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Ref: Public Notice dated 24.8.2020 on the Website Seeking Inputs in Proposed Reforms in Mining Sector

Dear Dr Dermal,

Please find here below and as attachment our inputs and concerns.

Introduction

This is in reference to the notice, which we pointed out earlier provided negligible time for the various affected communities and even the State Governments to respond, that has been removed today from the website of the Ministry. Therefore, we are presenting this response with the liberty to file additional representation and also would like to insist that the Ministry keeps in consideration whenever it is intending to make amendments. We would also like to place on record that we have been providing inputs to your esteemed Ministry regularly despite inadequate or no response, each time with more hope but unfortunately with greater disappointment.

It is heartening to note that right in the beginning, the note has reiterated the intent to be transparent and based upon the learnings from the past and aspiring to bringing in best practices, harmonising the other important concerns of our country - employment, technology, growth, and environment – which we believe should be at the heart of these policies and practices including the key elements of equity, self-reliance and the fundamental rights of the citizens particularly the Adivasis and people directly affected by these developments. Needless to point out that the Government of India itself recognises that over 65 Million of our people have been displaced and not properly rehabilitated in the pursuit of this development.



It is therefore an onerous and responsible task that the Ministry is embarking, especially given the pandemic which restricts the ability of several communities to deliberate upon the impacts of such far-reaching legislative changes. We wish that the process is conducted in a manner that proceeds with Free, Prior and Informed Consent of the different constituencies and particularly the vulnerable and poor who would be directly impacted as an aspirant of global best practices and natural resource stewardship.

India is endowed with huge resources of many metallic and non-metallic minerals. Since independence in 1947, there has been a rapid growth in the mineral production both in terms of quantity and value. Currently, India



produces as many as 87 minerals, which include 4 fuel, 10 metallic, 47 non-metallic, 3 atomic and 23 minor minerals (including building and other materials).

The mining activities are extremely poorly regulated despite the fact that as early as 1948, the founding fathers of the constitution realized this need. During the Constitutional debates, they said as early as in 1948, “Industrialisation has brought in its wake an ever-increasing demand for mineral resources. These resources are non-replenishable and mostly scarce. Proper control over regulation and development of mines and minerals is, therefore, a matter of national concern.” Today over 80,000 mines operate illegally as against nearly 10,000 legitimate leases. Only a third of the legal mines actually report to the Indian Bureau of Mines, the regulator and only a tenth of them is inspected.

Lingering Concerns Exacerbated

"Sustainable development" implies that economic activity should be designed to create wealth for the use of present and future generations. If natural resources cannot be developed and exploited to create wealth for the nation, the result may be poverty and deprivation. Crisis management soon takes over from sustainable economic development. We are very concerned that this short duration given for feedback and the pace at which the Government is trying to accelerate the transfer of natural resources to the private sector and open up new land may be a reflection of a decision being made more as a perception and response to the current economic downturn. It is therefore all the more important for the Government to deeply introspect and explore along with a very large cross section of the people.

To begin with we want the Ministry to carefully reflect upon some of the crucial aspects highlighted by an important committee on “State Agrarian Relations and the Unfinished Task in Land Reforms”. As the preface to this report succinctly pointed out and is extremely relevant in the context of the new mining regime being proposed, “(T)he process of liberalisation-globalisation has been in vogue for approximately two decades now. This era has witnessed twin phenomena — rapid growth for the country as a whole and a slowdown in agriculture. The former requires land which is not only inelastic in supply, but the actual availability has been shrinking on account of the competing demands from various sectors.” The Covid-19 pandemic has very clearly brought out that the economy built over such a neglect of farming can be in doldrums with an economic drought of two-quarters and the self-reliant and even the small positive growth is only coming from our farm and forestry sector, thereby making the role of your Ministry very crucial in appraisal of mineral resources of the country, their allocation and optimal utilisation.

We further quote some important paragraphs from this report, to highlight why by merely brushing aside such concerns will result in the creation of impediments for the aspired “Atmanirbhar Bharat”, here

1.7 Along with the very limited success of the land reform policies undertaken in India in different plans, the overall trajectory development including the State owned mega projects relating to infrastructure and industrialization, and recent changes in legal statutes regarding ownership and acquisition of land by private enterprises have further increased the share of landless and marginal farmers. The anxiety of rapid industrialization has acquired a new thrust in the period of economic reforms and has necessitated acquiring land on an even larger scale. One of the most contentious legislations in this regard is the SEZ Act.

