



## **World Environment Day 2009 - Your Planet Needs You! Unite to Combat Climate Change**

The theme for the World Environment Day 2009 is "Your Planet Needs You! Unite to Combat Climate Change". The World Environment Day slogan for 2008 was Kick the Habit! Towards a Low Carbon Economy and in 2007 the theme was "Melting Ice – a Hot Topic?"

Since the past couple of years, the world has become more aware to the problem of climate change than ever before. This is natural considering the fact that there have been very noticeable changes in the weather patterns in the past couple of years. Summers in the tropical regions are hotter and longer, the monsoon pattern has become erratic, the winters are less cold, etc, to name of few odd climatic features!

These climatic features that are many times unheard of, all point to the fact that the human beings; due to their unsustainable lifestyles, are exerting tremendous pressure on the various spheres of the environment. The imbalance in the atmosphere that is being created due to the large scale industrial, vehicular and rural domestic emissions of carbon dioxide and other polluting gases is slowly but surely altering the weather patterns. If this situation continues unchecked, it could have devastating effects on the entire mankind!

Protection of the environment can no longer be seen as the responsibility of the developed nations alone! All the nations of the world have to unite for a common cause – that of ensuring sustainable development so that the coming generations can also enjoy a comfortable life in a healthy climate! The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) is the voice for the environment in the United Nations system. It strives hard to bring together the leaders of the world to work together for the common good of the environment.

While the UNEP is making its efforts to protect the environment, it will be unwise to think that they alone will be able to solve the various environmental problems like climate change, desertification, melting of the glaciers, spiraling air, water and land pollution; to name just a few. This calls for a united effort and active involvement of each and every member of the society, including the school going children! Small acts like avoiding wastage of water while performing the daily chores, using cycles to go to schools instead of mopeds, planting and tending to at least one tree in the house, avoiding wastage of papers at home and in school, etc, when done by each and every school going child can make a world of difference. The school going kids who would grow up to be citizens of tomorrow, by following the simple rules mentioned earlier, can contribute in a big way to improve the environment or least prevent it from further deterioration.

The planet Earth, with its abundance of various natural assets like minerals, forest products, water and soil has given mankind the resources to progress and make his life more comfortable and worth living! But in the mad race of development, man has forgotten that the Earth has a finite capacity to take the burden of man's development! When this "carrying capacity" is exceeded, the imbalance created shall have a direct effect on man himself! It is therefore now our turn to help the planet Earth, in its time of distress, especially since we (*read mankind*) are responsible for the sad state of affairs of our planet.

Let us therefore on the occasion of the 37<sup>th</sup> World Environment Day commit ourselves to the cause of environmental protection, in whatever small but significant way possible! We shall have to unite to save our planet from the perils of climate change before it is too late. Let us then pledge today, that if we cannot contribute to improve the environment, we shall at least not degrade it!

**Contributed by NetPEM Public Trust, Nagpur**

