



MINUTES OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE NATIONAL TIGER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY HELD UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH, MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS ON THE 6TH OF OCTOBER, 2009 IN ROOM NO. 403, PARYAVARAN BHAVAN, NEW DELHI

The fourth meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (and the first meeting of the reconstituted NTCA) was held under the Chairmanship of Shri Jairam Ramesh, Minister for Environment and Forests on the 6th of October, 2009 in Paryavaran Bhavan, New Delhi.

The Hon'ble Minister for Environment and Forests and Chairman of the NTCA, Shri Jairam Ramesh, welcomed the members and other participants. The Chairman in his introductory remarks highlighted the recent initiatives taken by the Ministry for strengthening tiger conservation in the country, while articulating on the recent categorization of tiger reserves and the tripartite MOU with tiger States. The Chairman also apprised the members of his recent visit to China and interaction with the Chinese authorities on several issues relating to tiger including tiger farming. While highlighting the fact that the year 2010 is being observed as the year of the tiger in China, it was stated that an Indian delegation would visit China in the near future for interacting with the Chinese authorities to strengthen tiger conservation in the region. Further, a mention was made regarding the Global Tiger Initiative of the World Bank and the proposed World Tiger Summit at Russia, as a part of the said initiative. The Chairman informed that India is home to almost 60% of world's wild tiger population, and hence an International workshop would be organized from 14th to 16th February, 2010 at the Corbett Tiger Reserve, signaling the tiger year. This would be followed by a Tiger Summit in October / November, 2010 at Ranthambhore, with several other events to bring a focus on tiger conservation in the intervening period, with a view to establish India's premier position in this regard. The Chairman also briefly touched upon issues relating to Tadoba, NH-7, Mudumalai and the forthcoming all India tiger estimation. He spoke on issues raised during the two hour discussion on tiger conservation in the Parliament during the last session. He also praised the contributions made by Ms. Belinda Wright in keeping track of wildlife offences, and on the ongoing litigation relating to them. The Chairman also apprised the members of the initiatives underway for providing funding support to tiger reserves during the month of April each year.

This was followed by a discussion on the agenda items, presented by the Member Secretary (MS), National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), the details of which are as indicated below:

Agenda Item No. 1

Confirmation of minutes of the third meeting and observations received from Members

Shri Samar Singh, Expert Member, NTCA wanted clarification regarding the phrase "effective surrender policy in extremist ridden areas" as indicated in the agenda notes. The MS (NTCA) informed the member of the decision taken during the third meeting of the NTCA regarding an effective surrender policy for extremists, in areas affected by extremist engineered disturbances. Shri Valmik Thapar, Expert Member, NTCA desired a written response from the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes in this regard. Ms. Urmila Pingle, Expert Member, NTCA pointed out that there were reports of local authorities harassing tribals during relocation in some tiger reserves like Similipal, Kalakad Mundanthurai and Mudumalai Tiger Reserves. The Chairman directed that a written response should be sent to the Member on the factual status within three weeks. The Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs in his response to the Chairman highlighted the existing provisions for village relocation from the critical wildlife habitats as provided in the Scheduled Tribes and Other Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, subject to the condition that the rights of such people are duly recognized / settled.

With the above observations, the minutes of the third meeting of the NTCA were approved.



Agenda Item No. 2

Update on recent milestone initiatives taken by the Ministry of Environment and Forests/National Tiger Conservation Authority for strengthening tiger conservation in the country

The MS (NTCA) highlighted the milestone initiatives taken in the recent past for strengthening tiger conservation in the country. Shri Valmik Thapar emphasized on the need for improving the delivery system. Smt. Maneka Gandhi highlighted the increased mortality of tigers during the year. The Chairman apprised the members of the tripartite MOU which has been implemented recently to improve field delivery. The issue of delayed release of funds was also discussed. Shri P.K. Sen, Expert Member, NTCA highlighted the fact that almost 90% of the Annual Plan of Operations from States for seeking funding support are delayed. The Secretary, Environment and Forests observed that the ongoing DRDA system can be emulated for expediting fund flow. The MS (NTCA) highlighted the process for providing funding support under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger. He also highlighted the fact that at the start of a financial year, as per prevailing financial regulations, it is possible to release an amount equal to only 1/6th of the amount utilized in the previous year before the 'demand for grants' is passed in the Parliament in May/June. It was also informed that as per the 2006 amendment to the Wildlife (Protection) Act, an enabling provision has been made for creating tiger reserve specific Foundations and guidelines have also been issued to operationalise the same. However, the State finance departments are required to authorize these foundations to receive the central assistance. After further deliberations, the Chairman directed the MS (NTCA) to work out a mechanism to ensure timely release of funds to field units.

