

Export Awareness Workshops

NE Region Needs to Step up Exports Drive



Mr. Ramesh Kr Agarwal, Chairman FIEO (ER). On the dais from right are, Mrs. Debdatta Nandwani, Dy. Director General, FIEO (ER); Mr. Anil Kr Bamba, Director, Ministry of Commerce; Mr. Ravi Capoor, Commissioner & Secretary (Industries & Mines & Minerals), Government of Assam; and Mr. R S Joshi, Chairman, FINER.

In the background of the recently signed CECA with the ASEAN countries and South Korea and in view of the Look East Policy of the Government of India, the Federation of Indian Export Organizations in association with the Federation of Industries & Commerce from the North Eastern Region (FINER) organized Export Awareness Workshops (EAWs) in Guwahati, Assam and Shillong, Meghalaya.

The workshop held in Guwahati on 23 April 2010 and on 24th April, 2010 in Shillong, is the first of a series being sponsored by the Ministry of Commerce. Initiating the workshop, Ms Debdatta Nandwani, DDG, FIEO(ER) provided an overview of the Federation and its activities and the background of the Export Awareness Workshops being organized in the North East.

Delivering the welcome address, Mr Rameshri Kumar Agarwal, Chairman, FIEO(ER) stated that the exporters in the North East have the distinctive advantage of being the first to develop exim trade with the ASEAN countries, given their proximity to

Bangladesh and China. Also, they are the gateway to the ASEAN countries.

Mr Agarwal also urged the exporters of the North Eastern States to develop industry in the region in order to add value to their natural resources and export various countries around the globe. Also, the North Eastern sector will have to deal with the fact that neighbouring countries will be looking at these virgin markets to access and gain control. Hence, it is in the interest of the North Eastern Region that the industry is developed and value added products exported in order to earn valuable foreign exchange for India.

The workshop was inaugurated by Mr Ravi Capoor, Secretary and Commissioner, Department of Commerce and Industries and Mines and Minerals in the Government of Assam. Mr Capoor said the potential of the North Eastern region lies in its natural resources and its proximity to neighbouring countries like Bangladesh and Myanmar which are connected by road to the NE states.

The future of the NE lies in developing trade with its neighbouring countries. The Ministry of Commerce should take a holistic view on how to develop and promote trade to South Asia and South East Asia. Trade from the North East should be boosted by sending missions to ASEAN countries and Bangladesh and strengthening the foreign offices in these countries. It is important that the North Eastern states regain their past glory as the trade hub for the countries in the ASEAN region as well as China and Bangladesh. To revitalize the region, Assam is willing to work closely with FIEO and the Ministry of Commerce in the Government of India and provide all necessary support.

Mr Anil Bamba, Director, Ministry of Commerce, Government of India, stated that his ministry is spending 10% of its budget every year in the North East. He said the ministry wants the state and the exporters apply for assistance under its schemes.

Presentations were also made by EXIM Bank and ECGC on the services



At Shillong. LEFT: Mr. Anil Kumar Bamba, Director, Ministry of Commerce addressing the programme. Sitting on the dais from right, are Mr. Ramesh Kumar Agarwal, Chairman, FIEO (ER); Mr. B.M Lanong, Hon'ble Dy Chief Minister; and Mr. Anil Saraf, Director, FINER (GUW). RIGHT: A view of the participants.

offered by them for the benefit of exporters. Mr T.V. Rao, Director, EXIMUS centre, EXIM Bank said the region is endowed with natural resources like bamboo and wood and these form the main employment generation modes. It also has several agri products, including exotic varieties such as kiwi fruit, which can be canned and exported to Europe. The region has 98% of its border with neighbouring countries which is a great advantage for the exporters. EXIM Bank is also mandated to provide support for the agri export sector, which exporters should take advantage of, he said.

Mr V. Ramachandran, General Manager, ECGC said the ECGC also shares the view taken by EXIM Bank and would like to provide export insurance to all exporters in their ventures.

Mr Rajan Sudeshri Ratna, Professor, Centre for WTO Studies provided an insight into the India-ASEAN Agreement and the CECA with South Korea signed recently by India.

Mr Sanjeev Nandwani, JDGFT, Kolkatta said in his address that exporters should think global and act local in their bid to increase exim trade from their region. He elaborated on the FTP 2009-14 of India and its various nuances.

Mr R.S. Joshi, Chairman, FINER

while expressing satisfaction at the response to the workshop in his concluding remarks, promised all support for achieving the objectives of the Government of India. He also regretted that not all exporters could take advantage of the workshop and promised that the next meeting will have a greater participation.

Thanking the audience, Mr P.T. Srinath, Dy. Director FIEO(ER) expressed the hope that the workshop would generate more interest among Assam's exporting community and that there will be more active participation by entrepreneurs in the exim trade.

At Shillong

The EAW in Shillong was held at Hotel Polo Towers on 24 April 2010. Titled 'Scope and Opportunities for Exports from the North Eastern States of India', it was inaugurated by Mr B.M. Lanong, Dy Chief Minister of Meghalaya.

Welcoming the audience, Mr Ramesh Kumar Agarwal, Chariman FIEO(ER), welcomed the interest taken by Mr D.K. Areng, Director, Industries, Government of Meghalaya, and his desire to ensure that Meghalaya business people attend this workshop and benefit from it.

Delivering the inaugural address, Mr Lanong welcomed the participants to Meghalaya and said the state was on the threshold of diverting and put-

ting in resources to make strides in import and export.

Meghalaya has started trading in a very small way with other neighbouring countries but the result has not benefitted the state, a matter that needs to be looked into. However, the State Government is very keen in its efforts to see that trade with neighboring countries flourish and improve. Meghalaya has a lot of potential as a state by way of minerals and other items. The workshop will help in exploring the possibilities and approaches of the exim trade from the NE state.

Mr Bamba said the ministry has given a special emphasis to the development of Exim trade from the North East. Dawki, a land customs station based in Meghalaya, is being developed as an integrated check post from out of the grants of the Ministry of Commerce. Mr Bamba also elaborated on the ASIDE and EDF schemes, and emphasized that the Centre will extend all help for development of exim trade from the North East. He said Meghalaya was provided with Rs 9 crore under the ASIDE scheme. He invited exporters from Meghalaya to participate under the EDF scheme being implemented through FIEO.

Mr Srinath thanked the sponsors, organizers and the audience for their active interest in the workshop. ■