

The Lahore Times

27 November, 2013

Pakistan assumes charge of SACAM Chair; Ziarat Juniper Forest included in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves

ISLAMABAD: United Nation Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF) jointly organized, the 5th meeting of SACAM network in Islamabad.

Officials and representatives of the ministry for science and technology, PSF, UNESCO and representatives from the member states including Pakistan, India, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka along with Pakistani conservationists, scientists, and environmentalists participated in the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, chief guest, Zahid Hamid, Federal Minister for Science and Technology thanked all the stakeholders including MAB network delegates from other countries, UNESCO and PSF for organizing and supporting biodiversity initiative in the region. He said that local community is playing an important role in protecting the biodiversity.

He said the government is preparing a document for the approval of the protection of the Karakoram Pamir Biosphere Reserve in the Northern Pakistan. Referring to the Global Climate Risk Index developed by German watch, he said that since 1992-2011, Thailand, Cambodia, Pakistan, El Salvador and the Philippines were among the most affected countries due to climate change and environmental degradation which he said is a great concern.

The chair of the SACAM has been handed over to Pakistan for the next two years. In this context, the Chairman National MAB Committee and Secretary for Ministry of Science and Technology, Kamran Ali Qureshi, extended his gratitude to Iran, the outgoing chair, for its outstanding contributions. He said that the South and East Asian countries are most vulnerable because of the deteriorating ecosystem and Pakistan in this context is at high risk. He said that the receding of glaciers in the northern areas has resulted in devastating floods in the recent past, which destroyed settlements and agriculture lands causing serious problem in the national economy and revenue collection from agriculture sector.

In her address, Dr. Kozue Kay Nagata, Director/Representative UNESCO Islamabad said that SACAM is a remarkable platform of MAB professionals, conservationists, scientists, research students of the member states and that the programme is progressing well. As a result of these efforts, this year, Ziarat Juniper Forest of Balochistan, the second largest juniper forest in the world, has been declared Biosphere Reserve and included in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

She also shared that a dossier has been submitted to MAB Secretariat for the Karakoram Pamir Biosphere Reserve in the Northern Pakistan which is a unique ecosystem containing some of the highest peaks and longest glaciers combined with high altitude fresh water lakes and endangered wildlife like Markhor and Snow Leopard.

Source: <http://www.lhrtimes.com/2013/11/27/pakistan-assumes-charge-of-sacam-chair-ziarat-juniper-forest-included-in-the-world-network-of-biosphere-reserves-212209/>