



## **TERI Organizes Panel Discussion on India's Wildlife Scenario: Issues and Impacts**

### **Launches Book on "Protected Animals of India"**

**New Delhi: 25 June 2012:**

Rapid socio-economic changes in the India are having profound impacts across forestry and wildlife. Keeping this in view, **The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)** today organised a panel discussion on '**India's Wildlife Scenario: Issues and Impacts**'.

The panel discussion on "**India's Wildlife Scenario: Issues and Impacts**", highlighted the importance of India's rich wildlife with its exclusive, fascinating and diverse ecosystem. Today societal transformations are changing people's perceptions of forests. Globalization and increasing accessibility to global markets for many, but marginalization and increased asymmetry for others, have presented different opportunities and challenges.

On the occasion, TERI also launched a book on "**Protected Animals of India**", authored by **Mr Sanjay Sondhi, Founder Trustee, TITLI TRUST, Dehradun**. The book was launched by **Mrs. Maneka Gandhi**, Chairperson, People for Animals; Member of Parliament & **Dr. R K Pachauri**, Director General TERI. The Book *Protected Animals of India* covers the known, as well as a few less-familiar mammals, birds, insects, reptiles, amphibians, and other animals that are now "protected" in India. This book is published by **TERI Press** is on recycled paper and contains coloured photographs of each species, their local names, their International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) status, interesting facts under the "critter corner", and a map of legally-protected areas for animals in India.

Through this book, "**Protected Animals of India**", TERI raises the issue of the diverse wildlife of India being threatened by human-induced issues like clearing of forests to make way for habitation and industries, climate change, and poaching. While "Project Tiger" has been garnering a lot of support and attention, there are a number of species in our country that too deserve to be protected and saved. In fact, according to the foremost compilation of endangered species, the Red Data Book of the IUCN, currently 47 species in India are considered to be "critically endangered".

The panelists for the discussion were **Mrs Maneka Gandhi**, Chairperson, People for Animals; Member of Parliament, **Dr. RK Pachauri, Director General TERI**, **Mr Ravi Singh**, Secretary General and CEO, WWF India, **Ms Belinda Wright**, Executive Director, Wildlife Protection Society of India, **Mr Sanjay Sondhi**, the author of Protected Animals of India and Founder Trustee, TITLI TRUST, Dehradun.

In the keynote address **Mrs Maneka Gandhi**, "**Chairperson, People for Animals; Member of Parliament**", said, "We should act now before more animals fall in the protected category. As with everything in life, the time is to act NOW".

Speaking on the occasion, **Dr. RK Pachauri, Director General TERI**, said, " I am deeply anguished that way our wildlife is treated, I am delighted that TERI Press has published this book and I sincerely hope it reaches out to the right people at right places"

The discussion further focused on that, while it is true that animals are constantly adapting themselves to the changes in their ecosystems and habitat, there is very little they can do when the native forests of a country, like India, are on the wane. Throughout India, mining, industrialization, road construction, building of large dams, and agricultural activities have resulted in cutting down of forests and grasslands and depletion of natural habitats. As wild animals lose their home, their



clashes with humans increase, as is apparent from the news of tigers and leopards killing people making headlines every now and then.

**Mr Ravi Singh**, Secretary General and CEO, WWF India, highlights, “The civil society needs to be influenced in a positive manner, its important that we go back into our rich heritage which can serve as a guiding light and ensure we individually play a special role on this planet and find a way forward for peaceful coexistence.”

**Ms Belinda Wright**, Executive Director, Wildlife Protection Society of India, “The civil society needs to be more proactive, its time for more action and people must realise the value of each species”

**Mr Sanjay Sondhi**, the author of Protected Animals of India and Founder Trustee, TITLI TRUST, Dehradun, said, “ Life in forest is not only about tigers and elephants, but other creatures as well, this book focuses on the range of species along with many photographs and success stories”

There are other human-induced issues as well like climate change and poaching which are threatening the diverse wildlife India was once synonymous with. At the global level, one animal species is becoming extinct every 20 minutes. Scientists estimate that as many as one in 10 animal species found today will be extinct by 2050. In India, too, with every passing moment, species that once used to roam around freely in our forests are facing the threat of endangerment and extinction. Irrespective of the existence of legislations like the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (WPA) that clearly states in its various schedules that hunting animals is illegal, our insatiable greed to make quick money has ensured that poaching of wild animals continues unabated in India.

As one of the first steps towards protecting our rapidly dwindling wildlife, several animals of our country have been brought under the ambit of legally “protected” species. However, protecting our wildlife calls for actions on a number of fronts. To begin with, while understanding the dangers posed to these animals is necessary, it is equally important to learn about their habits and habitats.

### **About the author**

Sanjay Sondhi, an engineering graduate from IIT (Kanpur), is a naturalist with an avid interest in writing and photography. Before he quit his job in 2008 to devote himself to nature conservation and environmental protection, he was the Managing Director of Honeywell Turbo India Pvt. Ltd in Pune. He is currently involved in numerous conservation projects in western and eastern Himalayas and is one of the founder trustees of TITLI Trust, a non-profit NGO established with the purpose of conserving nature and protecting the environment.

### **About The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)**

From microbiology to global climate change, from smoke-filled rural kitchens to plush corporate boardrooms, from schoolchildren to heads of state—no sphere of human endeavour is unfamiliar to TERI. Headed by world-renowned economist and Nobel Prize winning climate scientist, Dr R K Pachauri, TERI is best described as an independent, not-for-profit research institute focused on energy, environment, and sustainable development and devoted to efficient and sustainable use of natural resources.

**For further information, please contact:**



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