

**About Nagaland:**

Situated in the foothills of the eastern Himalayas, Nagaland is a mountainous state with an area of 16,579 square kilometers. With a population of 1,980,602 as per the 2011 census, the state is divided into 16 districts or administrative units, namely Chumoukidema, Dimapur, Kiphire, Kohima, Longleng, Mokokchung, Mon, Niuland, Noklak, Peren, Phek, Shamator, Tseminyu, Tuensang, Wokha and Zunebphoto. It borders the state of Assam to the west, Arunachal Pradesh and part of Assam to the north, Burma to the east and Manipur to the south. There are sixteen major tribes inhabiting the state of Nagaland – the Angami, Ao, Lotha, Sumi, Chakesang, Chang, Kachari, Konyak, Khiamniungan, Kuki, Sangtam, Rengma, Phom, Yimchungru and Zeliang. The sixteen tribes are further divided into many subsections. However, there are around sixty Naga tribes inhabiting in Manipur, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Myanmar. Kohima is the capital of Nagaland, while Dimapur is the commercial with road, rail and air connectivity.

According to the data provided by the Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of Nagaland, the recorded forest area of the state is 8629.30 sq.km which is 52% of its geographical area. The Reserved Forests constitute 3.06%, Protected Forests 5.51% and Unclassed Forest constitute 93.56%. Nagaland has one National Park and three Wildlife Sanctuaries covering 222.0 Sq. Km which constitutes 1.34% of the State's geographical area. Based on interpretation of satellite data pertaining to Oct-2017 Feb-2018 the forest cover of the state is 12,486.40 Sq.km which is 75.31% of the State's geographical area. In terms of forest canopy density classes, the State has 1,273.19 Sq.km area under very dense forest, 4,533.72 Sq.km are under moderately dense forest and 6,679.49 Sq.km under open forest.

**About NCCAF:**

As mentioned, the state of Nagaland lies within the Indo-Myanmar Biodiversity hotspot, and illustrates unique a rich biodiversity of endemic flora and fauna, of which many are considered rare and endangered. In acknowledgement of the importance of the natural resources, the communities of Nagaland work together to protect and conserve their biodiversity, which resulted in the formation of the many Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) in the state. During a consultation meeting, a group of CCAs identified the need for a common platform for the mutual exchange of knowledge and ideas, support in terms of skill building and other aspects. Most importantly, it was there was consensus on the need to have an outlet for a common voice for all

the CCAs in the state, for recognition and policy influence and also for the representation of community initiatives at various national and international platforms.

At subsequent consultation meetings and deliberations during November 2014, the Nagaland Community Conserved Areas Forum (NCCAF) was formally established with a total 22 affiliated CCA members. A core committee was formed to draft the constitution and with the consent of all the members the constitution of the Nagaland CCA forum was adopted with a vision for a green Nagaland with rich biodiversity and with the objectives to establish cordial relationship between the functional CCAs in the state, participate in the global march on biodiversity conservation, encourage afforestation (local species) as well as conservation of forests, wildlife, water and all other natural resources, voice for common causes of conservation of biodiversity and environment at various levels, promote eco-tourism and encourage scientific research on biodiversity and sensitize people towards the sustainable use of natural resources

#### **NCCAF Meet 2024, 19-20 June 2024**

On 19 June, 2024, the Nagaland Community Conserved Area Forum (NCCAF) meet commenced at Clark Theological College, Mokokchung, Nagaland with the theme “Camaraderie towards Safeguarding our Biodiversity. The event was sponsored by Kenono Foundation, LEMSACHENLOK, Kalpavriksh, North East Network and the Nature Conservancy. The meet brought together diverse stakeholders including CCAs from different parts of Nagaland, government officials and NGOs.

During the inaugural programme, Neema Pathak Brome, Secretary Kalpavriksh and South Asia Coordinator, ICCA Consortium said that the talk on conservation in Nagaland has a unique narrative since the talk was always about hunting, however we are now talking about conservation in Nagaland which has ignited the imagination of the people on conservation. She stated that Nagaland may serve as an inspiration to world leaders in order to achieve global conservation objectives. She emphasised that 75% of Nagaland is under forest reserve, which is something to be proud of, and that more than 80% is under community control. However, despite the data and progress, there is no statewide policy, legal, technical, or financial support for the CCA, she stated. Brome stated that Kalpavriksh will continue to help organisations such as CCA.

