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Press Release: National Research Conference on Climate Change



IITs join hands with CSE to set up climate research network

- The Indian Institutes of Technology at Delhi and Chennai, in association with Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) organise a National Research Conference on Climate Change
- The conference launches the landmark Indian Climate Research Network
- Network aims to build and nurture a community of researchers, open the debate on climate change to a wider public, and create interfaces between climate researchers and others

New Delhi, March 6, 2010: A two-day national conference of climate researchers, which concluded here today, has culminated in the birth of the Indian Climate Research Network, a unique community of individuals and institutions which will work to enhance capacity for climate research and action in the country.

The conference, titled the ‘National Research Conference on Climate Change’, was held at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Delhi. It, and the network, is the brainchild of two IITs - of Delhi and Madras (Chennai) - and Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), the Delhi-based research and advocacy body.

“The network which we have jointly laid the foundations of here is unique because it is a cross-sectoral initiative which will act as a bridge between climate researchers and the larger climate community,” said Sunita Narain, director, CSE.

The conference: opening the horizons of climate research

According to Ambuj Sagar and Krishna Achutarao of IIT-Delhi, the conference itself was distinctive in some respects: perhaps for the first time in India, the organisers of a conference on climate change “reached out to find new researchers working on the subject” through a call for submission of papers.

The response, according to the organisers, was overwhelming. On one hand, the meet succeeded in bringing together on one platform almost all the top names working on climate research in the country. On the other, it identified and brought to the fore a lot of micro-scale work and initiatives which have been going on in the field of climate science in various parts of India.

Besides this, the conference also aimed at developing a common understanding of the key issues; identifying lacunae in science, policy, and action that need particular attention; and initiating a platform for a dialogue between researchers, NGOs, and policy-makers.

With sessions broadly categorised under ‘science and impacts’, ‘mitigation’, ‘adaptation’ and ‘policy issues’, the meet hosted a wide variety of presentations, highlighting research that has the potential to inform and influence current policy debates. These included papers on subjects ranging from energy scenarios and low-carbon pathways in India; emissions intensity and climate change; and impact of climate change on forests, to adaptive abilities of farmers in Gujarat; impact of climate change on corals in the Lakshadweep Islands; and micro-level monitoring of concentration of greenhouse gases at Cape Rama on the west coast of India.

Says Chella Rajan of IIT-Madras, “The conference, by providing a common platform to such an immense variety of thinkers, scientists and grassroot workers, has effectively extended the horizons and broadened the boundaries of climate research in the country.”

At the same time, points out Sagar, the meet has served to pinpoint the gaps that exist in climate research in India. “Mitigation, for instance, is one area in which more systematic analysis and research is needed,” he says.

The network: bridging communities

The Indian Climate Research Network will essentially carry on with the work begun by the conference. Says Ambuj Sagar, “The network will do what all researchers across the world always do – build a community, talk to each other, exchange ideas, have a conversation.”

According to Sunita Narain, the conference has listed three key areas in which the network will concentrate its efforts in the coming years:

- build relationships and encourage collaborations between communities to enable systematic research on climate change

- create interfaces with other networks, and find ways of “opening up the conversation” between climate researchers and researchers working in related areas such as water, development etc

- mentor and encourage new research and its initiators.

For more on this, please contact Kushal Pal Singh Yadav at kushal@cseindia.org or speak to him on 98108 67667.

For the complete presentations and other details of the conference, including lists of speakers, please visit <http://www.cseindia.org>