

**Subject: POSCO** 

April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011:

On January 31st 2011, I had issued a "speaking order" on the proposed project of POSCO in Jagatsinghpur district of Odisha comprising of (i) an integrated steel-cum-captive power plant; and (ii) a captive minor port. The decisions contained in the speaking order were as follows:

• Environmental clearance had been accorded to the integrated steel-cum-captive power plant with 28 additional conditions over and above that stipulated in the original environmental clearance of July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

• Environmental clearance was also accorded to the captive minor port with 32 additional conditions over and above stipulated in the

original environmental clearance of May 15th, 2007.

• Forest clearance for the project complex was made conditional on getting a categorical assurance from the state government that at least one of the three conditions enshrined in the Forest Rights Act, 2006---two in Section 2(0) and another in Section 4(3)—is not fulfilled in the case of those claiming to be dependent on or cultivating land in the POSCO project area.

On April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2011, the MoE&F received a communication from the state government which is at Annex-I. On the face of it, it would appear that the state government has provided an assurance along the lines sought for in my speaking order. However, just two days earlier on April 11<sup>th</sup> 2011, I had received an email representation from the POSCO Pratirodh Sangram Committee which is in Annex-II. I immediately forwarded a copy of this new representation to both the Chief Minister and Chief Secretary of Odisha. The representation talks about Palli Sabha Resolutions of the villages of Dhinkia and Gobindapur that have not been considered by the state government authority concerned.

While it is true that the state government had earlier categorically denied the authenticity of documentation submitted by the POSCO Pratirodh Sangram Committee, I do believe that these two Resolutions have to be disposed off by the appropriate authority in accordance with the Forest Rights Act, 2006, especially keeping in mind the provisions of Section 4(5) of the Act which states:

"Save as otherwise provided, no member of a forest dwelling Scheduled Tribe or other traditional forest dweller shall be evicted or removed from forest land under his occupation <u>till the recognition and verification procedure is completed</u>." [Emphasis Added]

After receiving information from the state government that the appropriate authority has completed the process of recognition and verification procedure for all the villages from where forest land is to be transferred for non-forestry purposes, a final decision regarding forest clearance will be taken.

Ignoring these two Palli Sabha Resolutions and not allowing them to be subjected to a due process of law as enshrined in the Forest Rights Act, 2006 would be tantamount, in my considered opinion, to violating the very essence of this legislation passed unanimously and with acclaim by Parliament.

Jairam Ramesh MOS(I/C)E&F April 14<sup>th</sup>,2011

## **ANNEX-I**

Most urgent

#### GOVERNMENT OF ORISSA FOREST & ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

No. 10F (Cons) - 561/2011(pt)- 6356 / F8-E. Dated: 8-6-1/

From:

B.P. Singh, FS

Special Secretary to Government

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The Assistant Inspector General of Forests, Govt. of India. Ministry of Environment & Forest.

(.F.C. Division), Paryavaran Bhawan,

C.G.O. Compiex, Lodhi Road,

New Delhi -110003

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Diversion of 1253.225 Ha, of forest land for establishment of Integrated Steel Plant & Captive Port by POSCO-India Pvt. Ltd. in Jagatsinghpur District, Orissa

Sir. I am directed to invite reference to the order dated 31.1.2011 of Hon'ble Union Minister, Environment & Forest and your letter F. No. 8-63/2007-FC dated 10.2.2011 in which the categorical assurance of the State Government was sought for in the matter of ensuring and guaranteeing compliance with the Forest Rights Act, 2006 in the POSCO Project area in Jagatsinghpur district of Orissa in order to take a final decision on diversion of forest land by the Ministry of Environment & Later - Hon'ble Union Minister Corests, Government of India. Environment & Forests in his letter dated 22.2.2011 addressed to the Hon'ble Chief Minister; Orissa had also drawn the attention regarding violation of Forest Rights Act in the POSCO project area as alleged by Sri Prasant Paikray

Since the issues raised above are about ensuring implementation of Forest Rights Act and alleged violation of the said Act in the POSCO Project area, the ST &SC Development Department, which is the Nodal department for implementation of the Forest Rights Act in the State and

se Collector, Jagatsinghpur, who is the Chairperson of the District Level Committee constituted under the provisions of the Forest Rights Act, sere asked to look into the matter and submit compliance.

