

Ukhrul pushes for steady climate change action plans
Source: Hueiyen News Service / Pamreiso Shimray

Ukhrul, May 29 2012: Several NGOs, churches and social activists put their heads together to deliberate on many core issues of climate change with discussion on "deforestation" taking the centrestage during the day-long workshop organised at Tangkhul Theological Association (TTA) hall at Hamleikhong in Ukhrul on Tuesday. In the one-day district level workshop on climate change, which was organised by Tangkhul Katamnao Saklong (TKS) in collaboration with Directorate of Environment and Ecological Wing, Manipur, the current status and implementation of the "action plans" on climate change in Ukhrul were put to debate and discussion by participating NGO activists, church workers, village headmen and environmental activists. Dr. Brajakumar Singh, Research Officer in the Directorate of Environment and Ecological Wing, Manipur, delivered the key note address, while journalist Irengbam Arun made a brief exhortation during the workshop. The day-long deliberation, though it was basically a follow-up of the "action plans" that was adopted based on recommendations of the workshop held in Ukhrul in July 13 last year, witnessed the participants sharing deep concerns over wanton deforestation in Ukhrul district. Several questions were raised over depleting forest cover in Ukhrul-that has now a green cover of about 288330.98 (HA) only and measures taken to tackle the agricultural practice, particularly jhum cultivation, which is the main factor causing large scale deforestation apart from timber felling in the hill districts of Manipur. In the "action plans" incorporated basically for Ukhrul district, the 2011's July workshop recommended "special horticulture scheme" for abandoned jhum fields, organic farming, Orange production at Kamjong and Kasom Khullen areas among others. Today's key debate also focussed on other "action plans" including eco-system and livelihood sustainability, water resources, health, forest and biodiversity conservation, enhance energy efficiency and conservation and urban planning. Participants also raised issue of increasing "water scarcity" during the dry season in Ukhrul town, and put forward suggestions to tackle the crisis. Unlike previous years, the town has been hit hard this time by acute shortage of water. This phenomenon, however, has become ubiquitous in the entire district this year with several villages reporting that the water holes are getting dry. Tuesday's deliberation was significant with the participating NGOs, churches and other bodies pushing for early and steady implementation of the "action plans" in the district. The state officials also admitted "implementation delay" citing various technical difficulties. In today's meet, however, the debate did not throw much light on the relevance of "indigenous knowledge," a key element in handling climate change particularly in tribal-dominated region. The application of "indigenous knowledge" is an indispensable component in climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies. It also forms as important guidelines in areas where "tribal customary practices" still has a strong hold. Many recommendations were also put up in the meeting and to which the attending officials assured of forwarding the same to the government for necessary actions. There was also a unanimous understanding among the participants on the need to take awareness campaign on climate change at grassroots level to materialise the 'action plans' .

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