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Auroville impresses diplomats

-by Deepa H Ramakrishnan

PONDICHERRY NOV. 29. Diplomats of 14 countries converged at Auroville near Pondicherry on Saturday to chalk out plans for association in various activities, including research undertaken by experts and their participation in the international zone of Auroville.

The diplomats representing the USA, the UK, Russia, Singapore, Japan, France, Holland, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Malaysia, Malawi, Mauritius, Serbia and Montenegro spent half a day visiting various places at Auroville and learning about the concept and design of the township.

They visited the Industrial zone, Auroville Centre for Scientific Research and International zone, also the Indian pavilion. They were given an idea of the basis of Auroville's visions, about how the township had been planned and all their activities in various areas.

Speaking to The Hindu, the US Consul-General, Richard D Hayes, said this was his first visit to Auroville and that he was amazed at the place and all its greenery. "The concept seems very much like many communities in the US, which has a long tradition of imaginative communities. India itself has a great tradition of supporting such communities take Tagore's (Shantiniketan) for example and fostering these kinds of experiments".

The Japanese Consul-General, Kikuchi, was impressed about the way the township had been planned "like the universe". "It is a very good idea because this area has no nationality, they are all human beings", he said. Auroville was very much known in Japan and many people wanted to come over here to live.

"Auroville being an area where everyone is free to research on anything that is useful to humanity, we would love to have some kind of cooperation with people from other countries in that area. That is why we have invited all these diplomats to visit Auroville and see for themselves the kind of work that we are doing", says Saurav of Auroville's Future.

"When The Mother inaugurated Auroville on February 28, 1968, it was envisaged as a place that belongs to nobody in particular but one that belongs to humanity as a whole. The international zone, which is meant to bring together countries of the world, has at present the cultural pavilions of India (Bharat Nivas), the Pavilion of Tibet and work has started on the American Pavilion. The Foundation stones of French, Italian, Russian and German have already been laid here and we expect more nations to follow", says Tapas Bhat, one of the first Aurovilians.

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