After necessary examination of the matter, the Commissioner-cum-Secretary to Government, ST &SC Development Department in his letter No. 9770 dated 7.3.2011, based on the report of Collector, Augotsinghpur, has confirmed that no one satisfies the conditions laid down under Section 2(o) of the Scheduled Tribes & Other Traditional Porest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 to be treated as other traditional forest dwellers" in the forest land involved in the POSCO project area, who has for at least three generations prior to 13%Gay of December, 2005 primarily resided in and who depend on the forest hand for bonafide livelihood needs. This observation of the Nodal department of the State Government clarifies that at least one of the three stipulations prescribed in para 19 of the order of Hon'ble Union Minister for Environment & Forests regarding eligibility of an applicant to be regarded as Other Traditional Forest Dwellers for settlement of individual/community forest rights as per provisions of the Forest Rights Act is not fulfilled in respect of any person in the POSCO project area. The copies of the letters of the Commissionercum-Secretary to Government, ST &SC Development Department and the Collector, Jagatsinghpur district are enclosed for reference.

etter dated 12.3.2011 had drawn the attention of Hon'ble Chief Minister, Drissa to the resolutions passed by Dhinkia and Gobindapur villages of Dhinkia GP—appended with another representation of Sri Prasanta Paikray indicating their opposition to setting up—of Steel Plant Project by POSCO India Pvt. Ltd. in their area along with their eligibility to be created as Other Traditional Forest Dwellers under the provisions of Porest Rights Act. The matter has been thoroughly enquired/examined by the Collector, Jagatsinghpur district (Chairperson of the District Level

Commetee constituted under the Forest Rights Act) and the ST &SC Development Department (Nodal department for implementation of the Forest Rights Act in the State).

The Commissioner-cum-Secretary, ST &SC Development Department vide his letter No. 11807 dt. 31.3.2011, based on the latest report of the Collector, Jagatsinghpur, has again reiterated the earlier position that no one satisfies the conditions to be treated as "other traditional forest dwellers" in the forest land involved in the POSCO project area. The copies of letter of Commissioner-cum-Secretary to covernment, ST&SC Development Department dated 31.3.2011 and the copy of letter dated 27.3.2011 of the Collector, Jagatsinghpur are enclosed herewith for kind reference.

In view of the factual position, Government of India, MoEF may allow diversion of 1253,225 ha, of forest land for establishment of the Steel Plant.

Yours faithfully,

Special Secretary to Government

Momo No. 6357 /F&E Dr. 8-4-11

Copy with copy of the enclosures forwarded to the Chief Conservator of Forests (Central), A/3, Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar for information and necessary action

Special Secretary to Government

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## OFFICE OF THE COLLECTOR & DISTRICT MAGISTRATE JAGATSINGHPUR

No.772/ Dt 27.3 2011

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The Commissioner-cum-Secretary ST & SC Development Department Covernment of Odisha, Bhubaneswar

Sub: Diversion of 1253.225 hec. of Forest Land for establishment of Integrated Steel Plant for captive port by POSCO India Pvt. Ltd. in Jagatsinghpur District, Orissa.

Rof: Letter No.11044/SSD dtd 23.03 2011

In inviting a reference to the letter on the subject cited above. Farn to  $\S_{\mathcal{P}}$ say that on earlier occasion, in his letter addressed to the Hon'ble Minister, Environment & Forest, Govt of India, New Delhi Mr. Prasanta Kumar Faikaray had raised the issues of violation of the provisions of Forest Right Act in POSCO project area and refusal of consent, for diversion of forest land for POSCO project by the Gram Sabhas of Gobindapur & Dhinkia viilages. The response on the matter has been submitted to the ST & SC Development Department vide letter No.542 dtd.01 03.2011, With the present letter two resolutions have been appended purportedly bassed by the Pak sabha of Dhinkia village on 21.02.2011 and that of Gobindpur village on 23 02 2011 extending the period of filing of Individual and Community claims under FIR Act, for another three months & asserting dependence of people on the forest land for three generations. The B.D.O. Erasama vide his letter No.5.13 dtd 26.02.2011 has reported that the date for convening of Pall-Sabha of Dhinkia village was fixed to 26 02,2011 and that of Gobindapur on 12.02.2011 as decided in the monthly Dhinkia G.P. meeting held on 26 01 2011. Notices to that effect were served in the respective villages under the seal and signature of Sri Sisir Kumar Mohapatra the Sarpanch of Dhinkia 를 만, which would be well evident from the Notice Book maintained separately for different villages of Dhinkia G.P. Resolutions of Palli Sabna of these two viliages have also been passed on the appointed dates. It is surprising to find that the so called resolutions the extracts of which have been appended to the