1.8 Nowhere is the distress more evident than in the tribal areas, particularly those falling within the Schedule V. The tribal people have been the biggest victims of displacement due to development projects. Though constituting only 9% of the country’s population, the tribal communities have contributed more than 40% to the total land acquired so far. The Parliament has legislated the most radical of its Acts in the form of Panchayats

(Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996, applicable to 9 of the States. All these States under Schedule V have stringent laws protecting the corpus of tribal lands which, however, continue to be subjected to a steady erosion. There have been disturbing trends noticed in the recent times. PESA area constitute the main target of mining/industrial zone/protected forest reserve after denial of rights/access of local community. In Assam alone, about 3, 91,772 acres of land has been transferred for development projects without considering either the ecological consequences or other adverse effects on life and livelihood of the marginalized communities.

1.9 Massive transfers of agricultural and forest land for industrial, mining and in the name of development or infrastructural projects have created rural unrest and distress migration in those areas. Findings indicate that about 7,50,000 acres of land has been transferred for mining and another 250,000 acres for industrial purposes during last 2 decades [Center for Science and Environment]. There have been regular reports of extensive displacement of poor peasantry under SEZs. Widespread conversion of agriculture land for non-agricultural purposes is being observed throughout the country. The major drivers of such rampant conversion are decreasing incentives from agriculture, increasing pressure of industrialization and urbanization, and changing aspirations of the people. The conversion of prime agriculture land is also a factor of decline of availability of food grains. This has become a huge challenge as India needs to secure food grains for its more than 1.1 billion people.

1.10 Though the Government stands committed to protection of the tribal corpus of land, and in all the Schedule V States there is a protective legislative framework, tribal lands is subject to continued erosion through the institution of moneylenders, collusive title suits, illegal permissive or forcible possession, unredeemed usufructuary mortgages, fraudulent transfers, abandonment and making of incorrect entries in the records-of-rights. The problem is aggravated by misplaced emphasis on evidence, lack of familiarity of the tribals with the court procedures, poor staying capacity on the part of tribal communities, lengthy procedures, rent seeking behaviour, rising demand for tribal land on account of the operation of the market forces and creation of a high value illegal tribal land market. Under the traditional systems it is the community which has always had the command over the natural resources including the land resources. This lacuna was sought to be corrected by the enactment of the Panchayat (Extensions to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996, better known by its acronym PESA.

1.11 PESA, inter alia, restores the community's command over the natural resources and empowers the Gram Sabha to identify and restore the alienated tribal lands and to protect the tribal way of life. PESA calls for four pronged strategy for successful implementation: i) amendment of laws that are contradictory to its provisions; ii) putting in place a set of procedural laws in conformity with the true intent of PESA; iii) creating effective support institutions; and iv) capacity building among the local communities and the bureaucracy. In none of the States it has been implemented so far. The hope is that a faithful implementation of PESA will go a long way in quietening the turbulence in the tribal areas.

1.12 All these key concerns need to be acted upon urgently for reasons of efficiency as well as equity. Ignoring just aspirations of the masses in rural India for inclusive development will only entail huge economic and political costs. To move towards the objective of inclusive development, which is the motto of the Eleventh Five Year Plan, one of the urgent inputs that ought to be carefully designed is land use policies. Land has multiple purposes to serve. Along with primary activities like agriculture, mining, forestry etc. it is also the basic requirement for industrialization. As mentioned earlier the process of rapid industrialization has resulted in acquisition of land on a large scale and displacement of people. Industrialization is important for development but it need not be and cannot be supported at the expense of agriculture and the basic rights of the people for land and livelihood. Thus, it is very important that every State clearly demarcates land to be used for different purposes."



A Quick Overview

Mining of major minerals was a forte of the Public Sector Undertakings until the nineties when the country embarked on the economic policy of privatization and globalization. New ways were and are being devised for exploitation of the resources and to hand over wealth of the nation for small short-term gains. The rapidity with which the global interests want to usurp these resources is reflected to the stock markets and it is with an exponential rate that mining is devouring lands and livelihoods of many communities. Most mineral resources are co-terminus with Forests and Schedule Areas and mining has become a major source of destruction of the environment and livelihoods of the local communities and has reached alarming proportions. Most of these mining blocks are in the Schedule V areas which have protection under the Constitution, legislations and through the Samata Judgment. The States have clearly circumvented these protections by taking lease by state corporations and entering into JVs with private companies.

