

भारत सरकार  
Government of India  
पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय  
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change  
राष्ट्रीय व्याघ्र संरक्षण प्राधिकरण  
National Tiger Conservation Authority

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F. No. 15-22/2020-NTCA

New Delhi, the December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**OFFICE MEMORANDUM**

**Sub: Minutes of the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of National Tiger Conservation Authority held on 07-12-2020- reg.**

The undersigned is directed to enclose herewith minutes of the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of National Tiger Conservation Authority, as approved by the Hon'ble Chairman, NTCA / MEF&CC, which was held on December 07, 2020 through video conference, for kind perusal and record.

Encl: As above.



**(Rajendra G. Garawad)**

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**Distribution:**

All NTCA Members/ Participants (as per **Annexure-I** of minutes of the meeting).

**Copy to:**

1. PS to Hon'ble MEF&CC.
2. PS to Hon'ble MoS, MEF&CC
3. Sr PPS to Secretary, (E, F&CC)
4. Sr PPS to DGF&SS, MoEF&CC
5. PS to ADG(PT) & MS (NTCA).
6. IGF/DIGF/AIGS, NTCA HQ/ Regional Offices Bengaluru/Guwahati/ Nagpur.

**Summary Records of 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority  
(NTCA)  
(held on December 7, 2020, New Delhi)**

The 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) was held on December 8, 2020 under Chairmanship of Sh. Prakash Javadekar, Hon'ble Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Chairman NTCA through video conference.

2. The list of participants is at **Annexure-1**.

3. The Hon'ble MEF&CC/Chairman NTCA welcomed the participants. The ADG (PT) & Member Secretary, NTCA apprised the participants about COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken like issue of advisory, closing of tiger reserves for visitation by NTCA in the wake of COVID-19 infection in Bronx zoo tigers in the USA. Due to these preventive measures and timely intervention not a single case has been reported in the wild tigers of India.

He also highlighted the recent achievements of NTCA which includes: Release of All India Tiger Estimation (AITE) report on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2020 by Hon'ble MEF&CC and Chairman, NTCA; Guinness World Record for using largest number of camera traps for monitoring tigers and their prey base and Tx2 Award by consortium of GEF, UNDP, IUCN, WWF & GTF to Pilibhit Tiger Reserve and Manas Tiger Reserve.

The Member Secretary, NTCA also apprised the participants about the visit of Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Hon'ble Member, NTCA to Valmiki Tiger Reserve and visit of the Secretary, MoEF&CC to Corbett and Ranthambore Tiger Reserve and mentioned about valuable suggestions/ feedback received during these visits for improving tiger reserve management.

4. This was followed by agenda wise discussion as below:

**(i) Agenda No. 1: Confirmation of Minutes of 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting held on 06.01.2020.**

**Members confirmed minutes of 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NTCA.**

**(ii) Agenda No. 2: Action Taken Report on the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of NTCA.**

The ADG (PT) & MS (NTCA) briefly explained the highlights of Action Taken Report (ATR).

**Members approved the ATR on 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the NTCA.**

**(iii) Agenda No. 3: Approval of Annual Report and Budget / Expenditure schedules for 2019-20.**

The ADG (PT) & MS (NTCA) informed that there has been 100% utilization of budget sanctioned under Grants-in-aid and Grants-in-aid salaries during 2019-20.

**Members approved the annual report and budget/expenditure schedules for 2019-20.**

**(iv) Agenda No. 4: Appraisal and ratifications of decisions of Technical Committee of NTCA and Recommendations made to National Board for Wildlife (NBWL).**

The ADG (PT) & MS (NTCA) presented that during the current tenure of NTCA, six technical committees were held and recommendations for a total of 42 developmental proposals had been given to Standing Committee (SC) of NBWL under section 38 O of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

**The members ratified the decisions of Technical Committees and recommendations made to Standing Committee of NBWL.**

**(v) Agenda No. 5: Agenda items proposed by Shri Harshvardhan Singh Dungarpur, Hon'ble MP and Member NTCA.**

**(a) Notification of Kumbalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary as Tiger Reserve:**

The ADG (PT) & MS (NTCA) informed the Hon'ble member about the process of declaration of tiger reserve and notification of critical tiger habitats which involves submission of proposals by the State Government.

He further stated that the proposal regarding notification of Kumbalgarh WLS as Tiger Reserve is awaited from the State of Rajasthan.

The Hon'ble Member also highlighted the problem of invasive weed lantana in tiger reserves across India. Taking note of the issue, the Hon'ble Chairman informed that apart from grassland development, water and fodder augmentation activities, the lantana removal and eco-restoration work will be undertaken using CAMPA funds in addition to the funding support provided under the ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger.

