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Location: Khasi Hills, Meghalaya

SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT -VIII

“ Sustainable Mountain Initiatives for Livelihoods and Entrepreneurship for Youth ”

4-6 November | Shillong, Meghalaya

The 8th Sustainable Mountain development Summit (SMDS-VIII) of the Integrated Mountain Initiative was held in North Eastern Council, Shillong, Meghalaya from 4-6th November. The annual Summits are a key convergence platform to share experiences, discuss issues of sustainable development, identify gaps and collectively work to arrive at policy recommendations. Every SMDS is based on a clearly laid out theme and is part of a strategy leading towards a more effective coordination amongst the Mountain States to influence policies.

This year's SMDS solidified the learnings from the past SMDSs to come up with an effective strategy for sustainable development by building an ecosystem for young entrepreneurs. The identified areas critical to building an enabling ecosystem for entrepreneurs in the IHR was deliberated upon - Sustainable Agriculture, Sustainable Energy, Sustainable Agri-business, Sustainable Tourism.



The Summit was inaugurated by Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma.

During the summit, he released a new IMI document, **“Assessing the Changing Entrepreneurship Landscape in the Indian Himalayan Region”**- which was prepared in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Management.

Once again emphasising on the gap between policies and action in the grassroots, he said that this can be bridged only through entrepreneurship. He highlighted the urgency to build up the potential of the youth to face the future which is likely to be disrupted by climate change and emerging technologies, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI).



Through the course of the summit, presentations were made by representatives from ICIMOD, SDC, IMI, NEC, SELCO Foundation, TRIF, ADB, amongst many others. On both the days, the deliberations were divided into two parallel thematic sessions. Other inspirational stories of entrepreneurs from different states fuelled the discussions on sustainable Agriculture, Sustainable energy, agri-business and sustainable tourism, and their potential as livelihood options in the mountain regions.

The two days of discussions threw up many ideas for follow-up, but almost all emphasized on the need for an entrepreneurial ecosystem by convergence of government, civil society, industry and financial institutions. It was also underlined that there was urgent need to revitalize all government extension services.

Key action points:

- Creation of tax and financial literacy among the local entrepreneurs, and the institution of a climate risk fund to shore up entrepreneurship in the mountain region.
- Lawmakers representing the mountain states and uplands of the Indian Himalayan region need to urgently take up these recommendations at the appropriate policy platform.
- Taking a step forward in its agenda to encourage entrepreneurship, the summit came up with a concret decision to set up immediately a start-up incubation centre in partnership with IMI, Villgro and IIM, Shillong.
- Government schemes need to be better targeted, appropriate research needs to be done on the same.
- Need for a Himalayan brand for products of the mountain region.



Mountain Legislators' Meet 2019

6 November | Shillong, Meghalaya



Mountain Legislators' Meet was held in NEC, Shillong, Meghalaya bringing together legislators from different mountain states to deliberate on and examine key policy measures and highlight issues from the vantage point of the mountain states.

The conference, convened by Hon'ble Member of Parliament from Tura, Ms Agatha Sangma, chaired by Hon'ble MP of Shillong, Shri Vincent Pala, and co-chaired by Shri P.D. Rai, Former MP of Sikkim (LS), was attended by MPs, MLAs and representatives of Autonomous District Councils from Meghalaya, Uttarakhand, Ladakh, Sikkim, Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura and members of IMI, MIMDI, Swiss Development Corporation, SELCO Foundation and ICIMOD.

