

International Seminar on Bamboo
“Bamboo for Livelihood and Community Development, September 16-17, 2010
&
The World Bamboo Day on September 18, 2010
At Kisama Heritage Village, Kohima, Nagaland, India

KOHIMA DECLARATION

We, the members of the World Bamboo Organisation, the Nagaland Bamboo Development Agency - an organization for promotion of bamboo under the Government of Nagaland, India; Scientists, Professionals, Academia, representatives from Industries, Civil Society, Government, Non-Government and Community Organizations from India and abroad participating in the International Seminar on Bamboo -“Bamboo for Livelihood and Community Development” at Kisama, Kohima, Nagaland, India during 16 to 17 September, 2010, recognise bamboo as an appropriate vehicle for both grassroots and industrial development, its ameliorating environmental attributes; and declare on the historic occasion of celebration of the World Bamboo Day on 18 September 2010 at Kohima, that we shall individually and jointly, locally and globally, promote holistic development of the bamboo sector for sustainable benefit to the world community with focus on equity and ecological security.

I. General Declaration

1. Bamboo for a Green, Clean and Healthy Mother Planet

We emphasise the unique potential and significance of bamboo in mitigation of the gravest challenges of the twenty-first century, being deforestation and global warming; and call upon all stakeholders to act locally and globally in harmony to generate awareness and to bring in effective policy shift, financial back up and infrastructure support to create an environment conducive to holistic development of bamboo sector to secure a green, clean and healthy mother planet.

2. Participatory Approach in Planning and Review of Implementation

We urge the Governments of bamboo growing nations to set up appropriate mechanism to associate elite academic bodies and institutes of technology; eminent scientists and professionals; representatives from industries, civil society and community organisations – national and international - in framing strategy and action plan for development of bamboo sector and review of implementation thereof with free on time access to documentation of these activities on official websites.

3. Development Grassroots Upward for Equity and Sustainability

We recognise the vast yet untapped potential of bamboo to improve quality of life and to generate prosperity even in rural areas of the developing world by pursuing judicious integration of traditional as well as modern industrial applications with the strategic approach for development from grassroots upward for equity and sustainability.

4. Convergence of Activities to Promote Micro-Enterprises & Employment

We call upon all stakeholders in the bamboo sector – local and global – to recognise the importance of convergence of their diverse activities to retain focus on building village level micro-enterprises close to resource base and to enhance livelihood and employment generation as primary objectives.

5. Technology & Management Model for Enhanced Productivity & Coverage

We express deep concern on the tardy progress in many bamboo growing nations in enhancing productivity and in augmenting area coverage; and we call upon these governments to closely follow success stories elsewhere in the world to adopt, adapt or to develop new technology and management models suited to each target species in keeping with its agro-climatic conditions, ownership status, etc. We appeal further to those governments to put in place appropriate policy and legal framework as well as access to institutional finance and other cost opportunities to encourage development of private farming as well as industrial plantations. We emphasise further to promote participatory forestry with bamboo as a priority species, subject to agro-climatic limitations, in government forestland with 100% right on bamboo harvest to the forest community in the capacity of management partner of the government based on appropriate MoU.

6. Innovation & Product Development Initially Targeting a few Exportable Products

We reiterate the urgency for the bamboo growing countries, lagging behind in technology and commerce, on concerted action on species specific innovation, product development and adaptation both for traditional as well as industrial products with the strategy to invest time and resources initially to produce only a few high value products targeting major export markets to build skills and expertise needed to compete globally.

7. Financial Feasibility Study of Bamboo based Enterprises

We emphasise the imperative need to promote professionalism in banks and other funding institutions in financial feasibility study of bamboo based enterprises to ensure support and clearance to viable projects; and urge the concerned authorities for appropriate capacity building to that end.

8. Access to Global Carbon Credit to Benefit Bamboo Growers & Entrepreneurs

We note that bamboo sequesters CO₂ much faster than other forest and plantation crops and that it meets the requirements for Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) under the Kyoto Protocol such as socio-economic and environmental criteria for sustainability, cost benefit analysis, etc.; and urge the bamboo growing nations for initiating steps for entry into global carbon credit mechanism to benefit bamboo farmers and enterprises and to attract investments.

9. UN Millennium Development Goals

We recognize the enormous potential of bamboo as a resource and as an enterprise to contribute directly and significantly to achieve three out of the eight millennium goals - to eradicate extreme poverty from bamboo growing areas; to ensure environmental sustainability through increased carbon sequestration and by substituting tropical timber; and to develop global partnership for development of the bamboo sector for sustainable benefit to the world community.

