

## **Assam holds 1st stakeholders consultation workshop to promote agroforestry in the state**

**Dispur, June 24:** A stakeholders' consultation for Agroforestry promotion in Assam was held at the Assam Administrative Staff College, Guwahati today with the objective to understand the needs and challenges in the promotion of agroforestry in Assam and to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices in the sector.

Minister for Environment and Forest etc., Chandra Mohan Patowary attended the inaugural session of the state's first-of-its-kind multi-stakeholder consultation workshop on Agroforestry in Guwahati.

In his key note address, Minister Patowary stressed on preparing a proper roadmap for promotion of agroforestry in Assam. He also urged representatives from industrial sector to come up with agroforestry based plans so that forest fringe communities and farmers can also be benefitted. He assured that the government will make necessary policy changes wherever needed to ensure benefit of all the stakeholders.

The minister asked the forest department to do research work in coordination with Assam Agricultural University to address issues like ecological imbalance, climate change etc. as well as to resolve human- animal conflict in the State.

The minister also inaugurated a flyer on the agroforestry promotion in Assam in the programme.

Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forest and Project Director, Assam Project on Forest and Biodiversity Conservation Society, KSPV Pavan Kumar delivered the welcome address in the inaugural session.

The Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Environment and Forest, Ravi Shankar Prasad in his speech said that the government has prioritized agroforestry as one of the key activities in the state and hoped that the workshop would be able to draw some kind of roadmap to meet the challenges and issues in this sector.

The one day consultation workshop was organized by the Assam Agroforestry Development Board in collaboration with the Assam Project on Forest and Biodiversity Conservation (APFBC). APFBC, is a statewide conservation initiative between the state government and 'Agence Française de Développement' (AFD), focuses on promoting alternative livelihoods through initiatives such as 'Agroforestry'.

The consultation workshop brought together key stakeholders of the agroforestry sector, such as the government, representatives from industrial sector, forest-fringe villagers, joint forest management committees and research institutions, and it facilitated the exchange of knowledge and best practices. Women representatives from local forest management committees also participated in good numbers. Several technical sessions were held as part of the consultation workshop today.