etter of Mr. Paikray have not been recorded in the Palli Sabha Registers of the villages in question. If the Pall Sabha of these two villages were so succ about non implementation of Forest Rights Act in their villages they might mave extended the period of filling of individual and community claims beyond the period of 3 months in any of a series of Resolutions they claim to have 135560 on different occasions. The individual as well as community claim, if Thy of the villagers could have been discussed and resolution to that effect trassed in those meetings. However, Rule 5 of the Orissa Gram Panchayat to post 1968 provides that the Secretary after obtaining approval of the Sarapanch shall issue notice of the meeting in this case the established  $\alpha$  ocedure and practice has not been followed. Instead of allowing the GP theoretary to issue the notice and record proceedings for the purpose in Palit Babha Register of the GP, the Sarpanch, which well known anti-POSCO ectivist and functioning as Secretary of the POSCO Pratiroagha Sangram Somiti, has simply asked the Secretary to attend the meeting. But the fact remains that the special meeting of the Palli Sabha of the villages Dhinkia and Gobindpur were never convened and no resolution have been passed within The meaning of section-6 of the Orissa Gram Panchayat Act, 1964 read with hade 5 of Orissa Gram Panchayat Rules 1968 and Rule-11(6)of the Forest/ 台ghts Rules, 2008. On a close scrutiny of the Palli Sabha Notice Book of arbage Dhinkia and Gooindpur it is evident that notices for the Special Pall. the bha meeting do not find mention in the Notice Book and the alleged Pall Sabha resolutions recorded in the Resolution Book. Extracts of the Notice flook and Resolution Book of both the villages are enclosed herewith for croper appreciation of fact. It is therefore sufficient to hold that the so called Hall: Sabha Resolutions relating to Gobindpur and Dhinkia village appended to the letter of Mr. Paikray are forged and fabricated documents manufactured by Mr. Mohapatra with the sole intention of stalling the process of diversion of forest land for POSCO project. In this case the Sarapanch of Dhinkia GP has misused his official position to mislead the MoEF.

In this connection it is submitted that similar type of resolutions were submitted earlier before the visiting Forest Rights Act Committee Members with ulterior motive to stall the process of diversion of forest and. However the SESF has cleared the proposal on conditions of categorical assurance from



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dependent on or cultivating land in the POSCO project area fulfill at least one of the three conditions essential to qualify as other Traditional Forest Dwellers (CFECs). The alleged Palli Sabha Resolutions dt.21.02.2011 & 23.02.2011 in Chage Dhinkia & Gobindpur respectively are nothing but a well-thought-out prester attempt to constrict development of the locality in general and essential POSCO project work in particular.

It is further submitted that a detailed information on the matter has theen submitted to the ST & SC Development Department vide the letter under reference. A copy of our earlier response is anciosed herewith for your kind empreciation and necessary action.

Yours faithfully.

Collector & District Magistrate
Jagatsinghpur

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GOVERNMENT OF ORISSA ST & SC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

From

Shri Santosh Sarangi, IAS Commissioner-cum-Secretary to Govt.

Τo

The Principal Secretary, Forest & Env. Department.

Subscription of 1253,225 ha of Forest Land for establishment of Confidence of Plant and captive port by POSCO-India Ltd. in Jagatsinghpur District, Orissa.

Sir.

No 1.5-1

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tam directed to invite a reference to your letter No. 3465, dated 23.02.2011 in which the ST & SC Development Department was asked to give clarification on implementation of Shri Prashant Paikaray and also give clarification on implementation of the Forest Rights Act in the Project area.

In continuation to the ST & SC Development Department letter No. 3048, dated 5.2.2011, I am to inform you that the issues relating to implementation of FRA 2006 have been examined in the Department. The constitution of the Forest Right Committees have been done in villages like Dhirrkia. Gobindpur, Nuagaon and Polang and applications were invited as per the provision of the Sch. Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Rules, 2007. Subsequently, FRCs have also been constituted in Bhuyanpal and Noliasahi villages and applications were invited. However, no applications were received from these villages are clear from the letter No.303, dated 4.2.2011 of Collector. Jagatsinghpur that all due procedures under the FRA, 2006 have been followed and none of the Other.

