



Press Brief

**INDIA FINALISES NATIONAL MISSION FOR A GREEN INDIA
WITH PEOPLE-CENTRIC FORESTRY AT ITS CORE**

New Delhi, February 23, 2011

The National Mission for a Green India has been approved by the Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change. The Mission is one of eight missions under India's National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC).

Mission Objective

The Mission objective is to increase forest/tree cover on five million ha. of forested and non-forested land, and improved quality of forest cover on another 5 million ha – a total of 10 million ha. The Mission will also focus on improvement of ecosystem services, including biodiversity, hydrological services and carbon sequestration, and aim to increase forest-based livelihood incomes for 3 million forest dependent families. In terms of carbon sequestration, the mission aims to reach an **annual CO₂ sequestration of 50 to 60 million tonnes by 2020, which will increase the share of green house gas (GHG) emissions offset by India's forest and tree cover to around 6 percent as compared to 4.5 percent that would have been offset in the absence of the Mission.**

'Business as Unusual'

Several key innovations have been proposed in this Mission that mark a major change in approach from the traditional focus of forestry programmes in the past:

- **Focus on quality of forests:** an emphasis on the *density* of forest cover.
- **Emphasis on Ecosystem services:** non-carbon services like biodiversity, water and improved biomass are recognized as key benefits, along with carbon sequestration
- **Decentralization:** at a local level, the Gram Sabha will be responsible for facilitating the Mission
- **Landscape-based approach:** the Mission will tackle forest and non-forested areas at the same time, in areas of 5000 to 6000 hectares at a time.

Compliance with Forest Rights Act, 2006

Compliance with the Forest Rights Act, 2006 has been made an essential element of the Mission implementation. As part of the conditions of the Mission, it is proposed that no funds will be released to agencies until the Act is complied with. Committees set-up by the Gram Sabha under FRA will be centrally engaged as part the institutional landscape for implementation of the Mission.



Transparency in Mission Finalisation

The Mission has been finalized after extensive consultation, with an attempt at transparency and inclusiveness at every stage of its creation. The draft Mission document has been on the Ministry website since May, 2010. It was made available in 11 languages to ensure inputs from as many citizens as possible. Over June and July 2010, the Minister of Environment and Forests, Mr Jairam Ramesh held public consultations in seven cities across India, in which over 1450 people directly participated. Thousands of letters and representations were also received and considered in finalizing the Mission.

The National Mission for a Green India was broadly welcomed and received several useful inputs from members of the Prime Minister's Council. Members emphasized the need to quantify the value of ecosystem services, i.e. the non-carbon benefits, of the Mission. To ensure good monitoring of the mission, it was suggested that the capacity of Gram Sabhas and Panchayati Raj Institutions must be built up. A polycentric approach, instead of a 'one size fits all' approach, was emphasized. Suggestions were also made regarding the convergence and collaboration of the Mission with other government schemes like the MNREGA, and other Ministries of the Government, especially Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Ministry of Water Resources and Ministry of Agriculture.

Following the approval, the Ministry of Environment and Forests will incorporate the comments made by the Council members into the final document, and launch the process of setting up a Mission Secretariat as an autonomous society, and start preparatory work. 2011-12 will be a preparatory year for the Mission, and the full-scale Mission will run from 2012-13 to 2021-22 - the duration of the twelfth and the thirteenth five-year plans.