**(b) Notification of new critical tiger habitats in the State of Rajasthan.**

The ADG (PT) & MS, NTCA informed that the Government of Rajasthan has been addressed on potential areas for which requisite action has to be taken by the State Government.

**(c) Status of village relocation from tiger reserves**

The ADG (PT) & MS (NTCA) stated that there are about 46,000 families still residing inside tiger reserves and relocation of these villagers will be undertaken on voluntary basis in a phased manner as and when financial resources are available. A rough estimate indicates that approximately Rs 6,000 crore shall be required for voluntary village relocation activity.

Secretary, MoEF&CC suggested that the possibility of involving private sector / non governmental institutions in the village relocation process may be explored. Shri Hemendra Kothari, Member, NTCA highlighted the importance of village relocation in creating inviolate area and the difference it has already made in some tiger reserves like Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra. He further suggested that the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds may also be tapped for the village relocation work.

The CWLW, Maharashtra mentioned that in case of Maharashtra, most of the potential village relocation sites are in the tribal dominated areas and for carrying out voluntary village relocation, funds from Tribal Department are being utilized. He suggested that a similar approach may be followed in areas having significant tribal population.

#### **(e) Posting of staff as per sanctioned strength in tiger reserves**

The ADG (PT) & MS, NTCA apprised that the staff strength details have been collated from all tiger reserves and letters have been issued by HMEF to Chief Ministers, Secretary to Chief Secretaries of States for filling existing vacancies in tiger reserve. Further, the status of staff position in tiger reserves is being monitored by the NTCA periodically.

#### **(f) Notification of tiger corridors for movement of tigers**

The ADG (PT) & MS (NTCA) informed that currently there are no provision within the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 for notification of tiger corridors. However, these corridors are being safeguarded through enabling provisions of the Tiger Conservation Plan of tiger reserves which is a statutory requirement.

In addition to the aforementioned agenda points, the Hon'ble member raised the issue of tiger deaths in Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserves and at other places in Rajasthan due to poisoning, snaring and locally made explosives and also about the lantana invasive weed infestation.

The ADG (PT) & MS, NTCA informed that there is a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in place and *prima facie* all tiger deaths are treated as poaching unless proven otherwise. He mentioned that all tiger deaths of Rajasthan particularly of Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve have been inquired by a NTCA team and the findings will be forwarded to the State for taking appropriate action.

#### **(vi) Agenda No. 6: Agenda items proposed by Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Hon'ble MP and Member NTCA.**

##### **a) Uniform operational guidelines for Tiger Conservation Foundations**

The ADG (PT) & MS, NTCA stated that a total of 41 Tiger Conservation Foundations (TCF) have been created so far and guidelines for TCF have been issued. Hon'ble Chairman instructed that uniform guidelines / manual of operations for making TCF functionally operative may be issued within a month.

Secretary, MoEF&CC, commented that during his recent visits to Corbett and Ranthambore Tiger Reserves it was brought to his notice that gate receipts of Tiger Reserves generated from eco-tourism activities were getting deposited to state treasury instead of ploughing it back to the foundation.

Further the Secretary added that he had already written to Chief Secretaries of Uttarakhand and Rajasthan requesting them to deposit the tiger reserve revenue into TCF account and a similar communication to the State Forest Ministers may be issued by Hon'ble Chairman.

Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Hon'ble Member suggested that similar to 'Namami Gange Foundation' which receives CSR contributions a 'National Tiger Conservation Foundation' may be created for soliciting CSR donations for undertaking tiger conservation initiatives. The Secretary, MoEF&CC, suggested that in addition to the provision of cash contributions, provision may also be made for receiving contributions 'in kind'.

#### **b) Improving efficiency and operationality of States Steering Committees**

Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Hon'ble Member informed the participants that though Steering Committees have been constituted by Tiger Range States but not a single meeting of these Steering Committees has taken place so far. Further, there is no provision of including Member of Parliament in the Steering Committees, the member added. Hon'ble Chairman, instructed the ADG (PT) & MS, NTCA to constitute a committee for formulation of rules for making Steering Committees functional.

#### **c) Formulation of Tiger Conservation Plans (TCP)**

The ADG(PT) & MS, NTCA informed the members that out of 50 tiger reserves, the TCPs of 38 tiger reserves have been approved by NTCA and TCPs of only 12 tiger reserves are under preparation at various stages by the State Governments.