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condition of 3 generations (75 years) of continuous dependence on the aforementioned forest area.

So far as the allegation received from Shri Prashant Paikaray is concerned, the Collector, Jagatsinghpur was requested to send a factual report and the report of the Collector with letter No 542, dated 1.3.2011 is enclosed here with. The letter clarifies issues raised by Shri Paikaray.

Considering the earlier report of the Collector and the present clarification submitted by Collector, Jagatsinghpur it is clear that none of the OTFD satisfies the conditions given at Section 2(O) of the Forest Rights Act 2006 which is "Other Traditional Forest Dwellers means any member or community who has for at least 3 generations prior to the 13th day of December, 2005 primarily resided in and who depend on the forest or forest land for bonafide livelihood needs".

For the purpose of this clause "generation" means a period comprising of 25 years.

Thus, the ST & SC Development Department would like to reiterate its earlier stand that none of the OTFD in the aforementioned 1253,225 Ha. of forest land satisfies the conditions laid down under section 2(o) of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition Of Forest Rights) Act, 2006.

Yours faithfully

Commissioner-cum-Secretary

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OFFICE OF THE COLLECTOR & DISTRICT MAGISTRATE,
JAGATSINGHPUR

Vo<u>542</u> / Dt<u>13.2011</u>

To

The Commissioner-cum-Secretary ST & SC Development Department, Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar

Substitution of Complaint petition received by PCCF, Orissa-regarding violation of Forest Biglit Action POSCO Project area. .

Ref Letter No 8848/SSD dt 22.02.2011

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This has a reference to the letter addressed to the Honble Minister. Environment & Forms! by one Bri Prasant Paikray regarding violation of forest rights in POSCO Project area. In this connection, it is submitted that district administration, Jagatsinghour has played a proactive small in implementing the provisions of Forest Right Act 2006. It has undertaken extensive measures to educate the public, P.R.f. members & Public Officers about individual rights and community right of Tribals & Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFDs) over the forest land ander their occupation for their bonafide livelihood needs. Accordingly, Forest Rights Committees (FRC) have been formed in all the villages of the district including the villages milier PCSCO project area. In respect of Dhinkia & Gobindpur village Palli Sabha were held on  $\pm 3.0222008$  as per schedule and FRCs formed on the same day. Details of the provisions of the inorre Act. & Rules and benefits available for the Tribals and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers vere assoussed in the meeting and explained to the people. The viilagers were also explained the procedure for filing claims for individual and community rights with relevant documents, if my within a period of three months w.e.f 23 03,2008. No such claim pertaining to individual right or community right has been received from the people of Dhinkia village within the said barrod. It is worth mentioning that Sri Sisir Kumar Mohapatra who is an active member of the POSCO Pratirodha Sangram Samiti and acting as the Secretary of the organization and at present the Sarapancha of Dhinkia G.P has signed the Palli Sabha and FRC proceedings of Dhinkia village on 23.03.2008. (Copy of the proceeding is enclosed as ANNEXURE-I). Similarly the iPall: Sabha of Gobindapur village was held on 23.03.2008, the FRC was constituted and the part-opents were explained in detail about the FR act and rules and benefits available for the people under different provisions and the procedure for filing claims if any pertaining to advidual and community rights within three months. (Copy of the proceeding is enclosed as ANNEXURE-II). Nebody in these villages filed any claim within the stipulated period, nor the wham Anbha, by resolution, considered it necessary to extend such period of three months by recording the reasons for not filling of any claim.

