

AGREEMENT ON LAND REFORMS BETWEEN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (GOI)

AND JAN SATYAGRAHA

- 1. National Land Reforms Policy:** While land reforms is clearly a state subject under the Constitution, the MoRD acknowledges that a National Land Reforms Policy announced by the Central Government could have its own importance. The MoRD will initiate a dialogue with States immediately and put out a draft of this policy for public debate and discussion in the next 4-6 months and to be finalised soon thereafter. The draft Land Reforms Policy prepared by the *Jan Satyagraha* organized by *EktaParishad* will be an important input into the preparation of this draft. Civil Society Organisations will also be actively involved in this exercise.
- 2. Statutory backing to the provision of agricultural land and Homestead Land:** MoRD will proactively initiate the dialogue process with States to take up steps on the issue of giving statutory backing (like MGNREGA and FRA) to (a) provision of agricultural land to the landless poor in the backward districts; and (b) provision of Homestead Rights to the landless and shelter less poor of rural areas, all over the country, so as to guarantee 10 cents of homestead to every landless and shelter less rural poor household.
- 3. Homestead Land:** MoRD will propose doubling the unit cost to enable provision of 10 cents of land as homestead for every landless and shelter less poor family as a component of the Indira Awas Yojana (IAY).
- 4. Enhanced Land Access and Land rights for the poor, marginalized and deprived landless:** The MoRD agrees to issue detailed advisories in the next two months exhorting the States to focus on the effective implementation of various laws enacted by legislatures aimed at protecting the land rights of dalits, adivasis and all other weaker and marginalized sections of society. Details of these advisories will be worked out in consultation with civil society organisations active on this issue. MoRD will also, through a set of advisories exhort and support the State Governments to take up a time-bound programme, for securing access to land to specific categories of marginalized and deprived landless families.
- 5. Fast Track Land Tribunals:** The MoRD agrees to initiate a dialogue with States to establish Fast Track Land Tribunals/Courts for speedy disposal of the cases pending in revenue and judicial courts. In addition to the Central Scheme for legal aid, States too will be exhorted to extend legal aid to all the persons belonging to socially deprived sections, whose lands are involved in litigation, particularly dalits and tribal communities.
- 6. Effective Implementation of Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA):** MoRD will work with the Ministries of Tribal Affairs and Panchayati Raj to complete stakeholder consultations over the next four months so that detailed circulars to States could be issued for ensuring effective implementation of PESA by empowering the Gram Sabhas to exercise the powers given to them under the Act.

7. **Effective implementation of Forest Rights Act:** Ministry of Tribal Affairs have issued a comprehensive set of revised rules on 13th September, 2012 under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers(Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. States will be actively exhorted and supported for effective implementation of the Forest Rights Act in the light of the revised rules and directives issued by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and in light of suggestions received from civil society organisations.
8. **Forest and Revenue Boundary Disputes:** MoRD agrees to issue an advisory to States to set up joint teams of Forest and Revenue Departments to undertake a thorough survey of the forest and revenue boundaries to resolve disputes. The Gram Panchayats and Gram Sabhas will be fully involved in the survey and settlement process.
9. **Survey, updating of records and governing Common Property Resources:** The MoRD will exhort and support the States to carry out survey of Common Property Resources (CPRs) with the direct involvement of the Gram Sabha and the Gram Panchayats concerned. The States will also be advised to ensure full implementation of recent Supreme Courts' directions on this matter.
10. **Task Force on Land Reforms:** The MoRD will immediately set up a Task Force on Land Reforms headed by the Union Minister for Rural Development to implement the above agenda. Members of the Task Force will include representatives of MoRD, state governments, civil society organisations working on land reform issues and all stakeholders concerned.

In light of this Agreement Jan Satyagraha agrees to discontinue its present march and work with the MoRD to carry forward this agenda.

Jairam Ramesh,
*Minister for Rural Development,
Drinking Water and Sanitation,
Government of India*

PV Rajagopal
Jan Satyagraha

Dated: October 11th 2012,

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