

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE LAUNCHING PROGRAM OF CSIR-AROMA MISSION AND IMPHAL/MANIPUR RIVER BASIN PROJECT ON 19<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2017 AT CSIR-NORTH EAST INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, LAMPHELPAT, IMPHAL.

Dr. D. Ramaiah ji, Director, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, North East Institute of Science and Technology, Jorhat,

Dr. P. Sengupta ji, Chief Scientist, Coordinator & Head, CSIR-NEIST, Jorhat,

Prof. N. Mohendro Singh, Former Member, Steering Committee NER Vision, 2020,

All the Scientists and participants,

Friends from Media,

Distinguished Invitees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a matter of great pleasure for me to be here this morning for the launching program of CSIR-Aroma Mission and the study of the Anthropogenic Impact and their Management Options in the different Ecosystems of the Indian Himalayan region with respect to Imphal River basin. I congratulate the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research as well as North East Institute of Science and Technology for organizing this programme which is of great significance and importance for this state. I convey my warm felicitations to all the participating delegates.

I am also very happy to know that delegates from CSIR-NEIST, Jorhat and GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment & Sustainable Development, Almora are participating in the programme along with beneficiary farmers, entrepreneurs of Manipur numbering about 100.

There have been efforts in the past for bringing into limelight the urgency for conservation of Himalayas and the Western Ghats. The endeavour surely deserves appreciation. Our rich environmental heritage is under tremendous pressure due to deforestation, growing population and development interventions and other difficult challenges. The effects of

global warming add a catastrophic threat towards a mass extinction of global biological diversity. The North East which is considered one of the top biodiversity hotspots in the world is also in danger. The conservation and sustainability aspect must be valued highly and taken seriously. We must be again and again reminded that the wealth of plains depends on the health of the mountains.

It is heartening to know that the CSIR-Aroma Mission Project was launched to boost cultivation of aromatic crops like Citronella, Lemon grass and Patchouli, keeping in view the plight of farmers involved in traditional agriculture in the rural areas due to climate change. Under the mission, CSIR-NEIST, Jorhat, Assam is carrying out cultivation of these crops in the whole North-East to develop especially the unproductive, marginal waste lands including those affected by water scarcity, drought, salinity or flood in North Eastern States. Main objective is to boost cultivation and value-addition of aromatic plants for supply to industries related to aroma business and the traditional system of Indian medicine. I am happy to know that a minimum of 800 hectares of additional area in North Eastern States including Manipur would be brought under cultivation of various aromatic crops, generating employment among rural youth and creating trained and skilled manpower leading to an estimated income enhancement of farmers. I encourage the efforts of CSIR to make the mission successful. In addition, the Aroma Mission aims to provide end-to-end technology and value addition solutions across the country at a sizeable scale and bring about transformative change in aroma sector through scientific interventions in the areas of agriculture, processing and product development for fuelling growth of herbal industry and rural employment.

The North East is such a rich bed for herbal plants and Manipur alone is home to more than 400 types of such plants. I have a scientific background with Ph.D in Zoology and I am a great herbal enthusiast. Realising the potential of herbal industry in the state, I have been in touch with the big business houses in herbal products such as 'Dabur, Patanjali, Himalaya for establishing their branches in Manipur. I have also been taking keen interest

in the initiatives taken up by IBSD, Manipur in the field of herbal industry and rural employment.

As you are all well aware, due to global warming and other man-made activities, frequent flash flood and abnormal and unusual rainfall occur across the globe that has led to damages of human life and properties. Our state has also not been spared. During this year, flash floods were experienced in which human life, crops and other valuable properties were lost. The main cause of the flash floods in Manipur valley is mainly due to damage and ill-health of the watershed in the riverhead and disturbances in the river basin system. Therefore, I am fully confident that the Imphal River Basin Study will certainly endeavour to redress this problem.

I am pleased to know that the research project study of Imphal river basin being taken up by the CSIR-NEIST, Branch Laboratory, Lamphelpat, Imphal under the funding of the GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan, Environment & Sustainable development, Almora, Ministry of Environment, Forest & climate Change is one amongst the five river basins sanctioned by the Government of India. I strongly believe that the project will be fruitful and will bring immense benefit to the people of the state.

The programme attended by delegates from CSIR-NEIST, Jorhat and GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment & Sustainable Development, Almora and beneficiary farmers/entrepreneurs of Manipur will be highly enlightening, informative and productive. I am sure it will help in bringing people, associations and organizations having passion for nature and its conservation, together in a mission mode to work for the cause of conservation of the Imphal river basin.

With these words, I wish you success in achieving your goals. I also wish a fruitful deliberation and a rewarding program. I thank the organizers for inviting me to this program.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.