

SMDS VIII | Day 2 Valedictory

05 Nov 2019

The 8th Sustainable Mountain Development Summit (SMDS-VIII) concluded here on Tuesday with a call for action on a few identified issues critical to the building of an enabling ecosystem for entrepreneurs in the Indian Himalayan region.



Summing up the outcomes of the summit deliberations, IMI Councillor and former MP from Sikkim, Shri P.D Rai, zeroed in few action points that demand immediate action -chief of them being the creation of tax and financial literacy among the local entrepreneurs, and the institution of a climate risk fund to shore up entrepreneurship in the mountain region.

Recognizing that the tangle of red-tape still cripples the entrepreneurial ventures, the summit urged the lawmakers representing the mountain states and uplands of the Indian Himalayan region to urgently take up these recommendations at the appropriate policy platform.

Mr Rai said the key recommendations would be further deliberated up at the meeting of the lawmakers' forum, which had been scheduled for Wednesday here in Shillong. "Lawmakers need to mull over these recommendations and take actions", he opined.

Taking a step forward in its agenda to encourage entrepreneurship, the summit came up with a concrete decision to set up immediately a start-up incubation centre in partnership with IMI, Villgro and IIM, Shillong. He also suggested that many of the government schemes should be better targeted.

One of the other most important issues emerged through the two-day marathon discussions was the recognition of the need for a Himalayan brand for products of the mountain region.

The summit also paid a rich tribute to late founder president of IMI, Dr R.S Tolia, who played a pioneering role in setting up the IMI. An award instituted in his honour was awarded to Satyanarayan Bharti for his life-long works on community forestry and water conservation in Uttarakhand.

Mr Moses Chalai, IAS, Secretary, NEC, while applauding the organizers of the summit, highlighted the importance of compelling and collective voices from the region for advancing the specific developmental needs.

In his valedictory address, Prof B.K Dutta, Member, NEC and the chief guest at the closing session of the summit, emphasized on the need to integrate the rich heritage of traditional knowledge and the genetic bio-diversity of the upland communities of the Himalayan region into the plans and programmes meant for them.

The deliberations began with an inspirational presentation by Neichute Doulo , one of north east region's most celebrated entrepreneurs, who echoed the summit theme that the oozing energy of the region's youth must be harnessed to build sustainable entrepreneurship in the uplands.

“Innovation is the soul of entrepreneurship, but nothing can happen unless we create an enabling ecosystem for the youth to get them interested in it.”

“Until recently, everyone was looking for only government jobs, and any form of entrepreneurship was looked down upon. As a result the sector remained under developed in the region. Moreover, the government jobs will not be available for ever and as easily as was in the past. In fact, these are going to dry up over the years.”

This mindset has to change, sooner the better, otherwise, the region will be left where it is now”, Mr Doulo warned. He urged the youth to focus on new ideas and innovations by taking advantage of new technologies and the entrepreneurial ecosystem being laid out for that purposes.

Innovation is at the heart of entrepreneurship, and partnership and collaboration among aspiring entrepreneurs are the requisite building blocks for prospective businesses.

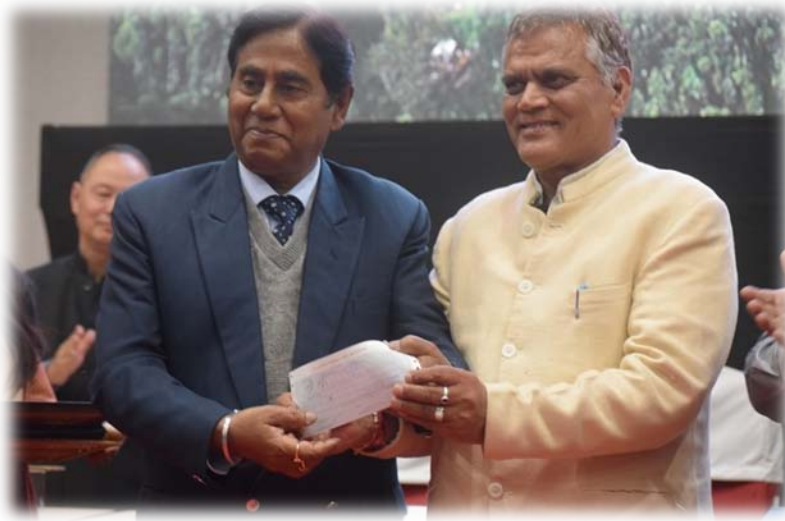
Over six other inspirational stories of entrepreneurs from different states fuelled the discussions on sustainable agri-business and sustainable tourism, and their potential as livelihood options in the mountain regions.



The two days of discussions threw up many ideas for follow-up, but almost all emphasized on the need for an entrepreneurial ecosystem by convergence of government, civil society, industry and financial institutions. It was also underlined that there was urgent need to revitalize all government extension services.

A panel discussion followed the presentations during the thematic sessions – sustainable agri-business and sustainable Tourism. One of the key points flagged was that entrepreneurship and business can grow only in an atmosphere of openness, and congenial environment that encourages investment and free flow of technology from outside.

The baton for the next Sustainable Mountain Development Summit 2020 was handed over to Mr STS Lepcha of SDFU – the IMI State Chapter in Uttarakhand.



The 2019 Dr R.S. Tolia Award being conferred on Shri Sachianand Bharati for his commitment to sustainable mountain development



The baton being passed to Uttarakhand, host of the next edition of SMDS