

**Embassy of India**  
**Tokyo**

**Address by Ambassador H.E. Mr Sibi George at the Seminar on**  
**"International Big Cat Alliance and India-Japan Cooperation in**  
**Biodiversity Preservation", Embassy of India Auditorium, Tokyo, 18**  
**June 2024**

**Mrs. Leena Nandan**, Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India

**Dr. Gobind Sagar Bhardwaj**, Member Secretary, National Tiger Conservation Authority, Government of India

**Shri Vinod Kumar Yadav**, Member, National Biodiversity Authority, Government of India

Distinguished guests,

Good evening. I am delighted to welcome you all to today's seminar on the theme of "International Big Cat Alliance and India-Japan Cooperation in Biodiversity Preservation." A warm welcome to Mrs. Leena Nandan, Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, Dr. Gobind Sagar Bhardwaj, Member Secretary, National Tiger Conservation Authority, and Shri Vinod Kumar Yadav, Member, National Biodiversity Authority, who will be addressing this event virtually.

2. Over the last few years, India has taken numerous steps for environment conservation through a holistic approach involving the participation of not just the Government but the whole of society. This includes the landmark **Mission LiFE** (Lifestyle for Environment) initiative launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in 2022 with

the objective of creating a global mass movement towards sustainable living and environmental conservation.

3. I am happy to share that earlier this month, on the World Environment Day, the Prime Minister also launched a tree plantation campaign called '**Ek Ped Maa ke Naam**' through which he has called on everyone around the world to plant a tree as a tribute to their mothers. In India, we have set a target of planting 800 million trees by September 2024 and 1.4 billion trees by March 2025 by following a whole of Government and whole of society approach.

4. There has also been a special emphasis on protecting biodiversity and natural resources. Initiatives have included cataloging plant and animal species, expanding forest cover, and creating protected areas like National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries. Programs such as Project Tiger, Project Elephant, and Project Dolphin focus on conserving specific species and their habitats, ensuring their protection for future generations.

5. In line with this approach, India launched the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) as a multi-country, multi-agency coalition to support conservation of big cats such as tigers, lions and leopards. By promoting knowledge sharing, capacity building, and resource support, Big Cat Alliance aims to enhance environmental resilience and address challenges arising from climate change and contribute towards stopping the decline in big cat population. We will hear in greater detail about the Alliance shortly.

6. India and Japan have been working together under a Memorandum of Cooperation in the field of environment. This also covers cooperation in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Cooperation is advanced through a high level mechanism co-chaired by the Environment Ministers of the two countries. We also have a Memorandum of Cooperation in the field of Forests and Forestry which facilitating cooperation in the area of biodiversity conservation.

7. In conclusion, India's initiatives in environmental conservation and biodiversity preservation are not just national efforts but form part of a broader global cooperation framework. Through initiatives like the Big Cat Alliance and our collaboration with key partner countries such as Japan in the field of environment and biodiversity, we are committed to ensuring a sustainable and resilient future for our planet. I welcome you once again to today's event and hope that you will find it useful.

Thank you.

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