

VII WORLD BAMBOO CONGRESS NEW DELHI

PREAMBLE

The seventh World Bamboo Congress held at India's capital New Delhi from 27th February to 4th March 2004 was inaugurated by the Prime Minister of India, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The Indian Premier termed the miracle plant, bamboo as **“Green Gold”**, full of potential and promises for ecological and livelihood support to the vast global population.

The congress was carried out through six plenary and twenty-eight technical sessions covering all aspects of bamboo. Parallel to the sessions World Bamboo Expo held at New Delhi provided, the congress participants an opportunity to witness the types of bamboo and its value added products with high business potential. The congress concluded with the valedictory address of Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, Hon'ble Vice President of India and ended with a sense of achievement and positive note towards bamboo for integrated development.

The salient points, which emerged in the Congress, included the following: -

- Millennium Development Goals stress environment, conditions of slum dwellers, health and education. Bamboo-based development can improve the environment by substituting for deforestation and by providing good inexpensive houses, schools and clinics.
- Employment opportunities for rural and peri-urban poor will remain a priority. Bamboo-based development can provide a wide range of employment opportunities at all levels of skill and capital involvement and is particularly suitable for community-based micro-credit financed activities.
- The use of bamboo should be encouraged in watershed management, soil and water conservation, rehabilitation of degraded land and rural development.
- Bamboo can offer innumerable opportunities for environmental improvement by sequestration of carbon, lowering light intensity and offering protection against ultraviolet rays, yielding more oxygen than equivalent stand of trees and working as a natural environmental cleansing system.
- Bamboo shoots are rich in fiber, protein and minerals. The process product developed from bamboo shoots can provide food and nutritional security to 2 billion people living in Africa, Asia and Latin America.
- Bamboo bio-mass is a potential alternative source for bio-energy and opportunity to pioneer another industrial usage through gasification to produce electricity.
- Bamboo a versatile material, has found uses in manufacturing pulp and paper, panel products, construction material, high strength fiber composites and an array of modern new generation bamboo products.
- The potential of bamboo as an economic resource capable for generating employment for rural poor and skilled and semi-skilled in plantation and in semi industrial and industrial ventures should be fully exploited.
- The world will probably face a shortage of wood-base fibre in the future. Bamboo can substitute for wood-base fibre in the future. Bamboo can substitute for wood in nearly all its uses and can help avoid future shortages and hardships.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology support is a felt need for development of bamboo in terms of resource enhancement and also in the utilization for product development. The issues of research and extension, standards and quality, education, training demonstration, machines and tools have to be addressed. The technology support required include following: -

- Identification of appropriate species;
- Species site matching and plantation/agro-forestry techniques;
- Establishing synergy between micro and macro propagation techniques;
- Technology for seasoning and preservation;
- Developing designs, product development and product specific technology;
- Developing tools, machinery for enhancing production on an economical scale;
- Manufacture of bamboo Charcoal and activated carbon;
- Bamboo extracts and vinegar etc.

STANDARDS AND CODES

Quality, certification and coding is necessary for wider acceptance of the bamboo products and appropriate institutional mechanism needs to be developed wherever felt necessary.

POLICY

Broad policy initiatives are needed for development of bamboo sector. They will include the following: -

- To place bamboo as a key species in development agenda as it can clean and green the earth within a short period and with its multiple uses/employment generation capacity.
- To encourage bamboo plantations on all types of lands, as an economic activity.
- To promote development of new products and designs and markets as well as standards and quality for new product.
- To recognize bamboo as an agriculture/horticultural produce and allow unrestricted movement of bamboo and its processing and marketing by removing all legal constraints.

CONCLUSION

- International agencies like IFAD, IDRC, INBAR, UNDP, UNIDO and E.U. should continue to finance research and development programmes on bamboo and strengthen networking around the globe on bamboo.
- Networking in harvesting the knowledge of bamboo through awareness raising and information management should continue for enhancing international, national and regional cooperation amongst different sections of bamboo users, policy makers, market, bamboo researchers, artisans and industries through a clear focus on new technologies, global market with a policy of information transparencies.
- International Centre for Research in Agro-forestry (ICRAF) should launch an initiative to promote bamboo as useful agro-forestry species for ensuring ecological, economic, food and livelihood security

The VII World Bamboo Congress- Recommendations

Recently, India played host to delegates from across the world at the VII World Bamboo Congress. There were extensive deliberations and the recommendations of the Congress are given below to give the global perspective.

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- Employment opportunities for rural and semi-urban poor will remain a priority. Bamboo-based development can provide a wide range of employment opportunities at all levels of skill and capital involvement and is particularly suitable for community-based micro-credit financed activities.
- The use of bamboo should be encouraged in watershed management, soil and water conservation, rehabilitation of degraded land and rural development.
- Bamboo can offer innumerable opportunities for environmental improvement by sequestration of carbon, lowering light intensity and offering protection against ultraviolet rays, yielding more oxygen than equivalent stand of trees and working as a natural environmental cleansing system.
- Bamboo shoots are rich in fiber, protein and minerals. The process product developed from bamboo shoots can provide food and nutritional security to 2 billion people living in Africa, Asia and Latin America.
- Bamboo biomass is a potential alternative source for bio-energy and opportunity to pioneer another industrial usage through gasification to produce electricity.
- Bamboo a versatile material, has found uses in manufacturing pulp and paper, panel products, construction material, high strength fiber composites and an array of modern new generation bamboo products.
- The potential of bamboo as an economic resource capable for generating employment for rural poor and skilled and semi-skilled in plantation and in semi industrial and industrial ventures should be fully exploited.
- The world will probably face a shortage of wood-base fibre in the future. Bamboo can substitute for wood-base fibre in the future. Bamboo can substitute for wood in nearly all its uses and can help avoid future shortages and hardships.