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SUSTAINABLE USE OF WATER NEED OF THE HOUR- SURESH PRABHU



Suresh Prabhu speaking at the inaugural session of seminar on water crisis

Increasing population and climate change is a major challenge to the water resources of India said Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Suresh Prabhu, while speaking at a seminar, in New Delhi, yesterday. The Minister said it is high time to focus on the problem in the water sector and the imminent water crisis in the country. The Minister said that per capita availability of water is constantly declining. Pointing out that around 78% of available water is used by the agriculture sector and by 2024 India will be the most populous country so there is going to be more pressure on water both for producing more food and for increased industrial activity.

There is an urgent need for optimum use of water for agricultural operations. He said that more crops should be harvested from every drop of water. Expressing concern over rapid depletion of ground water, the Minister said that the use of ground water in agriculture in India is three to four times higher than the USA.

He suggested that the focus should be on sustainable use of water, whether it is agriculture or industry. The Minister further stated that water used by the industry should be treated and be used for recharging ground water. He said, municipal bodies should ensure that potable water is supplied only for drinking.

The Commerce Minister said that in terms of storage of surface water, India is positioned at the lowest level. He suggested recharging of aquifers and water bodies for storing surface water. The Minister further said that along with quantity, quality of water is equally important and therefore efforts should be made to prevent contamination of water. He said industrial units discharge untreated effluents into the rivers, municipalities are also no exception as they dump municipal waste in rivers. He said, most of the cities in India have no source of water supply, they import water from long distances to cater to the needs of a growing population.

MM/SB