#### **d) Compliance of decisions taken during 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the NTCA**

Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Hon'ble Member commented that in respect of Action Taken Report of 17<sup>th</sup> NTCA meeting, information is still wanting in respect of issues like water management in tiger reserves and simplification of eco-tourism guidelines issued by NTCA.

In the context of LAC members and simplification of carrying capacity guidelines are being addressed by a committee constituted for updating the NTCA guidelines.

The Hon'ble member suggested that a comprehensive report on water management in tiger reserves may be sought from the tiger reserves and all pending activities like simplification of tourism related guidelines etc should be expedited. The Hon'ble member also suggested that members may be consulted for feedback before issuing guidelines on thematic areas like Corporate Social Responsibility for conservation.

The Hon'ble Chairman, NTCA informed the members that the use of LIDAR technology for survey of forest resourced is being explored by the Ministry and this latest technological tool may help in mapping the water resources of tiger reserves as well.

Other points highlighted by the Hon'ble Member for compliance under this agenda item were:

- Redesignation of sub-committee members for better co-ordination with States.
- Revision of Local Advisory Committee (LAC) guidelines as there is no provision of including the Member of Parliament in LAC.
- Preparation of directory of Inspection Bungalows / Forest Rest Houses of tiger reserves.
- Organizing training program for tour operators

Taking note of the points, the Authority instructed the NTCA officials for organizing capacity building training modules / programs for tour operators.

#### **e) Veterinary infrastructure in tiger reserves**

The Hon'ble Member suggested that appropriate veterinary infrastructure should be created in each of the tiger reserve for monitoring the health of wildlife. The suggestion was noted by the Authority and instructions were given for collecting information on existing veterinary infrastructure in tiger reserves. Secretary, EF&CC suggested training of veterinary doctors in wildlife procedures from experienced States like Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat.

#### **f) Brief on visit to Valmiki Tiger Reserve, Bihar to all members**

The Hon'ble Member shared a brief report pertaining to his visit to Valmiki Tiger Reserve and expressed satisfaction at the conservation works being undertaken in the tiger reserve. He suggested that such visits by NTCA members would further the cause of tiger conservation through effective co-ordination and liaisoning with all concerned.

#### **g) Status of Kaimur National Park, Bihar for discussion**

The ADG(PT) & MS, NTCA informed that a proposal in this regard is awaited from the State Government for considering it to declare it a tiger reserve.

#### **h) Inclusion of Member (s) of Parliament in Tiger Conservation Foundations**

The Hon'ble Member suggestion for including the Members of Parliament in the Tiger Conservation Foundation (TCF) and framing of operational manual for TCF was noted by the Hon'ble Chairman.

The Hon'ble Member while appreciating the good work of NTCA officials categorically highlighted the issues of reduction of Project Tiger budget from Rs 350 crores to Rs 195 crores in the current financial year. He emphasized that a large chunk of funds allocated to tiger reserve being spent on employment of local communities as forest watchers, trackers for protection of forest and wildlife. This sudden cut in the CSS-Project Tiger budget may affect the livelihoods of poor and vulnerable people during COVID-19 pandemic. Hon'ble Member urged the Chairman to kindly ensure adequate funding support to NTCA and Tiger Reserve so that protection of forest & wildlife doesn't get compromised.

The Authority took note of the budget related issues and instructed the MS, NTCA to prepare a brief note for apprising the Finance Minister about the fund requirement.

**(vii) Agenda No. 7 : Proposed by Shri P. R Sinha, Member NTCA**

Shri Sinha, Member NTCA mentioned about several important tiger reserve management issues flagged in the All-India Tiger Estimation – 2018 report which needs to be acted upon. He said that 39 out of 50 reserves do not have self - sustaining population. Long term survival of these reserves would depend upon addressing negative factors operating in the fringe and corridors connecting these reserves. There is need for lateral thinking for developing appropriate strategies to manage these populations. He suggested that a brain storming session may be organized with relevant agencies to address negative factors operating on such populations. .

The MS, NTCA briefed the member that all issues highlighted in the AITE and Management Effective Evaluation exercise of 2018 have been communicated to all Tiger Range States for appropriate action and shall be duly reviewed.

**(viii) Agenda No. 8 : Proposed by Dr S. S. Srivastav, Member NTCA**

Dr Srivastav proposed that the land vacated inside the tiger reserve due to voluntary village relocation should be monitored for the status of prey, habitat and the management interventions which may be required for use by the wildlife. MS, NTCA while taking note of the point reiterated that the issue will be addressed in collaboration with Wildlife Institute of India.

