

ICLEI World Congress 2006

Local Solution for Global Challenges

0000000000000000

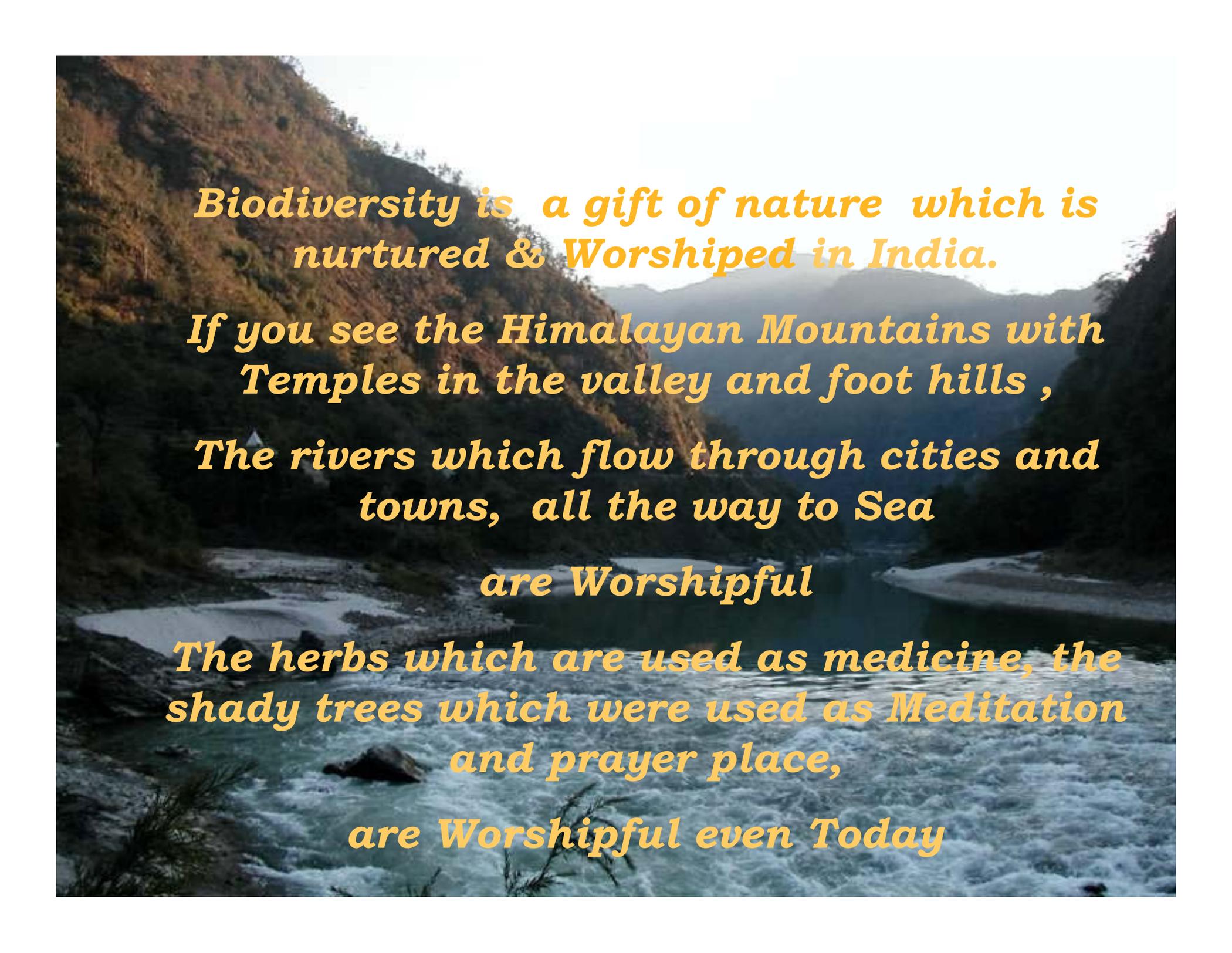
00000'0 000000000000 00 0000000000

MS.HANSA PATEL

Executive Committee Member

Chairman, ICLEI-South Asia

Advisor, All India Institute of Local Self Government

A scenic view of a river flowing through a valley with mountains in the background. The river is turbulent and white with foam, flowing through a narrow channel. The surrounding landscape is lush and green, with steep hillsides and a clear sky.

Biodiversity is a gift of nature which is nurtured & Worshiped in India.

If you see the Himalayan Mountains with Temples in the valley and foot hills ,

The rivers which flow through cities and towns, all the way to Sea

are Worshipful

The herbs which are used as medicine, the shady trees which were used as Meditation and prayer place,

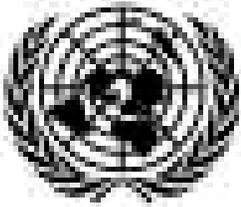
are Worshipful even Today

Biological Diversity

Biological diversity exists over the earth on 8 realms spread over 193 biographical provinces. It is a part of each Country's heritage and forms basis of life and plays an important role in protecting the resilience of ecological system.

