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Demand for classifying bamboo as 'grass' not 'tree'

TNN Sep 19, 2012, 10:33PM IST

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Guwahati/Dimapur: The Centre for Civil Society (CCS) and the South Asia Bamboo Foundation (SABF) urged the Centre to look into the bureaucratic and institutional hurdles in removing bamboo, which is a grass, from the 'tree' classification under the forest law.

The demand came during the celebration of World Bamboo Day on Tuesday at New Delhi. The CCS, in collaboration with SABF, celebrated the day with an aim to ensure sustainable utilisation of natural resources, promote new cultivation of bamboo for industries in the country and promote its traditional uses for community economic development.

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The Planning Commission estimates that bamboo cultivation and related industries could provide employment to nearly 50 million people.

SABF executive director and former president of the World Bamboo Organisation, Kamesh Salam, said, "The classification of bamboo as a tree instead of a grass is the main cause for the lack of development of bamboo in the country. The Union ministry of environment and forests is standing in the way of making the lives of millions of bamboo growers and tribals better by cultivating bamboo."

He said, "While the legislative hurdles seem to have been cleared, bureaucratic and institutional hurdles need to be removed."

Even the Kohima Declaration, which was passed on World Bamboo Day 2010, lays down specific measures to help realise the goal of a robust but equity-oriented bamboo industry in India, he added.

Meanwhile, Nagaland chief minister Neiphu Rio on Tuesday underlined the importance of bamboo as a resource and called upon entrepreneurs to bank on the 'green gold' and avail all opportunities available to them set up bamboo-based businesses. Inaugurating the World Bamboo Day in Dimapur, Rio said, "We have the best resource centre here, the facilities for technology sourcing and dissemination, capacity building, skill upgrade etc."

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