

Governor calls for common biodiversity strategy among Eastern Himalaya nation

Source: Sikkim Express, December 19, 2008

Sikkim Governor Balimiki Prasad Singh has called for creating common strategies among the biodiversity among the rich nations along the Eastern Himalayan stretch.

'We need to have a common strategy both in use of biodiversity and conservation. It calls for constant sharing of information, exchanges of research findings, knowledge about traditional practices and institutional networking', said the Governor in his inaugural address of the international conference on 'Sub-regionalism approach to Regional Integration in South Asia: Prospects and Opportunities' hosted by Sikkim University at Chintan Bhavan here today.

Mr. Singh, who is also the Chief Rector of the Sikkim University, added that the entire region of Eastern Himalaya is one of the most globally recognized bio-diversity hotspots. "There is enormous scope for cross-border collaborations both in sustainable conservation programme and commercial harnessing of natural resources", he said.

Speaking on the theme of regional integration, the Governor offered tourism as an instrument in injecting such integration and cross border exchange. With the contrasting features that we find in India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, China, and Thailand, tourism could be a major economic intervention that would really foster regional economic cooperation, he said.

"Buddhist circuit tourism linking the monasteries and relics in India and neighboring countries could bond the cultural heritage and harness the immense opportunities in the eco-tourism sector", said the Governor. He said that international conferences like the one hosted by Sikkim University will go a long way in sensitizing the governments, civil society and people at large about the commonality in their existence and complementarity in their livelihood patterns.

Sikkim University vice Chancellor Prof. Mahendra P Lama said during the plenary session that fruits of sub-regional cooperation can only be realized by a range of institutional collaborations with countries that are contiguous neighbors.

"Let the academic institution like Yunan University in China, Dhaka University in Bangladesh and Tribhuvan University in Nepal collaborate with Sikkim University in India on issue of natural resources management, climate change and cross cultural civilization history. These are so crucial and need to be undertaken collectively".

Sikkim University would like to play a key role in all these initiatives and also linking the educational and research institutions in this sub-region, said the VC. He informed that Sikkim University is designing its programmes which are unique to this entire region and it has the distinct advantage of being located in a pivotal area from where a whole range of regional cooperation ventures could be promoted.