

## ENVIS- CAZRI Celebrates International Day for Biological Diversity on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2015

International Day for Biological Diversity- “Biodiversity for Sustainable Development “ was celebrated on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2015 under the aegis of ENVIS at CAZRI, Jodhpur. The function was chaired by Dr. R.K. Bhatt, Director (Acting), CAZRI, Jodhpur. Dr. Suresh Kumar, ENVIS Coordinator welcomed the guests and also read out the message from Hon’ble Sh. Prakash Javdekar, Minister of State (IC) Environment, Government of India highlighting that “.....the income-poor in India and the world over face the negative fallouts of depleting and degraded natural resources in disproportionate measure to those who are responsible for such depletion and degradation. Sustainable development rests on a viable and sound natural resource base....”. He exhorted that “let us work together for conserving biodiversity to ensure the future we want for us and our coming generations. For we have borrowed this earth from our children, and not inherited it from our ancestors”.

Dr. D.C. Bhandari, Former Director (Acting), NBPGR, New Delhi was invited to deliver a key note address on “Agro biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Agricultural Development ”. Importance of Plant Genetic Resources (PGR) was exemplified in terms of 3300 agricultural crop varieties and 1407 horticulture crop varieties from selection of these PGRs. Many important genes from the wild relatives of crop plants have proved effective in providing resistance to pests and enhancing productivity. These can also be source of alternative pulse crops like Faba bean and rice bean besides being source of remedial medicines. Currently our germplasm holdings are of over 0.7 million accessions of field and horticultural crops. These genetic resources are characterized, evaluated, documented and exchanged, both within and outside India. While India gave high priority to PGR exploration missions in the past, there is now a paradigm shift for managing the Indian bio resources, with greater focus on in situ on-farm conservation and the livelihood of primary conservers and users, with the ex situ collections, serving as a backup function. Since biodiversity loss is irreversible need of the hour is to have ‘Green Revolution through Gene Revolution’. He highlighted that the future programme would focus on PGR conservation and sustainable use and its role in increasing food and nutritional security and in mitigating climate change impacts, thus playing a pivotal role in overall sustainable development.

Dr. R.K. Bhatt, Director (Acting) also emphasized the conservation of PGR for development of Agriculture and society as a whole.

At the end, vote of thanks was presented by Shri Tirth Das, ENVIS Member Secretary. The programme was compered by Dr. Shweta Mathur, Information officer while Dr. Ritu Purohit (Programme officer) introduced the speakers to the house.

