International Year of Chemistry Celebrated at DMAPR, Anand

The Year 2011 is being celebrated as the International Year of Chemistry (IYC) as jointly declared by UNESCO and IUPAC with the theme "Chemistry –Our life, Our future". To commemorate IYC 2011, a special function was organised at the Directorate of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Research, Boriavi, Anand (Gujarat, India). Dr. C Devakumar, Assistant Director General (Education Planning and Development), Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi, was the Chief Guest of the function. The function started with a brief note on the importance of chemistry in our life and introduction of the Chief Guest by Dr. Satyabrata Maiti, Director, DMAPR, Anand. Dr. Maiti, categorically mentioned that every aspect of our life has some chemistry involved in it and life is not possible without the chemistry. Thereafter, Dr. C. Devakumar, delivered a lecture on "**CHEMISTRY IN THE SERVICE OF HUMAN WELFARE".** He described chemistry as the central science, an enabling science and as a way of thinking, it challenges us to perceive, to examine, to test and then to understand that everything around. Describing the role of chemistry in human welfare, he highlighted that this branch of science plays a key role in combating diseases, solving energy problems, ameliorating environmental problems, providing the discoveries that lead to new industries, and developing new materials for national defense and new technologies for security. Regarding interaction of chemistry with other disciplines of science such as physics, biology, material science, geosciences and engineering, he highlighted that the interaction is going to help us in exploring and understanding little known areas of life sciences such as neurochemistry, computational chemistry, chemical biology and chemical genomics. The emerging role of GREEN CHEMISTRY for combating the menaces of some chemicals in order to have clean and pollution free atmosphere as well as some grand challenges for chemists and chemical engineers including development of new materials and measurement devices that will protect citizens against terrorism, accident, crime and disease was also highlighted in his lecture. He also described in detail the role of different branches such as combinatorial, analytical and electrochemistries for discovery of new drugs, polymer materials and fuel cell. Emerging concepts like biorefineries, supramolecular chemistry and nanoscience were also covered in his lecture. He also mentioned the role of chemical sciences in agriculture and need for efficient use of resources, conservation of scarce natural resources and conversion of biomass. He ended his lecture citing an example of astrochemical techniques for conversion of debris of a dying star into sugars.

In the end, Dr. Satyabrata Maiti, profusely thanked Dr. Devakumar for delivering the highly informative lecture.