Mining has a low contribution to the economy. GDP from mining has never exceeded 5% of the GDP even after liberalization. In comparison, small and medium enterprises contributed significantly (29%), employing more people and affecting less people.

In the case of coal, the private sector was a key player until it was nationalized in the seventies again to be opened up in the last decade. As of today, nearly twenty per cent of the known coal reserves of the country have been handed over to the private sector. If as a country, we continue to tread this path with the same ambition, few successive governments can auction away the entire resources of the country, significantly undermining any idea of self-reliance.

Allocations and auctioning have been completely irrational, such as for example, Bauxite deposits in possession by some companies could last them for a century forfeiting the rights of several generations of people and several governments, which is a clear indication of sacrificing resources in one-go and also negating the chance of communities to assert their rights now and in the far future.

The nature of mineral resources and the learnings from world over indicate the need for a completely different conceptualisation of the resource, how revenues from its extraction and use are apportioned for now and for the future generations and the need for strict limits to the quantum of production. The use of mineral resources to prop up the economy must be reflective of the huge input of other critical resources into production stream – e.g. inputs for 1000 kg primary aluminium production requires >5000 kg of bauxite ore, 13,000 litres of fresh water, 27500 litres of sea water, 15,711 kWh of electricity consumption. It clearly depicts that mining of a mineral is not limited to the mineral alone, it is highly intensified resource use of other resources or raw materials. Thus, it is ecologically unsustainable to promote indiscriminate production and expecting that unbridled market-forces to be competent to “harmonise” as expected by this move will be achieved.

With heavy mechanization, technologies available in terms of robotics and mass-load transport systems, the labour or employment is decreasing. Statistics indicate that mining employed far more people in 1951 as compared to 2019! In small scale and largely informalised mining, labour norms are flouted both in terms of remuneration as well as provision of facilities and massive exploitation of children and women is not unknown even to the policy makers.



Occupational hazards in mining industry are under reported, unreported and fail to recognize the huge costs at the societal level. Underground coal mines result in 1 death for 2.5 mT of coal mined and in surface mines we lose a person for every 10 tonnes. Even at micro levels of processing and disposal there is 1 death per 5 mT of Coal input and 1.3 disabling injuries per mT. A huge proportion of coal mine workers suffer from Coal Workers Pneumoconiosis (around 25% of coal workers). Noise pollution (>90dB) is a huge neglected aspect which is increasingly affecting workers as the mines are mechanized and the protective gears do not respond to working conditions or are not appropriately suitable to conditions. Despite the recent regulation on mine closure and reclamation areas impacted by coal fires are increasingly affecting a large conglomerate of settlements. Planning Commission had set up a Working Group on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) under the chairmanship of Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment. The report concluded on the existing situation “In spite of many initiatives, the standards of safety in mines have not yet reached to a worldwide accepted norm of Zero Harm at Workplace. Further, there are periodic occurrences of disasters in coal mines.” This calls for fresh initiatives with use of modern technologies and tools, scientific data acquisition, analysis and formulation of action plans on each identified thrust areas, proper implementation and effective monitoring of results.

Villages in the mining regions are getting devoid of drinking water due to breaching of the water table and increased competitive use of water by industry and mining. It is not mining alone, once we see the downstream industry, we realize that huge quantum of water is being gulped by the industry – e.g. it is estimated that this water can serve 300 million populations. On the other hand, the slippages in rural drinking water supply are huge i.e. the overall quantity and quality problem is glaring. With the introduction of coal bed methane i.e. emptying the last residues, the kind of water evacuation is likely to damage land at large scale.

The impacts are widespread and diverse, and have created socio-economic and cultural impacts over different geographies and ecosystems – from the Western Ghats which is an UNESCO Heritage Site and a Global Biodiversity Hotspot to Stone Quarries of Rajasthan where silicosis is a blight on a huge population still emerging from the cover of denial by the government, and from coal mines in Meghalaya leading to Acid Mine Drainage to beach sands in Kerala causing cancer from radiation. Even constitutionally protected tribal areas Scheduled Areas, (Schedule V and VI), where a large proportion of the mineral wealth of the country rests, have not been spared of this onslaught. Some of these areas, though euphemistically called “aspirational” are actually in the clutches of “chronic” poverty.

The current trend is to promote more mining and a complex set of factors external as well as internal are driving more investments. India opened up its FDI in mining without any bottlenecks for the investors in 1991. The policies initially aided the State and later, the corporates, as promoter of economic growth and private profitability by rapidly abstracting mineral wealth of the country. Various actors have invested into the sector, including national and international companies, banks, equity funds, and also “round-tripping” of illegal funds etc. It is now predicted to almost doubling its current size within the next 15 years.

