

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Local community's cooperation sought to conserve Assam's Doloni Beel**

Guwahati, March 20: Dialogue has been initiated soliciting effective cooperation from the local community in conservation of Doloni Beel, a unique wetland in western Assam that has remarkable significance for the socio-economy, agriculture and biodiversity of the region.

A community consultation was organised in the Sankarghola village under the Boitamari Block of Bongaigaon District of Assam by Aaranyak, a premier research-based biodiversity conservation organisation of India, on March 16 to discuss about the role of the local community in conservation of Doloni Beel,

The consultation that took place in the community hall of the village situated on the bank of Doloni Beel, was thronged by more than 150 people who came from about 15 fringe villages located around the wetland.

This programme was a part of the scientific study initiated by Aaranyak to help conserve the wetland and improve livelihoods of the people through an integrated management plan. The GIZ-India, a German Development Agency and the Assam Forest Department are supporting Aaranyak in this project.

Dr. Partha Jyoti Das, a senior scientist of Aaranyak ([www.aaranyak.org](http://www.aaranyak.org)), conducted a consultation session with the local villagers where they shared information and views about various aspects of the wetland and its relationship with the people such as the changes observed in the wetland over the last three decades, the utility of the wetland to the people, management and governance of the wetland, the threats posed to the beel, etc.

The villagers strongly agreed that there should be a serious effort by all stakeholders such as the government, NGOs and the people, to protect the wetland from excessive resource utilization, pollution and other harmful practices as well as preserve its ecosystems both for the people and biodiversity. They also opined that the beel should be managed in a way that local people get equitable benefits from its resources.

The meeting, presided by a local educationist Rajen Chandra Das, started with a welcome note by Dr. Ashoke Kumar Das, the coordinator of the Western Assam Zone of Aaranyak.

A group of officials from the GIZ-India comprising Ms Patricia Dorn (Project Manager), Sudip Kanta Basistha (Technical Advisor), Raj Sharma and Rajlakshmi Ozah, attended the meeting.

Addressing the audience, Patricia Dorn said that they were happy to see the participation of diverse groups of people from the area who gathered to talk about and express willingness to take action to preserve the wetland.

She appealed to the villagers to cooperate with the scientific study and conservation efforts initiated by Aaranyak in collaboration with the GIZ and the Assam Forest Department. Boloram Rabha, a local teacher also spoke on this occasion.

A performance of dance forms of the Rabha community by a cohort of local children added colour to the function and pleased the audience. The programme ended with the vote of thanks by Ankur Barman, Project Assistant of Aaranyak.

Press statement issued by Dr Alolika Sinha, Publicity Secretary, Aaranyak.

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