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The allegation of Sri. Palkaray that Sri Sisir Kumar Mchapatra, the Sarapanch of that not received any information, documents or records from the state Govt at any of to the Forest Right Act, is not correct. Initially, he was the Secretary of the FRC of the and has passed resolution inviting claims from interested persons. As the people is project area are fully convinced that non-of-them qualifies to constitute O.T.F.D. in that there was no forest in the project area and the land is covered by casuarina usity after 1971 cyclone for protection of sea coast. The land within the project area and forest land, but was waste land which has been declared by State Govt, as those only on 4th October, 1961 Under Section 29 of Indian Forest Act.

cover dependant on betel vines and cashew trees for seasonal neflection of leaf or not constitute community claims. Cashew and betel vines being non-forest activities on such crop, if any, for less than 75 years should not qualify to be treated as forest marry non-filling of claims within the stipulated period and filling of the claims at a great with an ulterior motive is not tenable in law should not be encouraged to block the adopment. If we speak the truth, there is nothing new in the allegations made by Sri are the Hon'ble Minister, Environment & Forest. The aforesaid allegations have been light forums at different time on behalf of POSCO Pratirodha Sangram Samiti and rossition thereof has been clearly explained to the satisfaction of everybody.

regard to allegation by Sri Paikray that Palli Sabha of Dhinkia and Gobindapur ed resolutions on February 5th, and 6th, of 2010 asserting, their eligibility under Right Act, and rejecting consent to proposed diversion of forest land for roject, it is submitted that no such resolution has been made in the Palli Sabha in telificial members, nor any such resolution have been handed over to any authority. ably brought to the notice of the Sub-Collector, Jagatsinghpur at Dhinkia village on sing the discussion held with the Forest Right Act, committee members by Sri Sisir reported. Sarpancha of Dhinkia G.P who handed over the English translation copy of rentioned Palli Sabha to him. The Palli Sabha Resolution of Dhinkia and Gobindapur to have been passed on 05.02.2010 and 06.02.2010 respectively are not passed in £1 a but must have been manufactured at later stage with ulter or motive only to Committee and to create confusion in the process of land acquisition by Sri Sisir spatra, the Sarpanch, a strong supporter of POSCO Pratirodha Sangram Samit: by sofficial position knowing very well that no person in the POSCO project area The OTFD. On a thorough search from the District office, Block office and Gram office records it is ascertained that these resolution were never recoived at any epy of such resolution has been sent to District Office nor Block Office nor it is the G.P. Office with the Executive Officer who is the Secretary of the Gram Sabha है। हो। of the Forest Right Rules 2007 and custodian of official records including the ಾರ್ ೨alli Sabha resolutions.

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Monroval, the Forest Rights Act does not provide for any such mandatory provision for completion of the process before diversion of any forest land or consent of Gram Sabha. The Larest (Conservation) Act, 1980 also does not provide for mandatory completion of the process of ERA before diversion of forest land. The FC Act, guidelines only provides for submission of Aara Gabha Resolution" along with the forest diversion proposal with many exceptional clauses Even the PESA Act lays down that "the Gram Sabha or the Panchayat Samili at the appropriate level shall be consulted before making the acquisition of land in the scheduled areas for development projects and before resettling or rehabilitating persons affected by such projects in the scheduled area. The actual planning and implementation of the project in the scheduled areas shall be coordinated at the State level". Thus it may be observed that in case of development project the PESA Act. Prescribes for prior consultation with Gram Sabha before making land acquisition in the scheduled areas only. In this background, obtaining the consent of Gram Sabha for the proposed diversion of forest land outside scheduled areas does not appoar to have any legal basis.

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Yours faithfully,

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Collector & District Magist

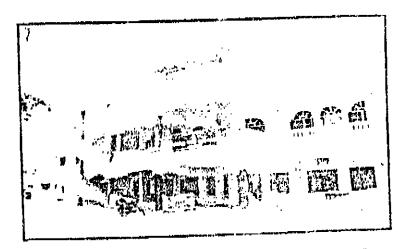
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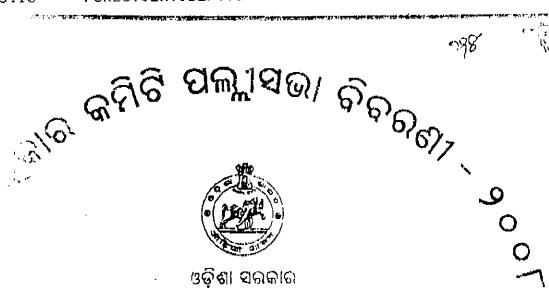
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。"<sub>我</sub>国,我们就是"我"。

Charles (100 Horist)

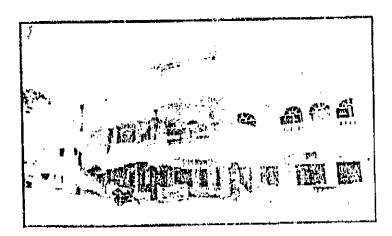




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A ha of Forest Land for establishment of Integrated Steel ort by POSCO-India Ltd. in Jagatsinghpur District. Orissa.

dated 22.03.2011 of Forest & Environment Department.