Discussion points:

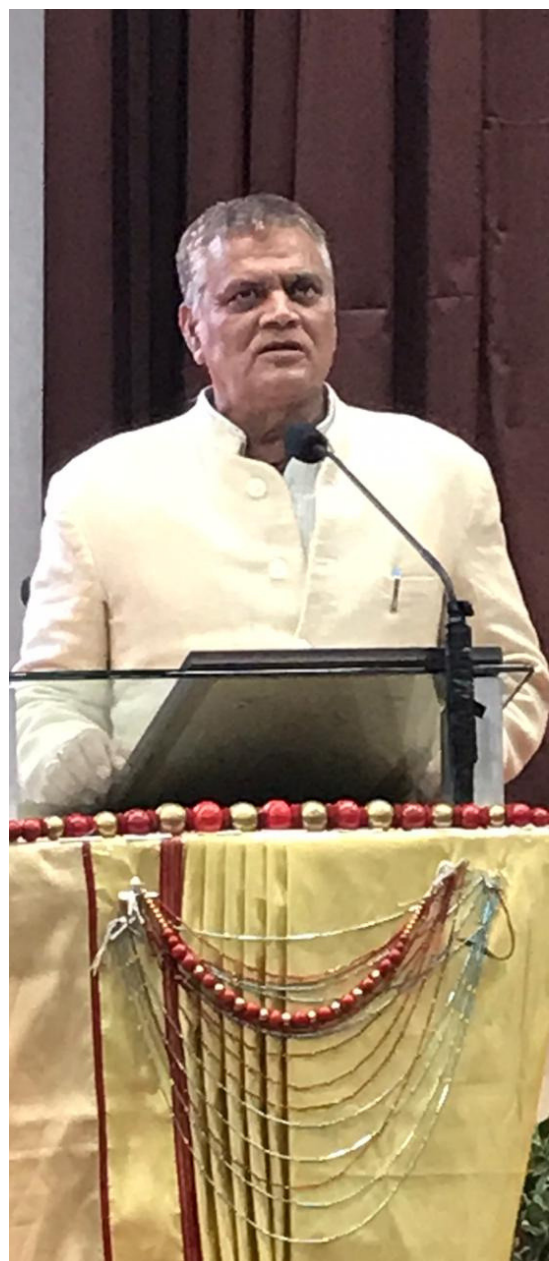
- Sensitization of general public, bureaucracy and politicians on the issues of climate change and the ways in which legislators can use policy instruments for adaptation.
- Need for integrated effort to addressing key issues of the region.
- Role of youth and entrepreneurs.
- Importance of alternative sustainable livelihoods to traditional practices like Jhum Cultivation.
- Importance of adding environmental education in the school and college curriculums.
- Importance of data and micro-data in guiding policy and the lack of data in IHR.

Dr. R.S. Tolia Award 2019

The 'Dr RS Tolia Award 2019', instituted to recognize efforts that have made an impact in integrating and addressing the issues of mountain communities was conferred on **Shri Sachidanand Bharati** for his incredible work in areas of:

- Forest conservation
- Water conservation
- Catalysing women organizations
- Disseminating forest and water conservation consciousness in villages
- Impacting mountain livelihoods

Based in Gadkharak village in Ufrainkhal Pauri Garhwal in Uttarakhand, Shri Sachidanand Bharati has dedicated his life to spreading forest and water conservation consciousness from village to village. This has not only led to revival of forests and water resources in the area, but it has also led to societal changes which will continue to have an impact for years to come. His work has found ways to incorporate traditional local solutions and apply them in innovative ways to address environmental, social and economic issues for creating a feasible way for forest and water conservation, ultimately leading to sustainable mountain development.



Passing the Baton

The baton for the next Sustainable Mountain Development Summit 2020 was handed over to Mr STS Lepcha of SDFU – the IMI State Chapter in Uttarakhand.

Zero-waste SMDS

The global movement against single use plastic has gained much needed attention in the past few years, and also within the country there is a clear and strong message to counter plastic pollution. IMI is committed to address this issue and thus the Sustainable Mountain Development Summit, Meghalaya 2019 was fully Zero Waste, by moving away from the use and throw culture and reducing the summit's waste in every possible way.

Instead of packaged drinking water, reusable bottles were used by our panellists. As part of the Zero-Waste Delegate kit, pencils with plantable material were distributed, along with metal flasks with refill options and notebooks with 12 steps to zero-waste on its inside pages. Paper and jute name tags replaced single-use plastic ones.

Our zero-waste journey aiming to reduce the waste load in landfills shall be continued and taken forward at future events too.



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