

Minutes of Interactive Session on
“Conservation, Protection and Rejuvenation of Mangroves in Maharashtra”
Held on 28th August 2009 in Mantralaya, Mumbai

The interactive session on ‘Conservation, Protection and Rejuvenation of mangroves in Maharashtra’ was held on 28th August 2009 under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Environment).

Invitees participated in this session along with their colleagues are: Dr. S. B. Chaphekar (Botanist & MCZMA Committee Member), Mr. Debi Goenka (Executive Trustee, Conservation Action Trust, Mumbai), Mr. Rishi Agrawal (Co-founder, Mangroves Society of India), Dr. Maya Mahajan (S. P. Godrej Marine Ecology Centre), Mr. Vivek Kulkarni (Managing Trustee, Panchatvatva) and Mr. Prashant Shinde (Srushtidnyan).

Secretary, Environment Department appreciated the concern & efforts of every individual in protecting mangroves & informed that we should evolve a supportive system to strengthen the work of Divisional Commissioner, Kokan Region appointed by State Government as per directions of Hon High Court to protect mangroves.

Important Issues discussed in the meeting summarized as:

- Quick response procedure for lodging complaints & action taken accordingly against any violations should be set up. Every received complaint will be registered with Unique Identification Number (ID) & action taken on that complaint can be tracked on line with that ID. Hot line, web-enabled procedure may be adopted for this.
- Role of different local authorities discussed at length & all members agreed to the suggestion to form Squad/ Committee at local level for better coordination. It was noted that, Home department in accordance with Hon High Court order in Writ Petition No. 3246/ 2004 had issued Government Resolution (GR) about responsibilities of Superintendent of Police and Deputy Commissioner of Police to take necessary actions against complaints of destruction of mangroves. It was suggested that in areas under Municipal Corporations Ward Officer of respective wards may be appointed as coordinator of the local level Squad/Committee. Representatives of local revenue department, police department, forest department, MPCB & local body should be included in the said committee.
- It was suggested that, program to restore destructed mangroves should be implemented immediately in the verified violation cases. For the proper conservation of this sensitive ecosystem, time bound restoration process should be carried out with the involvement of local authorities.
- It was also mentioned that the program for the mangroves conservation should be designed to restore whole coastal habitat as a healthy ecosystem.

- Action plan for restoration, rejuvenation of mangroves should be prepared. If necessary, technical cell may be formed in the MCZMA to coordinate the task.
- It was informed that the increase in the siltation may accelerate the mangrove growth and in the upcoming years, the width of creeks may be reduced and cause various problems such as 'pro-gradation of coastline by mangroves'.
- It was also brought to the notice that there is need and necessity to spread awareness in local people as well as in youth which is a socially important factor that may work as 'Eco-Brigade' and contribute in the task.