WORLD BANK PRESIDENT ROBERT B.

ZOELLICK VISITS ODISHA

World Bank promises to step up financial support to Odisha

Bhubaneswar:

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World Bank President Robert Zoellick on Wednesday visited coastal Rajnagar block in Odisha’s Kendrapada district today to see for himself implementation of mangrove conservation efforts and activities under the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project (ICZMP).

He also saw the impact of rapid sea erosion in the area and the steps being taken to deal with the menace. Zoellick, accompanied by several other top World Bank officials, including Roberto Zagha, Country Director, India, Karin Finkelstom, Vice-President, IFC, Thomas Davenport, Director, South Asia Region, IFC, Tapas Paul, Team Task Leader, ICZM Projects, Venu Rajamony, Joint Secretary, DEA, Govt of India, interacted with representatives of eco-development committees, beneficiaries, impacted families and self help groups at Okilapala Cyclone Relief Centre.

The World Bank group chief visited coastal communities to see how they were participating in planning for and conserving their natural resources in a way that did not hurt their livelihoods.

Zoellick also visited the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary and took a boat ride from the Gupti jetty.

On his two-day visit to Odisha, Zoellick met Shri Naveen Pattnaik, Chief Minister of Odisha and during his discussions focused on how the World Bank group, which had a 600 million dollar programme in the state, can better support the state government in addressing developmental challenges. He said the state had taken significant steps to combat poverty and to ensure social justice but some challenges remain in areas of agricultural productivity and providing access to infrastructure and public services.

Later in a press conference at Bhubaneswar, Zoellick said “the experiences of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project (ICZMP) in Odisha will enable the World Bank in getting ideas to help manage the coastal economy in other parts of India or even distant economies in the southeast Asian nations where coastal people are still depending largely on the ecological offerings of the sea for livelihood.”

The World Bank chief, who visited the ICZMP project in coastal Kendrapara district today, said: “We want to know that whether the ICZMP model is suitably working for Odisha or not. Today many locals of Bhitarkanika complained that they are experiencing livelihood loss as the conservation issues are getting more priority. However, many people are also serious about the conservation initiatives. We are currently gathering experience from various corners of the world and especially from countries such as Singapore where the coastal wealth or blue economy is a growing sector.”
Zoellick also said that, apart from achieving its goals, the project would help the WB members learn various things and apply in other areas in India like the west coasts and, also, in foreign countries.

Zoellick, who is on a 5-day India tour, visited Odisha to gain first hand view of Odisha’s economic and social challenges and also to find out how best the Bank could support it.

The World Bank President interacted with the local community members of fishers, SHG members, eco-development committee members of ICZM Project and Tripti Projects funded by World Bank at Gupti in Kendrapara, Odisha.

Zoellick also unveiled an ICZMP campaign poster on Olive Ridley turtle conservation and promotion of livelihood at Gupti.

*Glimpses of World bank Presidents visit:*