The irony is while the mining is being promoted, there is no commensurate development in practice of conservation aspects which is building a huge cost towards environment. The regulatory regime is in place, but these are again skewed by executive decisions to promote investments. Moreover, monitoring is not effective thus leading to lowest compliance. The push is to change government policies and make them favourable to industry, thus the mining companies and the State are equally alienated from the host communities. The financial transactions are very opaque, with investments banks which are large in number channelizing funds which is difficult to track. The whole issue of capital mobility and its role in expanding mining is still poorly understood.



Ecosystems are getting disturbed beyond their resilience, like the river ecosystem is getting hugely affected, so is the wildlife corridors. The interrelationship between governance of a welfare state and mining is marred by huge gaps and strange complicated structures. The glaring anachronism in terms of neglect of mapping human, botanical, zoological and atmospheric resources is huge; the result of which is these overlying resources are not accounted and treated as overburden by companies and government. Thereby the whole process is damaging the huge potential of community and undermining the wealth of the ecosystem.

By and large in the mining operation and investment world, the key beneficiaries are investors, banks, owners, politicians and contractors, consultants and even reclaimers. The cost is being paid by local communities, workers, environment, ecosystem, and small investors.

Evolution of Current Policy and Law

The first Industrial Policy Resolution adopted in 1948 codified the national policy in respect of mines and minerals. Mining sector also received due attention in the second 'Industrial Policy Statement' issued in 1956. As a follow-up measure to Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956, the Mines Minerals Regulation and Development Act 1948 (MMRD) was repealed and MMRD Act 1957 was enacted. Under this Act the Mineral Concession Rules 1960 and the Mineral Conservation and Development Rules 1958 (MCDR) were issued. The new Industrial policy in 1991 oriented towards market liberalisation.

The National Mineral Policy 1993 was an exercise to keep the mineral sector tuned to the restructuring measures adopted in the trade and fiscal sectors. The new Mineral Policy declared in March 1993, has made a radical departure from the earlier policies by throwing open the mineral sector to private companies and by allowing equity participation by foreign companies in joint venture in mining promoted by Indian Companies. Further Amendments in MMRD Act, 1957 in 1999 was brought in to reflect the changed emphasis on “development” rather than “regulation” and was amended to MMDR Act.

The slow pace of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in the mining sector even five years after the liberalization of the investment regime, the lack of enthusiasm for investment in prospecting shown by the domestic private sector, and the lack of resources with public sector agencies meant that the sector was unable to significantly contribute to growth. During the Mid-term Appraisal of the 10th Plan in the Planning Commission, it was observed that the 1993 policy had not been able to achieve the aim of encouraging the flow of private investment and introduction of high end technology for exploration and mining because of procedural delays, etc. A need for review of NMP, 1993 with a High Level Committee on National Mineral to review the situation led to the National Mineral Policy (NMP), 2008, which confers lot more concessions to investors while also expressing the need for environmental and social safeguards.

The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2015 received the assent of the President on the 26th March, 2015 concluded the long and protracted process of consensus-building on the legal framework. However a host of new amendments and legislations and subordinate legislations which is to serve as the basis for responsible extraction of the country's natural resources largely set aside the earlier efforts and brought in changes which are largely making it easier for continuing indiscriminate mining, engendering poor corporate governances and grossly ignored the concerns of the people.

Towards a Way Ahead: Key Points in the Context of the new Amendments



Mining is one of the most environmentally and socially destructive economic activity. It has a low contribution to the GDP but the conflict it engenders is enormous and widespread. Our country today has the dubious distinction of having illegal mines significantly outnumbering the legal mines. The future should usher in an era of Mineral Development with regional development as the focus rather than the current attitude of exploiting minerals for mere profit. We recognize that the minerals will be ours forever if we restrain mining, but the wealth of the soil and other biota and the rich heritage of the communities will be lost forever if we mine the minerals below them.

Mechanisms like paying the Net Present Value, compensation, resettlement and rehabilitation do not reflect the true long-term value of the ecosystem services which the terrain and the plant and animal resources provide, nor does it do justice to local communities. The future must make these important elements in the design.

