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PRESS RELEASE

International Biodiversity Congress calls for newgreen deal based on natural capital of biodiversity

The webinar organised by University of Kerala in association with the Centre for Innovation in Science and Social Action (CISSA) and Navdanya and on “Biodiversity and Health”, called for a new green deal in development, with a strong focus on natural capital and biodiversity-based sustainable livelihood. According to Dr Vandana Shiva, who lead the talk, the extractive economy which put value for every element of biodiversity and mammoth project which a developing country like India could not afford to would be ecological and economic disasters, in the post-COVID era. The efforts should be to decentralise conservation efforts at grass roots and following the concept of late Sri Sundarlal Bahuguna, the ‘Chipko’ movements should be part of the conservation effort of all villages in the country, with a moto “Ecology is permanent economy”.

Prof. K. Srinath Reddy, President, Public Health Foundation of India, urged the need for a holistic “One-Health Policy” to address the health of the humans, animals and ecosystem, with the involvement of all allied departments. Dr.G.G. Gangadharan, Director, Ramaiah Indic Specialty Ayurveda Restoration Hospital (RISA), advocated a revised approach of “One Health Policy” for India, with the incorporating the Indian tradition of treating illness of humans, animals and plants. Dr. Shalini Dhyani Senior Scientist, Critical Zone Research Group, CSIR-NEERI, Nagpur insisted the need for nature-based solutions to restore the health of ecosystems in India, based on the local experiences rather than blind adoption of technologies.

The webinar recommended the governments to ‘listen’ to the researchers and conservationists in planning developmental projects that would harm the economy and work for a green economy that is low carbon, resource efficient, and socially inclusive. In the backdrop of the decision of United nations to celebrate 2021- 2030 as the United Nations for Ecosystem restoration, the webinar advocated that all ecosystem restoration programmes in India in the post-COVID era should be linked with livelihood of people, should ensure people’s participation, and with appropriate technologies developed locally. The webinar recommendations also cautioned the data piracy happening in India, with multinational corporations, especially in nutrition and health, which ultimately lead to the extractive economy, where the rich biodiversity of the country will be used only for developing value-added products rather than using the local biodiversity to sustain food and nutritional security in the rural settings of India. The webinar also urged the governments to use the women power in Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Generation program for local projects on biodiversity enrichment and livelihood security, and to popularise the community kitchen approach in Kerala to ensure food security and local livelihood generation in the post-pandemic time as well, with resources generated locally, specially with the support of panchayat-level Biodiversity Management Committees, said Prof Biju Kumar of University of Kerala.

The seminar also urged the governments to take steps for the creation of ecological civilization and knowledge society that is rooted in the principles of happiness, socio-economic development, nature and biodiversity conservation, health security, site-specific education that ensures skill development, mainstreaming the principles of sustainable development and emotional intelligence, and corruption-free governance.

Dr.P.G. Pandurangan, Director, Biodiversity and Ecology division of CISSA and Prof A. Biju Kumar spoke on the occasion. About 300 participants from all over India participated.



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