

Workshops for Capacity Building on 'Combating Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought' in Punjab and Uttarakhand

Degradation of soils and land due to soil erosion and other adverse processes is a severe problem in many parts of the world. It leaves the soils exposed and vulnerable to climatic hazards such as drought and consequently reduces the productivity of lands. Rehabilitation of degraded areas and maintenance of soil fertility are key factors for sustainable development and growth. In view of this, the world leaders during Rio+20 Conference in 2012, recognized Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought as a serious global challenge impeding sustainable development globally and agreed towards an aspirational goal for achieving a land-degradation neutral world. The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Government of India has, therefore, decided to focus for awareness about "Combating Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought" during 2014-15.

Punjab State Council for Science & Technology (PSCST), RCE Chandigarh lead partner and Regional Resource Agency (RRA) for the states of Punjab, Chandigarh & Uttarakhand, organized workshops for capacity building of institutions including Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), schools and other educational establishments on the theme 'Combating Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought' on 30.07.2014 at Chandigarh and 12.08.2014 at Mussoorie, Uttarakhand. Programmes were organized in collaboration with other agencies namely the Institution of Engineers, Chandigarh and the National Centre for Good Governance, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, Uttarakhand. 276 participants from Punjab & Chandigarh and 64 from Uttarakhand representing various NGOs, educational and training institutions, professional associations, scientific bodies, community organizations, etc. participated in these workshops. Experts delivered lectures themes relevant to the subject. Following were the key points discussed:

- Experts from PSCST presented background and objectives of workshops and the relevance of theme in the context of changing climate scenario in these states and

the role of institutions to pro-actively take up combative/adaptive and mitigative steps and be in the state of readiness in case of anticipated disastrous situations. Various programmes of the Central Government sporting initiatives through NGOs were discussed.

- Experts on water issues delivered lecture on the theme 'Water Resources and their conservation including rain water harvesting and role of NGOs and other institutions in context of Punjab and Uttarakhand'. Need of improving water use efficiency particularly in the drought prone, climate sensitive and erosion prone areas was discussed alongwith case studies to take steps at individual and community levels.
- Special lecture on 'Combating Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought' brought out information about the types of badlands, reasons of their formation and curative measures required to restore such lands.
- Expert on Soils talked about 'strategies for checking land degradation and enhancing productivity in hill & mountain agro-ecosystem following watershed approach in India'.

Participants felt the programmes very informative.



Interactive session with participants during the capacity building workshop