

**Address of Dr V K Bahuguna, IFS, Director General, ICFRE on the eve of
Republic Day on 26th January, 2012.**

Ladies and Gentlemen, when the nation is celebrating 63rd Republic Day, let me take this opportunity to congratulate you all on this momentous occasion. Our country, during all these years has made tremendous strides in all the spheres of development, truly in the spirit of a growing republic as an emerging world leader. And this growth is possible with the contribution of all of us, jointly, in making our republic stronger and resilient.

On this day, it's my precious prerogative to highlight and share with you, the growth of forestry research, education and extension in the country and the role of a catalyst played by ICFRE. I am very happy to declare, at this juncture that ICFRE has been turning into a vibrant institution, as a result of number of new initiatives and achievements, amply supported by all the sister institutions and the Government of India.

The Council has aligned its focus and thrust areas on the technical issues of Forestry research, in our quest to address the larger challenges faced by the forestry Sector today. Landmark initiatives of Think Tank, Knowledge forum, the ginger groups, National Project Directors and Subject Matter Coordinators have been brought in last few months to infuse a fresh thinking into the organization and put our work to a wider consultative process and scrutiny. Presently, ICFRE with its institutes is implementing 415 research projects of which 358 are ICFRE funded and 57 are externally aided. All these projects have emerged from a wider stake-holders consultation and demand and a meticulous process of prioritization. ICFRE is working to develop models for REDD plus, especially for bringing benefits

to the communities and Van Panchayats in the states of Himachal and Uttarakhand, apart from valuation of ecosystem services in these areas. ICFRE has completed the second National Communication to UNFCCC on Assessment of Soil Carbon stock and dynamics in Forest soils of India for the period 1995 to 2007. A task force of the Ministry is working in ICFRE to have a revisit of the Forest Types of India to provide extremely important data for policy and management decisions at the national level.

More tangible contribution to the farmers of this country is release of four clones of *Casuarina equisetifolia* , four clones of *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* and one clone of *Delbergia sissoo* and *Eucalyptus hybrid*. This is likely to have a multiplier effect on the farm incomes and benefits to the tune of over Two lakhs per hectare is expected. As you all know, release of clones in forestry is a culmination of a very long and arduous tree improvement programme, for which our scientists need to be specially complimented.

We have recently brought out a comprehensive compendium of R&D activities of foresters and scientists over past 150 years, the repositories of knowledge and technologies developed, in a voluminous compilation of “Forestry in the Service of Nation”. At the same time, ICFRE has also taken a lead to document the best practices emerging in the field, as a contribution of the toil and hard-work of the foresters, in the form of “Voices from the Field”. ICFRE is being integrated with the National Knowledge Network, as a result the council and the institutes will be connected with national and international scientific institutions bringing the benefits to the researchers.

ICFRE is geared-up to strengthen the forestry extension in the country with the help of Van Vigyan Kendra and Demonstrative villages in collaboration with the State Forest Departments, which is another significant step to take findings from the labs to the field for the benefit of society at large. We have recently launched an innovative “Direct to Consumer” Scheme in ICFRE, to take technologies and findings of research projects, which are extendable, to the field directly by a concerted effort. IFGTB has recently signed MOU with Biotech Consortium Indian Limited (BCIL) to facilitate transfer of technology on Isolation of nucleic acid from plant tissues.

ICFRE is committed to improve the standard of forestry education in the country through its continual support to the universities offering formal forestry Education. A well established system of quality assurance in forestry has been put in place by ICFRE for accreditation and I am glad to share with you that as on today, 18 Universities have been accredited by ICFRE.

FRI Deemed University is being nurtured into an institution by higher learning in forestry and is fast attaining international repute. Till date, this institution has produced 566 PhD’s and as many as 286 scholars are registered and continuing doctoral research. It gives me immense pleasure to share with you all that Hon’ble Prime Minister, in his address to the 17th SAARC Summit, has announced to provide ten scholarships per year to SAARC nations for pursuing PG and Doctoral Studies at FRI University. We propose to network forestry research, with education in the Universities in the ensuing Five Year Plan to establish a unique connect to foster excellence. We have revamped our HRD Programme for capacity building and have been sending our scientists for participation at

national and international forum to learn, share showcase our achievements in forestry. Within last eight months, as many as 70 foreign visits have been approved by the Council.

The role of ICFRE in carrying out environment management and impact studies has been recognized by Hon'ble Supreme Court and macro level EIA studies of Bellary, Chitradurga and Tumkur districts have been given to ICFRE. Advance centre for mine rehabilitation and reclamation has newly been established at IWST.

ICFRE successfully organized first ever Indian Forestry Congress from November 22nd to 25th, 2011, as a key scientific event in forestry, to commemorate International Year of Forests 2011 and highlight ever-increasing role of Forests in the Changing world. International conference and exhibition on "Art and Joy of Rediscovering Wood" sponsored by FAO was organized by IWST, Bangalore in October 2011. Recently, ICFRE hosted the CBD's expert group meeting on Biodiversity for Poverty Eradication and Development attended by a good number of international experts. I am also happy to announce that ICFRE will host 24th Session of IPC and 46th executive meeting from October 8 to 12, 2012 at Dehradun for the first time in the country, and this will be best platform to showcase Indian success story of Poplar at International forum.

The status of council has seen a sea change in the Government of India level with the up-gradation of the post of Director General of ICFRE. Similarly, the position of Directors of the Institutes and the senior management level at ICFRE headquarter have been upgraded. The long-pending selection process of senior officers as DDG's and Directors has been completed in record time through

proper follow-up at Government of India level. Similarly 52 scientists have been promoted to next higher grade in FCS and for the first time even out of turn promotions have been granted to reward the outstanding work. Designations of ministerial cadre have been changed and long-pending promotions cleared, bringing their status at par with the Ministry. MACPS, pending since 2008, has been implemented benefiting as many as 150 officials from the ministerial cadre. Similarly the decade long problem relating to up-gradation of pay-scales of RA's has been taken up with Secretary Expenditure of Government of India and is likely to be resolved. I am sure all these landmark steps taken for staff welfare during past few months will have a positive and encouraging impact on the morale of the personnel.

A comprehensive Human Resource Development Policy is being developed for the council to facilitate an environment of opportunities, trust and growth for everyone to excel and able to contribute to the forestry sector. The policy has not only recommended measures, like Seven years tenure and special allowance, to attract brilliant IFS officers to work in Forestry Research, but also to provide higher responsibilities like NPDs, National Scientist and Emeritus Scientist to the scientists to excel in their relevant fields. Dr Ramprasad Committee report is in the active consideration of the council in this regard.

Our aim is to take ICFRE to the next level of governance and foster it as an institution of excellence at International level. I am sure with your assiduous support and tireless efforts, together we will be able to achieve this goal in the immediate future. I once again extend my heartiest greetings to you all on the occasion and wish you all the best in your endeavors'. **Jai Hind.**