Brainstorming session on

‘Agroforestry for Rehabilitation of Water-Congested Ecologies for the Eastern Region’

(Patna, 5th April 2016)

A brainstorming session on ‘Agroforestry for Rehabilitation of Water-Congested Ecologies for the Eastern Region’ was organized jointly by National Academy of Agricultural Sciences, New Delhi and ICAR- Research Complex for Eastern Region, Patna on 5th April 2016 at ICAR- Research Complex for Eastern Region, Patna. Dr. J.S. Samra, Ex-DDG, Natural Resource Management & Chief Executive Officer, National Rainfed Area Authority was the chairman of the session, Dr. P.L. Gautam, Vice Chancellor, Career Point University, H.P, was the Guest of Honour and Dr. Gurbachan Singh, Chairman, Agriculture Scientist Recruitment Board, New Delhi was the Chief Guest. Around 65 delegates from various eastern states, Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare, GOI, World Agroforestry Research Centre, SAUs, and CIMMYT participated in the event.

Dr B.P. Bhatt, Director, ICAR RCER in the inaugural session gave a brief account on scenario of water congested ecologies, wastelands and demand-supply gap of fodders and fuel wood in different eastern states. He stressed upon the need to integrate woody perennials and livestock for ensuring sustainability and doubling income of farmers of the region, inventorization of diverse water ecologies, studies on ET potential of suitable tree crops for biodrainage, establishment of seed and seedling bank of MPTs/shrubs suitable for shelter belt, boundary planting, wind break, diversification in aquatic crops and assessment of ecosystem services rendered by waterlogged ecologies etc.

Dr J.S. Samra in his opening remarks emphasized on effective utilization of available ground water, harnessing solar energy and strengthening of marketing system for increasing the income of the farmers. He also stressed upon use of space technology such as GPS mapping and other alternative ways of land consolidation for resolving issues related to disputed land and fragmented land holding. For minimizing the effects of eroding river banks, he suggested the use of vegetative shelterbelts instead of bunding for training of rivers.

Dr Gurbachan Singh affirmed that agroforestry is a high potential but unexploited area for ushering second green revolution in the country. For rehabilitation of water congested areas of eastern India, he stressed upon detailed inventorization water congested ecologies which include characterization of source of water congestion, duration and depth of water congestion etc. He emphasized on development of specific agroforestry solutions for different water congested ecologies with sufficient concern for profitability. For this he stressed upon Minimum Support Price for forestry products. Based on the research experiences in Haryana and Punjab on rehabilitation of waterlogged areas through agroforestry interventions, he suggested for development of policy guidelines on biodrainage and constitution of a Task force for its implementation involving interministries. He also urged the scientific community to break the barriers of discipline oriented research for addressing the research needs of farming community.

Dr P. L.Gautam recommended that for thorough characterization of waterlogged areas, the available dataset of NRSA on Dynamic database of water resources of eastern India or State Remote Sensing Agencies are to be used. He stressed on inter-institutional collaboration for maintaining germplasm of different fodder crops suitable for waterlogged areas. He recommended establishment of arboretum of all waterlogging tolerant trees and bamboos species and maintain a field gene bank of waterlogging tolerant fodder species at ICAR RCER, Patna. He also suggested for development of a policy paper based on the deliberations of the

brainstorming session and participation of representatives from Donor agencies in future deliberations

(Source: ICAR Research Complex for Eastern Region, Patna)