

## Himalayan Legislators meet at International Conference on Climate Change



The Sustainable Water Future Programme (SWFP) of Future Earth international conference on Climate Change titled 'Towards a Sustainable Water Future' was inaugurated on the 24th September 2019 at IISc Bengaluru by Mr Rajiv Pratap Rudi MP, Mr PD Rai Former MP, Prof Olcay Unver, Vice Chair UN-Water, Geneva, Switzerland, Prof Andras Sollozi-Nagy, Chair SWFP and Prof Anurag Kumar, Director IISc in the presence of a large number of national and international scientists, top officials and luminaries.

The conference, scheduled from the 24th -27th September 2019 is being hosted by the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru in partnership with *Futureearth*, *Waterfuture* and *Divecha Centre for Climate Change* and attended by 700 participants from across the globe in 6 plenaries and 45 parallel sessions. An additional 20 special sessions, 5 high level round table policy dialogues and 10 themes with 6 cross cutting themes will address the current state of global water resource challenges, future pathways and scenarios, and different technological, institutional solutions to accelerate the implementation of water-related Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda targets with an aim of 'leaving no one behind'.

The conference will give a major opportunity for academics, water practitioners, policymakers, scientists, civil society and government officials to discuss the direction that the global science community should take in order to solve myriad of challenges affecting our water systems in real time, and develop new frontiers for innovative solutions.

On the first day, a special session on *The 21st Century in the Indian Himalayan Region* was chaired by the Integrated Mountain Initiative (IMI) which attracted participants from across the Himalayan states who made presentations on issues ranging from vulnerable smaller water resources, decentralised water governance, integrated urban water security, seasonal water quality variation, conservation planning in human dominated riverscapes, climate change vulnerabilities to the state water policy of Meghalaya.

A high level round table conference for legislators of the Himalayan region was attended by MPs, MLAs and representatives from Uttarakhand, Ladakh, Sikkim, Arunachal, Nagaland,

Mizoram, Meghalaya and members of IMI, World Bank, United Nations University and officials from national and international institutes of excellence.

The members discussed at length the local water issues as evidenced by increase water scarcity, widespread water pollution, and rapid decline in freshwater biodiversity. They explored different innovative frameworks, approaches and methods to determine the potential of natural and human made infrastructure investment, and their complementarities to achieve sustainable solutions enhancing water security and resilience of the socio-ecological system.

They offered ideas for the design, implementation and evaluation of water at different levels and the potential for setting up a Mountain Solution Centre that will integrate solutions for the region.

The state of Meghalaya was represented by the Hon'ble Member of Parliament from Tura, Ms Agatha Sangma who spoke of the global crisis of water and the need for all states to have a water policy and integrate it with the Jal Shakti Ministry of Govt of India. She urged for reduction in ecological footprints and for polluting companies to take responsibility of the mess they have created.

Chairperson, Meghalaya State Council for Climate Change & Sustainable Development, Ms Ferlin Sangma spoke of the initiatives that Meghalaya State Council for Climate Change & Sustainable Development has done through the setting up of the climate change centre, preparation of the state action plan for climate change, developing project proposals, and providing technical and knowledge support to state agencies.

Mr H M Shangpliang, MLA from Mawsynram presented a short video on the rains of wettest place on earth, the effect of climate change on the oranges, the bees and the livelihoods of the people and offered water harvesting solutions that can be adopted by the hill people.