II. India Specific Declaration

1. Revocation of Statutory Regulations on Harvest and Transit of Bamboo

We reiterate the need for the bamboo growing States in India to utilise their powers under the Forest Act to withdraw statutory regulations on transit of bamboo to stimulate growth in the sector with enthusiastic participation of farmers, traders and industries in keeping with the mandate of the National Bamboo Mission of India; while continuing persuasion with the Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India to effectively and permanently mitigate the hurdles arising out of regulation on harvest and transit of bamboo in forest and non-forestland by an amendment of the Indian Forest Act to delete the provisions treating bamboo as a 'tree'.

2. Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) Scheme

We recognise the multiple constraints in the bamboo sector in India for resource generation and sustained supply; technology deficit and lack of trained manpower; and the perceived need for a more responsive policy and legal framework vis-à-vis enormous potential of bamboo to improve livelihood of rural masses and its comparability with other cash crops. We, therefore, strongly recommend treating bamboo at par with 'agricultural products' for the purpose of concession on Custom Duty under the EPCG Scheme; and to grant a total moratorium on export obligations under EPCG Scheme for ten years from the date of issue of notification introducing the proposed moratorium.

3. Safeguard duty on import of bamboo products from China

We note with concern that import of bamboo products from several South East Asian countries has surged in the past few years causing injury to the nascent Indian bamboo industry, and urge the Government of India, therefore, to impose 30% safeguard duty on import of bamboo products.

4. Exemption from Value Added Tax

We call upon the concerned authorities to grant exemption for ten years to industrial bamboo products and handicrafts from Value added Tax in consideration of the fact that this is an emerging sector of immense potential for economic emancipation, especially of the rural poor, of the bamboo growing states of India; the potential of the sector in employment and wealth generation through plantations and rural enterprises; multiplicity of challenges the sector faces at this nascent stage due to scarcity of appropriate technology and trained personnel, policy and legal framework not yet adequately responsive for development of the sector.

5. Commodity Body for Bamboo

We emphasise the importance for declaration of bamboo as a commodity at par with tea, coffee, rubber, spices, coconut, etc. and the need for constituting an Indian Commodity Body for Bamboo in view of the immense potentials of the sector to provide Single Window Solution, from resource generation to value addition and certification to marketing for the sector; and to facilitate international cooperation by networking with the International Commodity Body for Bamboo and other global technology or funding agencies for the benefit of the sector in India. We further suggest that it would be prudent and effective if a worthy professional institution already active in the sector takes on the role; and considering the pioneering role, competent technical back-up, rich experience in project formulation and implementation, consultancy, networking; and the advantage of its location in the North East, the Cane and Bamboo Technology Centre (CBTC), Guwahati fits the bill; and we recommend CBTC be designated as the Indian Commodity Body for Bamboo in India.

6. Bamboo Value Addition Park

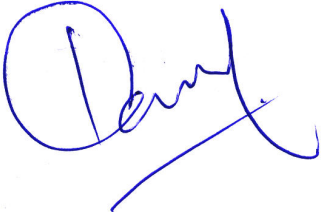

We note that bamboo value addition units – handicrafts and industrial - utilise raw material in diverse forms beginning from bamboo culms to intermediate products like sticks, slivers, strips, bamboo mats, treated poles, etc. We appreciate under the circumstances the importance of establishment of integrated chains of selected bamboo based units together in an appropriate locality to internalize, to the extent feasible, backward and forward linkages within the system for targeted cooperative action for mutual benefit; and we, therefore, appeal to the Government of India to provide 100% grant-in-aid to bamboo growing states to create sound basic infrastructure for Bamboo Value Addition Parks with top grade road network, water supply and effective drainage, electric network substation and other common facilities of warehouse, training centre-cum-conference-hall, communication hub, fire station, security, etc. to encourage and facilitate prospective entrepreneurs to venture into the yet largely uncharted territory of bamboo based industries

7. Campaign for Bamboo

We emphasise the vital need for bamboo as an appropriate vehicle for both grassroots and industrial development; its ameliorating environmental attributes; unique potential in mitigation of the challenges of deforestation and global warming; the beauty and utility value of bamboo products; and the pride that one is entitled to for his or her service to the cause of environment and ecology by using products made of bamboo instead of wood; and call upon the Government of India to organize well planned long term orchestrated campaign through electronic and print media to create awareness, support and participation of citizens for the development of the bamboo sector.

8. 2020 Vision to Bring Smile to Billion Faces

We recognize the enormous potential of bamboo as a resource and as an enterprise to enhance quality of life and prosperity in the relatively under developed bamboo growing regions of India and impress upon the Government of India and the State Governments and all other authorities and stakeholders in the bamboo sector to remain committed to the 2020 Vision to make India a prosperous, happy and secure nation, where the rural and urban divide is reduced to a thin line; and wherefrom poverty is eliminated bringing smile to billion faces.

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