

India and China are taking long strides in developing linkages and collaborations in the field of forestry and environment, outlined in the objectives under the umbrella of BRICS Cooperation Agreement. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> BRICS Cooperative Agreement meeting held in Ministry of Environment and Forests, GoI, in the early part of 2012, it was decided that the programme of ICFRE will be given highest priority.

A six-member high-level Chinese delegation, headed by Mr. Zhang Shougong, had earlier visited ICFRE, Dehradun, in December 2011, laying the foundation of the collaboration between the two institutions. The delegation had interacted with ICFRE officials to identify research areas for cooperation in the areas of forestry sciences, developing the draft of the MoU.

The Memorandum of Understanding has now been signed between the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education and the Chinese Academy of Forestry to foster cooperation between the two nations in identified fields of research. The MoU was signed by Dr. VK Bahuguna Director General, ICFRE and Mr. Zhang Shougong, CAF president, on 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2011 in Beijing. The MoU signed between the two institutions will facilitate cooperation between two countries on identified areas of research. Dr. VK Bahuguna and Mr. Shougong discussed emerging areas of mutual interest like climate change, forest ecosystems, forest hydrology germ-plasm conservation, sustainable forest management and tree improvement.

The MoU now also paves the way to develop an Umbrella Action Plan with main emphasis on bamboo cultivation and development of industrial bamboo products and improvement programme for important tree species like teak, sisso, sandalwood and eucalyptus among others. Appreciating the Chinese expertise in the area of bamboo cultivation and technologies for bamboo products, Dr. VK Bahuguna said that same could be shared with the council in an institutionalised manner for livelihood support, especially the people in rural and forest fringe areas.

According to the ICFRE DG, this long-term bilateral collaborative programme has tremendous scope for exchange of technologies in the area of bamboo improvement, product development and tree improvement in a bid to address livelihood issues and promote sustainable forest management.