

From: Jairam Ramesh <jairam54@gmail.com <jairam54%40gmail.com>>
>> Date: Thu, 28 Oct 2010 10:17:21 +0530
>> Subject: Fwd: DFO suspended and other action on NFRA comm report in UP
>> To: Naresh Saxena <naresh.saxena@gmail.com <naresh.saxena%40gmail.com>>
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>> NCji:
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>> I am not all happy that FRA Committee findings are being used in this
>> fashion. I expected that you would submit your report by December 15th as
>> agreed and then we would take it forward. This is no way of reciprocating a
>> Minister's goodwill for civil society groups.
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>> Warm regards,
>>
>> Jairam Ramesh

Dear Sri Jairam Ramesh,

This refers to your email dated October 28 regarding action taken by the UP Government on the findings of the FRA Committee that visited the state in September.

As you are undoubtedly aware, our Committee has been mandated to study in detail the implementation of the Forest Rights Act in the states, including factors that are aiding and impeding its implementation. Towards this end, the Committee as provided in the TORs visits the states, holds consultations on all relevant issues with the stakeholders, including forest dwellers, field staff, and public representatives. It is also our endeavour to meet with the senior state officials to brief them about our findings and engage with them on how to improve the implementation of the Act in the field.

In this particular case, the Committee Members were lucky as they were able to get an audience with the Chief Secretary, who not only heard them patiently but decided to send a team of senior officials to investigate the irregularities that were pointed out to him in our report. Our Members' observations were vindicated by the findings of the senior UP officials, and that led to action against the field officials.

It has been our practice to not only share our field reports with the concerned state governments, but put them on our website too for wider

dissemination and awareness raising. This enables us to share our knowledge and observations with the stakeholders, which is necessary to raise consciousness about the plight of forest dwellers, and to undo the 'historical injustice' to them, so eloquently stated in the Preamble of the Act itself.

I am happy to report that the practice of sharing field report with the State Governments and the two Ministries has often resulted in prompt action by the states or clarifications being issued by MOTA. These successes would be fully documented in our final report (which will simultaneously appear on our website) that we will submit to the Ministry by the 15th December. Keeping totally silent about our field observations and keeping them locked up till that date will neither serve the interests of the forest dwellers nor will it be consistent with our own commitment to transparency.

Hope this clarifies the matter.

Warm regards,

NC