**PRESS RELEASE**

**CMS VATAVARAN holds Panel Discussion on People and Forests of Chhattisgarh and Film Screenings**

**January 16, 2015, Raipur:** CMS VATAVARAN hosted a panel discussion on “People and Forests of Chhattisgarh”.

Welcome address was given Dr N Bhaskara Rao, Chairman, CMS, New Delhi. Shri Ram Prakash, IFS, PCCF & HoFF was chairperson of the panel discussion. It was moderated by Ms Seema Bhatt, Independent Consultant - Climate Change, Conservation and Ecotourism, New Delhi. The panelists were Dr Arvind Anil Boaz, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, and Nodal officer, Climate Change, Govt of Chhattisgarh; Shri Shirish Agrawal, Executive Director, Chhattisgarh State Minor Forest Produce (T&D) Cooperative Federation Ltd and Shri Jaisingh Dhumal, Chief Manager, Technology Finance Group, ICICI Bank, Mumbai.

The speakers gave presentations on various aspects like: **Success of Chhattisgarh in the Non-Timber Forest Produce sector in Enhancing Local Livelihoods; the role and importance of forests and forest produce in providing means of livelihood to the people of Chhattisgarh; Mainstreaming Biodiversity at different levels in the state of Chhattisgarh; and plantation of species that would increase the biodiversity in Chhattisgarh; Importance of community involvement in conserving biodiversity.**

Chairperson Shri Ram Prakash, highlighted the role and importance of forests and forest produce in providing means of livelihood to the people of Chhattisgarh.  
He briefed the audience on the forest wealth of Chhattisgarh.  
Through the presentation Shri Shirish Agrawal explained the audience about the success of Chhattisgarh in the Non-Timber Forest Produce sector, which also enhances Local Livelihoods. Dr. Arvind Anil Boaz talked about mainstreaming biodiversity at different levels in the state of Chhattisgarh. He informed that Chhattisgarh is the first state in India which has a bio-cultural protocol. He also highlighted the need for conserving wetlands. Mr Jaisingh Dhumal explained the role of ICICI Bank in sponsoring environment related programmes. He promptly offered INR 01 lakh for plantation of species that would increase the biodiversity in Chhattisgarh; he also highlighted the importance of community involvement in conserving biodiversity.  
The panel discussion was followed by an open forum interaction which reflected ideas and understanding of the participants.

Around 30 participants including college and university students; faculty; representatives from civil society, etc participated in the panel discussion.

The second day of the festival include film screenings at Rajkumar College; Gyan Ganga Educational Academy; Kaanger Valley Academy; Pt Ravishankar Shukla University; Govt. D.B Girls Post Graduate, (Autonomous) College; Kushabhau Thakre University of Journalism and Mass Communication; Chhattisgarh State Police Academy and Grihini – A Voluntary Organisation.

The film screenings was much enjoyed by the school & college students, police officials and members of Grihini. Total 1550 people participated in the film screenings.

The films screened during the day were: *Pratirodh (Resistance) by Bijo Toppo; Rolling Dunes of Thar (Wild Adventures) and Corbett’s Legacy by Naresh Bedi; Shiffing Undercurrents - Women Seaweed Collectors of Gulf of Mannar and Gaur in my Garden by Rita Banerji; Jal by Anjali Nayar; In Their Element by Inder Kathuria; Smarty Plants by Erna Buffie; Dammed by Kavita Bahl and Nandan Saxena; Greeny the Great by Dhananjay Bhopale; The Jungle Gang Meets the Tiger by Krishnendu Bose;* The issues discussed post film screenings were global warming, wildlife protection, pollution and biodiversity conservation.

**The highlights of tomorrow’s programme (January 17, 2015):**

* **Green Filmmaking Workshop**

Venue: Auditorium, Multi Media Department, Kushabhau Thakre University of Journalism and Mass Communication

Time: 08:30 – 05:30 pm

* **Green Film Screening and Open Forum Discussions**

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| **Time** | **Venue** | **Audience** |
| 08:00 am – 09:00 | **Vivekanand Vidhyapeeth,** Raipur | Schools students |
| 09:00 am - 10:00 am | **Gyan Ganga Educational Academy**, Baloda Bazar Road, Near Vidhan Sabha  **Kaanger Valley Academy**, Opp. R S U Gymnasium, Dumar Talab |
| 10:15 am - 11:15 am |
| 11:30 am - 12:30 pm |
| 12:45 pm - 01:45 pm |
| 08:30 pm – 09:30 pm | **Rajkumar College** |
| 11:00 am - 12:00 pm | ***Pt Ravishankar Shukla University***  ***Govt. D.B Girls P G (Autonomous) College***  ***Kushabhau Thakre University of Journalism and Mass Communication****, Kathadih* | University/ college students |
| 12:00 pm -01:00 pm |

*For more information, please contact:*

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