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Yours faithfully.

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## **ANNEX-II**

#### POSCO PRATIRODH SANGRAM SAMITI

Gram Panchayats Dhinkia, Nuagaon, Gadkujang, Erasama Block, Jagatsinghpur District, Orissa.

April 11, 2011

To: Shri Jairam Ramesh Minister of State (I/C) for Environment and Forests Paryavaran Bhavan, CGO Complex New Delhi 110 003

Sub: Expected assurance from Orissa government related to POSCO project; facts already on record with your Ministry demonstrate that any such assurance will be false

Dear Sir,

We are the main organisation of the people who will be affected by the POSCO project's proposed steel plant in Jagatsinghpur District of Orissa. Since the Ministry's decision of January 31, 2011 in favour of the project, we have been forwarding documents, complaints and gram sabha resolutions from the area to the Ministry in order to demonstrate the utter illegality of any "assurance" from the Orissa government on the lines that the Ministry has requested.

As recent press reports indicate that such an assurance is expected this week, we wish to reiterate the submissions made to your Ministry recently:

- 1. Representation of the POSCO Pratirodh Sangram Samiti dated 03.02.2011, in which we have listed the official documentary evidence that proves that we are indeed other traditional forest dwellers and which is already on record with the Ministry as a result of the POSCO Enquiry Committee.
- 2. Complaint of the Forest Rights Committees of Dhinkia and Gobindpur villages dated February 11th, 2011, accompanied with sworn affidavits of the sarpanch of Dhinkia and the Panchayat Samiti member from Gadkujang village, and copies of resolutions passed by Dhinkia and Govindpur gram sabhas in February 2010. The affidavits and complaints clearly state that no records, forms or materials were provided to anyone in these villages relating to the Forest Rights Act, and further state that the Committees (which are the inquiry bodies under the Forest Rights Rules) hold that the people of the area are indeed other traditional forest dwellers and that their claims for community rights are pending before the Sub-Divisional Level Committee.
- 3. Gram sabha resolutions of the villages of Dhinkia and Gobindpur passed on February 21st and 23rd, 2011, respectively, which state that the people of the area are eligible as other traditional forest dwellers, that they enjoy both individual and community rights under the Forest Rights Act, and that they reject consent to the proposed diversion for the POSCO project. The palli sabhas also exercised their power under Rule 11 of the Forest Rights Rules to extend the deadline for receipt of claims. These resolutions complied with all technical requirements and are valid as palli sabha resolutions (the palli sabha being the gram sabha for the purposes of the Forest Rights Act in Orissa). These were forwarded to you on March 10th. These resolutions are also evidence under the Ministry's order of July 30th 2009 and show that that order was never complied with, in contravention of the Ministry's condition imposed on the final clearance of December 29, 2009.

We further wish to inform you that, without any assistance or statutorily required implementation steps

from the State government, and despite the intense police presence and constant threat of violence, the people of the area and in particular of Dhinkia and Gobindpur villages have been completing the process of filling out claim forms and verifying rights claims and that several hundred such claims are expected to be approved by the respective palli sabhas within the next fifteen days. It is also expected that these palli sabhas will be issuing notice under section 8 of the Forest Rights Act to the State government for its blatantly false statements over the past year, which constitute criminal offences under section 7 of the Act and sections 192 and 219 of the IPC.

Finally, Sir, we wish to note that as per recent press reports the Orissa government intends to argue that we cannot be other traditional forest dwellers as the land was not notified as forest land until 1961. This is a malicious and absurd distortion of law and has already been dealt with by the POSCO Enquiry Committee in depth. The fact is - as demonstrated by the Orissa government's own maps - that the area was forest as per section 2(d) of the Forest Rights Act in 1930, and this is the relevant definition.

In light of the above we wish to reiterate that any assurance from the Orissa government has been shown to be both false and illegal and that the evidence to demonstrate this is on record with the Ministry. We call upon the Ministry to reject any such false assurance.

Sincerely,

(Prashant Paikray) Spokesperson