

## **“Save the forest and forest will save you”**

It is not possible to sum up the importance of forests in just a few words. Forests impact on our daily lives in so many ways, even in the midst of a busy, noisy, concrete city centre. Despite our dependence on forests, we are still allowing them to disappear.

Some importance of forests:

### **Watershed**

Forests serve as a watershed. This is because almost all water ultimately comes from rivers and lakes and from forest-derived water tables. Some rivers running through forests are also kept cool and from drying out.

### **Habitat and Ecosystems**

Forests serve as a home (habitat) to millions of animals. Think of the many types of reptiles (snakes and lizards) wild animals, butterflies and insects, birds and tree-top animals as well as all those that live in the forest streams and rivers.

Animals form part of the food chain in the forests. All these different animals and plants are called biodiversity, and the interaction with one another and with their physical environment is what we call ecosystem. Healthy ecosystems can better withstand and recover from a variety of disasters such as floods and wildfires.

### **Economic benefits**

Forests are of immense economic importance to us. For example, plantation forests provide humans with timber and wood, which is exported and used in all parts of the world. They also provide tourism income to inhabitants (people living in or close to forests) when people visit to see the best of nature.

### **Climate Control**

Climate control and atmosphere purification is key for human existence. Trees and soils help regulate atmospheric temperatures through a process called evapotranspiration. This helps to stabilize the climate. Additionally, they enrich the atmosphere by absorbing bad gases (example CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases) and producing oxygen. Trees also helps to remove air pollutants.