Global Industrialization and Urbanization are the parameters of development. Outrunning the technology and the urban societies which spawned them, millions of tons of man-made contaminants are poured into the water we drink, and the air we breath :detergents, pesticides , industrial wastes,exhaust fumes, flay ash, and smoke from incinerators, sewage, silt and radioactivity.

The problems created by water range from out break of diseases to the destruction of coastal & marine vegetation and wild life. Even critical than water pollution is wholesale use of air as sewer for products of combustion. Many countries though have regulations, most industrial centers still tolerate the toxic levels of gases which take lives , contribute to health hazards, damage city property and blight farmlands The continuing migration of people from rural to urban areas is creating many problems and the city planners find it difficult to cope



Biodiversity is an essential part of the operation of ecological processes which are critical to everyday life. It has an important bearing on economic and social issues such as land use, land degradation, greenhouse gas emissions, agriculture and tourism and plays a large part in the unique identity of local places and communities.

The concept of biodiversity conservation sparked into the **international** scenario from 1970s' by different conventions including United Nations convention on Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS III 1982).

United Nations Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) is the first major step taken by humankind for promoting the conservation of bio resources, their sustainable use and equitable sharing of benefits. Its Article 6 urges the countries to develop national strategies, plans and programs for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. However the **Convention on Biological Diversity** (CBD 1992) is most comprehensively framed international Agreement, which encompasses conservation of Biodiversity in the most holistic manner.



Environmental Challenges in India:

Like most developing countries the Urban sectors in India are also facing challenges of unemployment, illiteracy, ethnic conflict and sustainable environment

India with over a Billion people and the urban population estimated to reach 366 million by 2010, has a successful experiment of open economy which has earned the admiration and respect of the world. Yet needs investment in Education , skills for employment, new technology for infrastructure, low cost solution for health care, & rural development to control the migration for resilient cities.

The overwhelming predominance of chemicals , petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals dyes and dye intermediates have continued to deplete the environment and has created burden on the National Environment management capacity. Heavy concentration of Industries without concern for the carrying capacity of region have resulted in industrial clusters threatening, the ecosystem of different regions.

Biodiversity conservation has priority over many environmental issues included in National Environment Action Programme (**NEAP**) in India . A Biodiversity Action plan and National biodiversity legislation are in process of finalization, which will conserve the Environment and related biodiversity.

India (a signatory to the UN CBD,) is one of the 12 biodiversity hot-spots of the world. Government of India has initiated the process to develop National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (**NBSAP**) which is expected to immerge from integration of State Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans.

The Country has rich treasure of biodiversity having number of endemic spices of higher vertebrates. The country has ratified the aforesaid conventions and intends to make them practical either by reinforcing its existing national legislation or by coming up with new strategies and legislation aiming at conservation of **Biodiversity**.

NATION has a challenge to protect its environment thus needs to amend Regulation-Acts and Bye-Laws at state level to control the emissions of gasses and contamination being added to the natural sources .

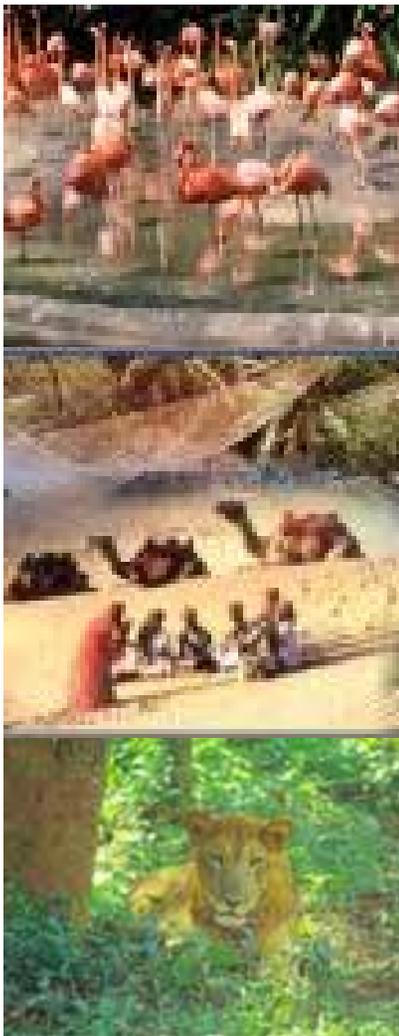




Gujarat state with an area of 1,96, 024 Sq Km is distinct geographic state having its boundaries marked by natural features like sea , mountains and Desert has a strategic situation as a meeting point of western and eastern natural flora, and has four out of 10 Biographic zones which represent some of unique eco system like Nal Sarovar, Rann of Kachchh..

The state has many spices like Great Indian Bustard, Lesser Florican, Desert Monitor and flying squirrel among animals are threatened and recorded in Red Book and Safed Musli and Guggal among plants. If due attention is not paid these spices will become rare or will extinct.

