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## FORESTS ARE LIFE

### Institutionalization of International Day of Forests Celebration in India

On March 21 2015, the Partnership for Land Use Science (Forest-PLUS) launched a campaign to celebrate the International Day of Forests in India. “Forests Are Life” was a major outdoor media campaign covering more than 300 sites across New Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore. The campaign’s design and slogan “Forests are Life” were developed and provided by Vertiver. The campaign messages were displayed in partnership with outdoor media partner JC Decaux and Times OOH. The materials for the campaign were based on traditional Indian art styles that highlighted the importance of forests because of the ecological, cultural and livelihoods services they provide. The vernacular aesthetic, which celebrated India’s forests using Gond and Madhubani illustration styles, captured the attention of a large number of audiences from various walks of life. A distinctive element of this campaign was that it was presented in three different languages: Hindi, Kannada, and English. Due to demand from stakeholders, the campaign was extended from initially planned period of two months to six months.

Based on the 2015 success, the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEFCC) and Forest-PLUS jointly relaunched the campaign in 2016 on the International Day of Forests in the presence of senior officials from the government, including the Secretary of MoEFCC and members of the industry. The Ministry also organized a forest walk in New Delhi with Honorable Environment Minister, Shri Prakash Javadekar. The Prime Minister Office’s published a quarter page advertisement using the campaign graphics and message featuring the PM Narendra Modi’s photograph in leading national newspapers in Hindi and English. The campaign was adopted by Sikkim Forest Department, which displayed the campaign at their headquarters on March 21<sup>st</sup> 2016. Forests are Life has institutionalized the celebration of the International Day of Forests in India, marking a day of international significance.