Some of these aspects are indicated here given the extremely limited time given for providing these submissions;

Rationalising and regularization of the on-going mining activities on a war footing

In the context of mining, mineral deposits are available to a limited extent no matter how huge the resource is and ideally need to be endowed for posterity. In the past, a run-away expansion of `strategic minerals' did not take place as countries sought to have them for their domestic military needs. Even in our country, Aluminium was considered once such metal and is very key to illustrate our point. If we concede the need for this metal in improving the living standards and utilising the existing technologies for the benefit of all, resources need to be extracted. There are several ways of ensuring this but the emerging concept of expanding existing areas of extraction and conserving identified deposits is extremely critical and explained in the context of bauxite in India. The current reserves of bauxite are distributed between deposits, which are as large nearly 500 million tonnes such as in Panchpatmali, to pocket size deposits of few thousand tonnes in Ratnagiri Coast. Some of these large deposits are already being extracted. The proposition is that opening up of several new areas involves severe and widespread environmental consequences and social discontent. In the context of the Eastern Ghat Bauxites in Orissa, it makes immense sense in opening up only few areas with large deposits and not `pock-mark' the entire region with several deposits being opened up. The current market situation of bauxite, with several global players being viable with imports from large distances means that deposits which are within couple of hundred kilometres does not impact the viability of the project. The case for conservation of mid-sized deposits (~ 50-100 mt) is also important from a medium term economic and technical perspective. The rapid improvement in our technological capability in aero-space will mean that in the next two decades we will have the indigenous capacity to utilize this important element in our industries which if opened up today will be depleted by the time the country needs them and perhaps will not have the choice of the resources. If we take the case of existing and proposed bauxite-alumina complexes in the Eastern Ghats, the requirement of each company is of the order of 3 million tonnes per annum. While these could be achieved by opening up several places of smaller deposits it makes ecological and economic sense to restrict to couple of large deposits, some of which have already been opened up. Such an initiative, where policies enable brownfield expansion and Greenfield conservation will not only enable unhindered development of the industry currently but will also provide the State with options for the future without having to commit all the known deposits to investors.

The unacceptable situation of illegal mining must be put to an end. Irrational exploitation of differing grades of ores for short term gains has to be restrained. Illegal mining of minor-minerals particularly of river-bed across the country have been destroying the river systems and needs urgent attention. This calls for a total moratorium on new leases and ensuring "zero-tolerance". Enhancing the efficiency of the mining activities and generating more resources from "brown-field" expansion rather than opening up new "green-field" areas has to be a high



priority. Ensuring strict compliance of all the environmental, social and labour laws governing mining activities and several environmental, social and labour laws are constantly violated in several mining contexts. The blight of occupational diseases particularly such as asbestosis and silicosis must be completely eliminated. The laws should be made convergent with proper oversight authorities. So far, the compliance is based on the reports of the company and meagre assessment by the State Pollution Control Boards. The density of stations and the quality of monitoring leaves much to be desired. Creating awareness in the communities on the laws and the compliance conditions, the monitoring process itself is important and can provide a number of opportunities for gainful occupation of the local youth. Environmental monitoring units can be established across the regions with locally trained people for conducting assessments and maintaining ambient records. A number of such centres can be useful in monitoring water quality, soil chemistry and other such analysis that is periodically required by the community and the local administration. Such local data inputs with satellite-based monitoring will provide an excellent basis for identifying critical areas and methods to tackle them.

The state and centre must announce a “zero-tolerance” policy. It must be mandatory for every village official to immediately notify any mining activity in their jurisdiction. The State must ensure support to the local officials in strictly controlling this menace. In areas where it is rampant special multi-agency cells should be created. Creating even a small production sharing or ownership basis for local communities can lead to a greater participation of people in controlling this menace. Revenues and penalties collected, and vehicles seized must be brought into the revenues of the concerned District Mineral Foundation. The area and scale of mining can be increased based on compliance, which can act as an incentive to good companies.

Greater Exploration and Building of State Reserves

Increasing State investments on exploration of all resources and have a detailed map before embarking on deeper exploration and even in that process especially through non-invasive technologies and augmenting the reserves both on-land and within our exclusive economic zone in the oceans. Exploration investment in the country is abysmally low and does not even constitute two per cent of the global exploration investments and needs to be raised significantly.

There are very little resources going into developing new exploration methods. While our EEZ extends to 200 km from the coast, current investments are restricted only to search for oil and gas and disturbing the near shore environment.