The agrarian state of Gujarat having 7 big cities has experienced rapid industrialization and urbanization with an economical growth at the cost of degradation of productive resources. The state, with over 7,000 species documented so far has special significance in terms of biodiversity and has large number of native species which are endemic and their disappearance would be irreversible loss not only to present generation but also to future generation.





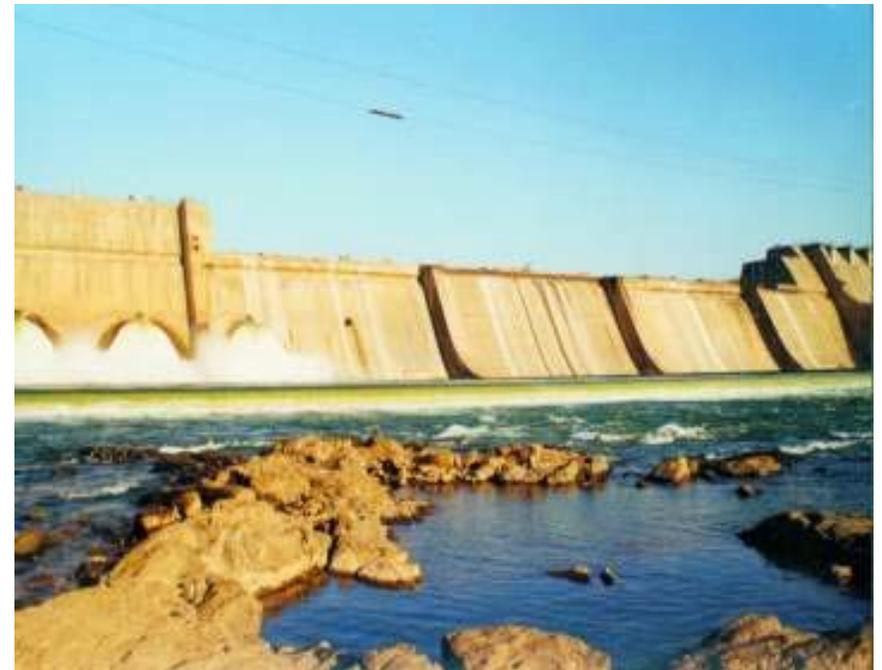
Similarly the rivers flowing from high mountains, though being main source of drinking water and growing agriculture are getting polluted. Over the years, the quality of the water has deteriorated due to industrial development on the rise the uncontrolled release of effluents by the same industries into the rivers.. A pioneering effort to control the pollution of water by Government has been made by establishing The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), statutory organization, in September, 1974 and an effort to clean the Indian rivers was made, accordingly Ganga Action Plan Phase I (GAP) was launched.

The state of Gujarat takes pride as the flag bearer of India's industrial strength . with 400 kilometer stretch of industries known as Golden Corridor, having 19 major rivers. The year 2005 onwards is the period of Urban Development year with special concentration on cleaning the rivers for the local utility and the agriculture, the river front projects are ongoing in all 7 cities.

Special attention is concentrated on river Narmada to protect and safeguard the biodiversity. The DAM on the river Narmada which is known as Sardar Sarovar project has been built to bring the green revolution and meet the clean water demand, covering the states of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. This International project is the Asia's largest Dam which will irrigate millions of hectors of land, providing employment benefits to farmers and ultimately add to nations economy.

It is the first major river valley project which is subjected to exacting environmental conditions, by adopting various programs of Forest Conservation, Fisheries Development , Eco-Tourism and the rehabilitation of tribals which had become a controversial issue . Thus there is growing awareness, among civil society and the government which has launched State Environmental Action Program (SEAP) in 1999 supported by the World Bank to form Gujarat Ecological Commission.

The Gujarat State has been identified as the first state for formulating such Action program, which aims at comprehensive policy framework, covering aspects of ecological security, and environmental protection, ensuring sustainability of natural habitat and resource productivity.



Local government has an essential role to play in managing and planning for biodiversity in their local areas. Councils can develop strategies and plans to save the clean drinking water, make changes to land use planning and encourage social and Urban forestry by people's participation, further can actively manage biodiversity through specific programs by ECO BUDGETING.

ROLE OF ICLEI -South Asia

The mission of ICLEI is to provide global environmental and sustainable development conditions through cumulative local actions.

Environmental Budgeting in Local Authorities was confirmed at the U N summit on sustainable development in Johannesburg 1992; as an appropriate mechanism for implementing Local Action 21 at Grassroot level to achieve Global Sustainability.

The present work of ICLEI is to transfer the same knowledge of ecoBUDEGETING in different cities of Asia through its Secretariats. At present the project funded by Europe Aid Asia Urbs Program (EAAUP) and supported by ICLEI's Europe & Asia Secretariat is implemented in 2 cities of South Asia. The participating cities are the city of Bologna (Italy),alongwith the city of Guntur - India and the city of Vaxjo (Sweden), alongwith the province Bohol -Philippines. We look forward to such best practices to be adopted by Local Authorities for Global Solutions