

New programme launched to promote climate change reporting in the Northeast

Imphal: Dr. Najma Heptulla, Governor of Manipur, has emphasized the role of media in spreading awareness about impacts of climate change and the need for adaptation in the north-eastern region.

The Governor was inaugurating a three-day media workshop on climate change reporting in the state capital on Saturday, as part of the media sensitization initiative in the north-east jointly launched by the Indian Himalayas Climate Adaptation Programme (IHCAP) of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the Centre for Media Studies (CMS).

The Governor said, “While scientists have been working on different aspects of climate change and state governments are preparing plans for adaptation, media has a powerful role in generating awareness and motivating communities at the local level.”

Expressing concern over degradation of the Loktak lake, Dr. Heptulla announced that she would soon be launching a programme to involve children in regeneration of the wetland.

Media persons, both in print and electronic, should focus more on impact on climate change on remote, vulnerable communities, Dr. Heptulla said. They should also highlight case studies of success at local level which do not find much space or not adequately covered.

The Governor also released a manual titled *“Himalayas, Climate Change and the Media”* on the occasion.

State Environment Minister Shri I Hemochandra said Manipur has taken a lead in the country to meet the challenge of climate change. Manipur was among the few states in the country to have formulated action plan on climate change and to have initiated action to implement the same.

The Indian Himalayan Region is one of the most vulnerable mountain systems in the world. If effective measures are taken in time, experts believe it may be possible to prevent further degradation of the ecosystem. “Through this programme, we are trying to trigger interest in climate change, its impacts on sustainability, livelihood issues and adaptation stories among journalists, editors and media houses in the region and thereby among the masses,” noted Dr. Shirish Sinha, Deputy Director of Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

Ms. P N Vasanti, Director-General, CMS, said, “The challenge before journalists reporting on climate change is to connect changes occurring at the local level with larger global climate

science and policies. We need to build this capacity among interested journalists.” She mentioned that CMS Vatawatan film festival has been trying to spread awareness about environment through films.

Under the programme, a series of media workshops will be held in all the Northeastern states over the next three years. Senior thematic experts, scientists and policymakers will participate in these workshops and interact with journalists from different media outlets in the Himalayan states. Fellowships will also be awarded for journalists from the region to write field-based stories. Best stories written by state-level journalists will be awarded at the end of the programme.

About IHCAP:

Indian Himalayas Climate Adaptation Programme (IHCAP) is a project under Global Programme Climate Change (GPCC) of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). In India it is anchored under the Framework of Science and Technology Agreement of November 2003 between the Swiss Federal Council and the Government of India and is being implemented as a bilateral cooperation programme with Department of Science and Technology. IHCAP builds on capacity and knowledge enhancement related to three pillars- increasing knowledge on impacts of and vulnerability to climate change of the Himalayan socio-ecological system; enhancing capacities of academic and public institutions to address climate change; creating awareness, informing stakeholders and disseminating knowledge in the Indian Himalayan Region, Hindu Kush Himalayas and beyond.

About CMS:

Established in 1991, CMS is a not-for-profit, multi-disciplinary development research and facilitative think-tank. It endeavours to work towards responsive governance and equitable development through research, advocacy and capacity building in social development, environment, communication, media, transparency and governance issues at local and national policy levels. Its flagship programme in environment sector is Vatavaran, a leading international festival of environmental films.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.ihcap.in/uevents.html>