The Member NTCA also pointed out the implications of reduced funding support to tiger reserves particularly in tiger reserves affected particularly by Left Wing Extremism. He urged the Chairman, NTCA for providing additional budget in the current financial year.

**(ix) Agenda No. 9 : Any other item with the approval of the Chair.**



**(a) ADG (PT) & MS, NTCA:**

With the approval of Chair, the ADG(PT) & MS, NTCA explained the need for having a Vision Plan for tiger conservation for the next 10 years which was agreed by the Authority.

**(b) Shri Hemendra Kothari**

The member reiterated the points pertaining to the importance of voluntary village relocation by enhancing the relocation package and the need for ploughing back the gate receipts of tiger reserve into the Tiger Conservation Foundations.

**(f) Dr Anish Andheria**

The member suggested that NTCA may consider issuing an advisory to the Tiger Range States to manage corridors for facilitating the movement of dispersing tigers. According to him, sometimes the corridors are managed by following the approach used for 'core area' of tiger reserve which may lead to growing human-wildlife conflicts. He also suggested that 'Compensatory Afforestation' may be carried out in corridor areas as it will be a win-win situation for the project proponent and also for tiger reserves. The member pointed out that CSS-Project Tiger funds play an important role in tiger reserve management and any cut in the funding would have adverse impacts on tiger conservation.

**(g) Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Hon'ble MP & Member NTCA**

The Hon'ble Member suggested that the status of linear infrastructure projects may be expediated because the delay in construction impacts the movement of wild animals.

The Hon'ble Member appreciated the work being done by the NTCA for tiger conservation in the country and requested for quarterly meeting of the NTCA on regular basis.

**(h) CWLW, Odisha**

The CWLW, Odisha requested for enhancement of package for voluntary village relocation. It was informed that the proposal in this regard is already under consideration.

Hon'ble Minister, EF&CC and Chairman, NTCA, expressed satisfaction over the efforts of NTCA. The meeting ended with thanks to the Chair and participants.

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**Annexure I**

<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Name/Designation and Address</b>
1.	The Minister in charge of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
2.	The Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change
3.	Ms. Diya Kumari, Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha)
4.	Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha)
5.	Shri Harshvardhan Singh Dungarpur, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha)
6.	Shri P.R. Sinha, Former Director, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, House No. K-1-12, Sector -D, Prasad Lab, Kankar Bagh Colony, Patna, Bihar-800020.
7.	Dr. Tishyarakshit Chatterjee, Former Secretary, MoEF&CC, Plot No. 208-A, Road No. 14, Jubilee Hills, Telangana-500033
8.	Shri Hemendra Kothari, Chairman, DSP Black Rock, Mafatlal Centre, 10th Floor, Nariman Point, Mumbai-400021. Maharashtra
9.	Dr. Erach Bharucha, Director, Bharati Vidyapeeth Institute of Environment, Education and Research, Katraj-Dhankawadi Campus, Pune-Satara Road, Pune-411043
10.	Shri B.K. Patnaik, IFS, Retd. PCCF & CWLW, Uttar Pradesh, 105-Surekha Villa, Nigamananda Nagar-2, Bomikhal, Bhubaneswar, Odisha-751010.
11.	Dr S.S. Srivastava, IFS, Retd. PCCF & HoFF, Odisha, Flat No. B-031, Raheja Atlantis, Sector-31, Gurgaon (Haryana)-122001.
12.	Dr Anish Andheria (Ph.D.), Wildlife Conservation Trust,

	11th Floor, Mafatlal Centre, Nariman Point, Mumbai-400021.
13.	Shri Khageswar Nayak, Retd. Field Director, Kanha Tiger Reserve, S.V.19, Shreekhetra Vihar, Aiginia, Dist. Khurda, Bhubaneswar, Odisha-751019.
14.	Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
15.	Director General of Forests & Special Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
16.	Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Environment, Forest and Climate Change
17.	Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
18.	Chairperson, National Commission for the Scheduled Tribes
19.	Chairperson, National Commission for the Scheduled Castes
20.	Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj
21.	Director, Wildlife Preservation, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
22.	Chief Wildlife Warden, Uttar Pradesh
23.	Chief Wildlife Warden, Telangana
24.	Chief Wildlife Warden, Assam
25.	Chief Wildlife Warden, Odisha
26.	Chief Wildlife Warden, Jharkhand

27.	Chief Wildlife Warden, Maharashtra
28.	Joint Secretary and Legislative Counsel, Legislative Department, Ministry of Law and Justice
29.	Additional Director General of Forests (Project Tiger), Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change