The recent and continuing fire in Baghjan Oil field in the North East, the continuing fire in the coal fields of eastern India and several other accidents and poor recovery of mineral resources, loss of associated minerals all point to the need for the state to develop and nurture a huge knowledge base at its disposal. Since science and particularly geoscience is not a “coin-in-slot” operation, depending upon speculators with short term interests and contractors, including what seems to be the favoured model of MDO by the state will lead to grave uncertainties both in terms of governance and optimal utilisation of resources and to be able to knowledgeably deal with the crisis situations. Developing a widespread understanding of the strategic value of different minerals and ensuring conservation of requisite quantities of such minerals must be recognised, and specific efforts must be made to conserve minerals essential for the country’s future. Minerals such as bauxite, titanium, several heavy metals which will be crucial for future development of materials need to be assessed for our long term needs rather than for profits to corporates in the current period or even economic returns for the current generation.

Enabling and emphasizing on local value addition and restricting export of minerals;



Though every state government talks about value addition, in the name of lack of technology or that mining is a stand-alone industry important mineral are being exported with very little benefit to the state or the communities. Value addition must be the norm rather than as an exception. The long term consequences of climate change and strategic future mineral availability should form the key consideration in the development of minerals. It is important to recognize that mineral bearing areas do not suffer from the classic situation of “resource curse” which is seen across the globe. In order to do this effort must be made to identify economic opportunities which are not dependent on mining.

Skilling People in Mining Area

Continuous de-skilling of the tribals and other farming communities is seen from the fact that majority of them become migrant labourers. Their past skills and knowledge have very little significance in their new contexts and mechanisms to either use their skills in a profitable manner or to acquire skills required to excel in the changed context are completely lacking. Therefore, a focussed attempt at developing skills at various levels from policy, management and operational and implementation levels are required. This will necessitate a very detailed research on the mining areas, the perspective plans of the industries in the area, the level of current skills and demands. Mechanisms need to be evolved to ensure that these opportunities can be accessed by the local communities.

A number of opportunities do exist in these areas. A set of activities can emerge from the regulatory requirements themselves, such as green-belt development, transportation, compensatory afforestation and in goods and services required for the mining and industrial activities. Several other opportunities can be based on local resources and strengthening and channelizing existing skills. A concerted effort needs to be made to enable cooperatives in mining and other sectors and to encourage local enterprises. This requires inputs at various levels and positive encouragement from state and district administration. Some of these enterprises can initially be enabled to form joint ventures with other State or Private entities.

Dealing with legacy and existing issues

Among the major impediments in mining is the sense of betrayal and abandonment by the tribals. Unless this feeling is assuaged, the new initiatives will be met with suspicion. Therefore, in each mining areas extensive survey of the past displacement and the status of those communities should be undertaken and wherever it is immediately feasible to provide relief and proper rehabilitation. There are several sites across the mining and tribal belt where this investment and the concern being exhibited to those who have been deprived in the past will be a good model for communities to experience. This will be a good baseline for the future activities and the efforts can be measured in terms of the long-term impacts and specific actions needed. Since this is a sensitive task and may involve raising expectations among the tribals, this exercise needs to be conducted by an independent third party. Since the law now provides for sustained availability of financial resources, these could be systematically addressed. Legacy issues are not restricted to social aspects, but several mines have not been properly closed and have also not completed activities such as reclamation and compensatory afforestation. These could provide additional occupations to the tribals.

The conservation of non-renewable resources is an important in the context of long-term future of any country and more so of emerging economies like India. In several countries in the liberalization, privatization and globalisation may have actually been increasing their GDP while becoming poor on the long-term if the issues of long-term conservation and investments in the improvements of social attributes do not take place concurrently. It is time we consider these aspects deeply in the manner of demonstrating natural resource statesmanship rather



than making errors as have been made in several parts of Africa and South East Asia, where remediation costs and social conflicts are debilitating any economic gains that mining industry could bring in.

We seek a wider public discussion involving people in the mining areas, the respective state governments and other institutions knowledgeable about the implications. It is the onus of your Ministry to be able to present a rationale for opening up new mines and we implore you to create a schedule for translation, communication and outreach in different areas so that such that primary stakeholders are able to understand and respond in the spirit of the best practices that the Government aspires.

Me and my colleagues sincerely hope that you will personally consider these key inputs and impress upon your senior colleagues and the Hon Minister to seriously take note of these aspects since many of us have come to realise that this earth that we live and depend upon is truly inherited from our future.

With very warm regards,

MANAGING TRUSTEE, ENVIRONICS TRUST
SUPREME COURT COMMISSIONER IN WP(C)110/2006
MEMBER, NTCA COMMITTEE ON REVISION OF R&R