

## **UPDATE FROM POSCO PRATIRODH SANGRAM SAMITI – 29th May 2013**

Dear Friends,

Despite protests and public opinion against illegal felling of trees and demolition of betel vines in the proposed POSCO project area, the state government continued its undemocratic and tyrannical measures by destroying trees and betel vines. Finally came the intervention of NGT on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2013, when the green body stayed the tree cutting activities of the state government for POSCO project in our area. As you know in the last hearing on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2012, the NGT had suspended the environmental clearance granted to the POSCO in our area. Though this suspension order has not been withdrawn or challenged in the NGT, The Industrial Development Corporation Limited (IDCO) has been acquiring lands for POSCO at gun point in Govindapur. Currently more than 3 lakh old trees have been cut which acted like a protective shield against any natural calamities like tidal waves and frequent cyclones etc. As per news reports, last week tidal waves entered to the main land up to 5 Kilometers as the natural barriers such as trees have been finished.

So far they have acquired 1093 ha of fertile agricultural land, destroyed betel vines illegally through severe repressive strategies like implicating people in false cases, by making heavy deployment of police force and unleashing violence by private goons such as throwing bombs which killed four peaceful protesters.

NGT was intimated about the illegal tree cutting and trench construction work as POSCO does not have a valid environmental clearance. The petition near NGT said the state government is yet to formulate a conversion policy for changing forest to industrial areas while it went ahead with cutting trees and destroying betel vines for the POSCO plant.

In the last hearing, the tribunal had asked an expert committee under the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests to review the project afresh. A committee was formed by MOEF to review the project headed by former bureaucrat K Roy Paul. The committee report was very critical on POSCO and the government environmental clearance process. Attaching here with the Roy Paul committee report and a note for your information.

In another development, POSCO's financiers have been questioned for sponsoring the plant in our land. On 26<sup>th</sup> May 2013, Norway's National Contact Point (NCP) – a body that

oversees the implementation Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development guidelines – has pulled up the country's \$740 billion oil fund for aiding POSCO plant. NCP said Norges Bank Investment Management (NBIM), which manages the oil fund on behalf of the Norwegian government, has refused to cooperate with the OECD Contact Point in its assessment of the fund's investments in POSCO. "NBIM has violated the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, and it lacks a strategy for identifying and handling possible violations of human rights in the companies they invest," NCP said in a statement on Monday.

The investigation was triggered by a complaint from several organizations about the 12 million tonnes annual capacity steel plant planned by POSCO, which will displace 20,000 people physically and leave them without any means of living. A complaint filed to the local OECD contact points of South Korea, Norway and Holland by the non-governmental organizations Lok Shakti Abhiyan in India, KTNC Watch in South Korea, Fair Green and Global Alliance in the Netherlands and Norway's Forum for Environment and Development. These organisations have claimed the stakeholders or funders should have used their influence to prevent or mitigate the damage caused by the human rights violations during the acquisition for the plant.

Your continuous support and co-operation will always inspire us to fight in the face of adversities.

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