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SAVE THE DATE

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CREATING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR JAMMU & KASHMIR AND LADAKH

New Opportunities for an Inclusive and Green Development

Annual Conference 2020
WWF-India, New Delhi

Development Alternatives

BALIPARA FOUNDATION
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The new status of the Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh regions provides an excellent and unprecedented opportunity to create a society that is highly prosperous, inclusive and green. This means that societal goals have to be redefined to meet the fully justifiable aspirations of the people and the development strategies need to be redesigned to take full advantage of its resource base – natural, human, physical and financial.

For some decades, these states and territories have suffered from a gross lack of jobs and a massive destruction of their environmental resources, both greatly intensified by externally generated security threats and economic disruptions. With appropriate changes in the goals and strategies for development, these regions can quite quickly kickstart a rapidly growing economy that is both socially just and environmentally regenerative. This would greatly benefit not only the local population but the entire country.

The first priority has to be to strengthen the policies, institutions and infrastructure, i.e., the systems of governance, that will make these regions highly attractive for businesses to invest in production and marketing activities, for civil society to set up services to help communities to become self-reliant and for educational and training entities to provide world class knowledge and skills for taking up meaningful and dignified jobs.

An equal, top, priority has to be given to developing capacity in the regions to assess and evaluate how the regions' resources can be used for optimal impact on the economy and society – and to provide the foresight and insights needed to avoid the (sometimes huge and negative) unintended consequences for people and nature that have afflicted many development efforts in the past.

The World in general and India in particular face an array of unprecedented challenges and threats to the future of human well-being, including gross poverty and social inequity, climate change, biodiversity loss and extinction of species, extreme events and resource depletion. The criticality of pollution and fresh water shortages that we are experiencing are a manifestation of this degradation/ destruction.

It is for this reason that the United Nations Agenda 2030, adopted by all countries, including India, envisions drastic cut backs on ecological degradation for a sustainable future for all within a definite time frame. Strategies for sustainable production and consumption (SDG 12, SDG 8) and decarbonising growth (Paris Agreement and SDG 13) have been identified as key to achieving the Global Goals.

The thrust of all these international commitments ultimately boils down to two fundamental priorities:

i) To ensure that all citizens have access to the means of satisfying their basic needs;

ii) To restore the environmental resource base and essential life supports to full health.

Today, the solutions to the growing challenges and threats faced by humankind now need inputs from both modern science-based knowledge and conventional thinking and traditional wisdom. In post-independence India, the focus was on optimising industrial processes economic policies towards raising 'resource efficiency'. The methodologies adopted for this purpose were influenced by engineering, economic and market-based principles – usually leading to large-scale, heavily mechanized and resource-guzzling solutions. Most of these had evolved over the past two centuries, as a result of the Industrial Revolution, a period of human endeavour that produced unprecedented opportunities and benefits for improving lives and livelihoods by raising the productivity of natural, human and physical resources, but over time led to new types of social and environmental problems not known earlier. Often, a corrective solution to reduce the adverse impact led to further unintended problems, in a never ending cycle of successive problems and solutions. Examples include heavy mechanization and chemicalization of agriculture, large scale water management structures, energy/material intensive construction, urbanisation and adoption of agricultural practices, without regard to their long term impact on critical resources like water, soils and productive land base. Each of these has had a huge impact on local ecosystems and global biospheric system.

The Himalayan regions are home to strong and highly courageous people but are domiciled in extremely fragile ecosystems and vulnerable economies. ***The Annual Conference of CoR-India will address the complex issues of what kinds of policies, programmes and project can best respond to making them economically prosperous, socially equitable, environmentally resilient and thus sustainable and durable.***

PLENARY 1: Harmonising Development Initiatives for Enhanced Social Equity

PLENARY 2: Nature-Based Solutions for Sustainable Development

PLENARY 3: Resource Mapping - Natural, Physical and People

PLENARY 4: Industrial Development - Prospects

PLENARY 5: Importance of Joint Actions of Nations on Climate Change – Risk Resilient Infrastructure and Other Alliances