

**Visit of a Team from U.S. Agency for International Development
(USAID)
to Himalayan Forest Research Institute, Shimla
(19th September, 2016)**

A 5 member **U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)** team consisting of Mr. Todd Johnson, USAID/Washington, Ms. Juliann Aukema, USAID/Washington, Mr. Mark Newton, USAID/India, Mr. Varghese Paul, USAID/India and Mr. Soumitri Das, USAID/India visited HFRI on 19th September, 2016 and had an interactive meeting with the Director and Officers/Scientists regarding designing of a new project, in collaboration with the HFRI, that will follow USAID's and MOEFCC's Forest-PLUS project.

In the beginning, Dr. V.P. Tewari, Director, HFRI welcomed the USAID team and explained various research activities taken up by the institute in the Western Himalayan region, significant research achievements and technologies developed. Mr. Mark Newton briefed about the Forest-PLUS activities and purpose of the visit of USAID team to HFRI.

While initiating discussion, Director, HFRI told that the institute can extend all technical support in developing techniques for improving forest management including forest management and silviculture, NTFP management and harvesting, estimating carrying capacity of pastures and grazing management, biodiversity assessment, conservation & management and capacity building of local people including frontline staff of State Forest Department (SFD) apart from taking up studies on effect of climate change on Western Himalayan ecosystem and insect dynamics and IPDM on trees & forests in changing scenario. Dr. K.S. Kapoor, GCR further highlighted the work done by the institute in phyto-diversity studies in various National parks & sanctuaries. When asked specifically to deliberate upon the technologies developed for carrying out eco-restoration activity, Dr. Kapoor gave the details of the research carried out in this particular field right from inception of this institute till date. He further suggested that integration of local communities with present day research scenario, must form an essential component of any research project. Dr. Ranjeet Singh spoke about his work on changing population dynamics of insects in mid and high altitude areas and Dr. Vaneet Jishtu explained about the work on establishment of Medicinal plant Conservation Areas and Long-term Research Sites in high altitude transition zones.

The USAID team appreciated to forestry research initiatives and achievements of HFRI in Western Himalayas and opined that there is huge scope of research collaboration between USAID and HFRI in addressing climate change related issues in the region adopting ecosystem approach and informed that soon they will come back with a viable proposal for collaboration.

In the end, the Director and the GCR thanked the entire USAID team for visiting HFRI and have fruitful scientific discussion and wished that HFRI and USAID will soon come up with a collaborative projects addressing the forestry related issues of vulnerable areas in western Himalayan region supporting the economic upliftment and livelihood security of rural poors.

Some Glimpses of the Meeting with USAID Team

