



Gitika Goswami presented on Sustainable Mountain Tourism

GB Pant National Institute along with National Mission on Himalayan Studies jointly organised a Brainstorming Session on **Sustainable Mountain Tourism** with support from Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) on the occasion of **International Mountain Day-2021** on 11th December, 2021. The primary objective of this session was to provide a platform to experts/scientists/researchers/stakeholders for sharing the project learnings and experiences in the sustainable mountain tourism aspect.

The United Nations General Assembly designated 11 December “International Mountain Day”. This year’s theme for International Mountain Day 2021, ‘Sustainable Mountain Tourism’ was set in adherence with several SDG Goals 8, 12, 14 in particular on inclusive and sustainable economic growth, sustainable consumption and production (SCP) and the sustainable use of oceans and marine resources, respectively.

Ms. Gitika Goswami, Associate Vice-President, Development Alternatives (DA) shared the project learnings and experiences on Sustainable Mountain Tourism. She highlighted how tourism can play a key role in valuing and protecting the natural and spiritual heritage of mountains, and the cultural diversity and traditional practices of mountain peoples.

Mountain tourism in India attracts around 15 to 20 percent of global tourism. The restrictions due to the pandemic have further compounded the vulnerabilities of mountain communities. The Indian Himalayan Region every year records about 100 million tourists and the number is expected to increase to 240 million by 2025, putting a huge pressure on resources. She raised a fundamental issue which is how tourist inflow can have negative impacts like inadequate solid waste management, air pollution, degradation of water sources, loss of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystem services. She further spoke about Sustainable Tourism Aspects covered through our intervention in the project areas of Mandi and Uttarakashi in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, addressing Climate Resilience, Low impact

tourism, Mountain community empowerment, Public-private partnership through the lens of Gender, Climate Change and Communication.

To conclude, she suggested way forward through facilitating access to local market, capacity building, addressing solid waste management through circular economy, creating a platform for advocacy and knowledge sharing, ecosystem synergy based approach including governance, nature, culture etc.

The programme was inaugurated by Ms. BV Uma Devi, Additional Secretary, MoEFCC and was attended by eminent experts, state government, practitioners, and other stakeholders from different Indian Himalayan Region states like Ms. Archana Chatterjee (National Coordinator, IUCN), Dr. P.M. Dhakate (IFS, Chief Conservator of Forest), Dr. Sonali Bisht (Advisor, INHERE) to name a few.