In a brief talk on “Strengthening Community Conserved Areas- vision and scope,” Y. Nuklu Phom stated that Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) cannot work in isolation and that all CCAs need to come together since there are many challenges in the state. While stating some of the challenges, Nuklu mentioned about the impact of plantation of alien crops or exotic plants in our land, logging, use of salt, drying of rivers and ponds, extinction of seeds and loss of production, among many. He stated that there is an environmental emergency and that we need to rush by bringing together policy makers, intellectuals, experts, scientists, civil societies and communities. He further stated that we need to take up mission-ecology focussing on environmental protection in a mission mode.

Rongsenlemla Imchen, IFS, CF, NTC, Department of Forest & Climate change, Government of Nagaland graced the meet as the Chief Guest. “The issue and challenges of CCA has so far been focused on "Conservation" but, it cannot work isolated,” she said. “A workshop of this kind, where case study, success stories, issues and challenges can be discussed, consulted and replicated in the respective CCAs, is a much-needed meet,” she asserted while lauding the initiative of the NCCAF. She informed that the Department's mandate is trying to expand the conservation area, as a landscape approach. She also addressed on striking a balance between conservation and livelihood security which is addressing alternative source for livelihood dependency. She concluded by saying that the role of NCCAF is very crucial since it can act as the collaborating agent between various CCAs and also other sectors of the government.

In the second session of the meet, four topics were discussed and deliberated by various facilitators with the participants which included Research, Community-led biodiversity surveys and monitoring facilitated by Neema Pathak Brome, Synergy between conservation management plans & enterprises/financial, facilitated by FES & Ruchinilo Kemp, Social equity in conservation facilitated by Akole Tsuhah and Carbon mechanism facilitated by Rudrath Avinashi

Day one of the meet featured walk-in exhibition from various CCAs which was inaugurated by the special guest, an evening session which witnessed a community event with nature sound competitions between various CCAs and presentations.

The Nagaland Community Conserved Area Meet 2024 concluded on 20<sup>th</sup> June by adopting a six point resolution at the final session of the meet. Special guest, Alemtemshi Jamir, Retd. Chief

Secretary of the state and Neema Pathak Brome, Secretary Kalpavriksh & South Asia co-ordinator, ICCA Constituents spoke on “Understanding Community Reserves in the context of CCAs in Nagaland.” Neema spoke about some of the concerns about community reserves stating that there is a lack of clarity between Community reserves and Community conserve areas. She said that villages should not be forced to sign MoUs for Community Reserves (CRs) for the sole purpose of availing support. She said that a clear and comprehensive policy on CRs and CCAs needs adopted and added that the government needs to play a crucial and critical role as a facilitator and advisor.

Alemtemshi Jamir, in his talk said that there is a looming danger of climate change and that CCAs bank our hopes against the fight against global warming. He said that there is a window of hope to increase CCAs since the migration trends in the villages are continuing and agricultural activities especially jhum cultivation is decreasing. Alemtemshi also stressed on the need of having a proper conceptual clarity and policies concerning CCAs. G. Thong and Y. Nuklu Phom, Advisors NCCAF spoke on “Collective envisioning for support of CCAs in the state.”

The resolution drafting committee presented a six-point resolution which was approved by the house. The house resolved that CRs should not be mechanism for support to CCAs in the state and that the government should have a separate policy for support of CCAs without any further declaration of CRs in the state. It was also resolved that while government and other agencies introduce new/alien species through projects, they should firstly do a comprehensive environmental, social and economic research and assessment on the impact of the species to the local environment. NCCAF also resolved to identify key species in the state and create a strategy for their conservation at the state level. Further, the forum reaffirmed to work at a landscape level with a collective effort to create state-level corridors to safeguard the rich biodiversity and provide a safe movement for flora and fauna. Inclusion of women and vulnerable section of the society into the decision-making process of biodiversity conservation at all levels was also included in the resolution.

Tokugha Sumi, Vice-chairman, NCCAF concluded the meet by pronouncing the vote of thanks.