Agenda Item No. 3

Presentations by specially constituted crack teams sent to tiger reserves affected by extremist engineered disturbances and low density of tiger and its prey

Presentations were made by members of the specially constituted "crack teams" sent to tiger reserves affected by extremist engineered disturbances and low density of tiger and its prey. Issues relating to Similipal, Palamau, Valmiki, Dampa, Buxa, Namdapha, Manas and Nagarjunasagar Srisailem were discussed. Dr. K. Ullas Karanth appreciated the initiative. Smt. Maneka Gandhi desired involvement of local experts in such teams. Shri Valmik Thapar pointed out that it is essential to understand the reasons behind the good or poor performance in tiger reserves. The Chairman stated that reserve specific issues would be taken up with the respective Chief Ministers. Smt. Maneka Gandhi desired that a sub-committee should be constituted for reviewing the ongoing field practices to facilitate codification of good and wise practices. The Chairman directed that a Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri Valmik Thapar, comprising of Dr. K. Ullas Karanth, Shri P.K. Sen and Shri Shekar Dattatri would review the practices and come out with a report on the best practices and the reasons for bad performance in some reserves within a month.

Agenda Item No. 4

Update on tiger mortality and strengthening field protection/anti-poaching operations in tiger reserves

The MS (NTCA) provided an update on the agenda item. Smt. Maneka Gandhi desired that armed teams should be constituted in reserves to deal with poachers. She also emphasized the need for intelligence gathering. Shri Brijendra Singh, Expert Member, NTCA, while highlighting several slides of foot traps recovered by him recently at Corbett, emphasized the urgent need to strengthen field protection. He also flagged the issue of late payment to local people involved in field protection.

The suggestions made by the members were noted and a compendium on generic guidelines for evolving security plan in tiger reserves, prepared by the NTCA in collaboration with TRAFFIC-India and other experts, was released by the Chairman.



Agenda Item No. 5

A. Details of grants provided to NTCA during 2008-09 and progress of expenditure

The NTCA approved the details of grants / activities provided to the NTCA during the year 2008-09, including the progress of expenditure.

B. Approval of NTCA on proposals received for funding support during the current financial year (2009-10)

The NTCA approved the following:

S. No.	Name of the Organization	Title of the Proposal	Total Cost of the Proposal (Rs.)
1.	Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi	Financial Support for CSE fellowship programme for the media on "Human Vs Wildlife"	3,50,000/-
2.	Wildlife Trust of India	Capacity building for field staff in Arunachal, Assam, Mizoram and Chhattisgarh (Tiger Reserves) for field data collection relating to forthcoming All India Tiger Estimation	5,00,000/-
3.	Wildlife Protection Society of India	To maintain an all India database for crime against tigers and leopards	7,50,000/-
4.	A. Wildlife Institute of India B. Dr. K. Ullas Karanth, Centre for Wildlife Studies (CWS)	All India Estimation of Tiger, co-predators and prey (2009-11)	1.WII- 6,10,00,000/- 2.States-4,50,00,000/- 3.Non-Governmental Experts – 50,00,000/- 1.CWS- 2,67,00,000/- (It was directed that the proposal should be referred to the Internal Finance Division of the Ministry of Environment and Forests for scrutiny vis-à-vis the option suggested by Dr. K. Ullas Karanth for providing funding to a national institute having an ongoing collaboration with him)
5.	Wildlife Institute of India	Independent Management Effectiveness Evaluation of Tiger Reserves	58,78,000/- (It was decided that the proposal should be deferred for consideration after the sub committee constituted for codifying the best practices comes out with its report)



The Chairman directed that the financial proposals should be examined by one or two members within a week for finalizing the allocation. Accordingly, the grants indicated above were finalized subsequently in consultation with two expert members of the NTCA (Shri Valmik Thapar and Shri P.K. Sen). The following two proposals were also recommended during the meeting:

1. Proposal for studying the Kuno–Ranthambhore corridor (submitted by a NGO) (approved by the earlier Technical Committee) Rs. 2.50 lakhs
2. Proposal for monitoring tigers in the Tadoba (submitted by an independent expert – Shri Jayant Kulkarni) (new proposal) Rs. 9.00 lakhs landscape

Agenda Item No. 6

Need for ensuring ecologically sustainable land uses in identified tiger corridors and moratorium on diversion of forest land in such areas for non-forestry purposes

After deliberation, the NTCA accorded in-principle approval on the same, while emphasizing the need for site specific examination.

Agenda Item No. 7

Providing legal protection to non-forest areas in the buffer zone of tiger reserves to ensure their corridor value and prevent man-tiger conflicts

After deliberation, the NTCA accorded in-principle approval on the same, while emphasizing the need for site specific examination.

Agenda item No. 8

Mainstreaming tiger conservation in tiger landscapes (payment for ecosystem services)

After deliberation, the NTCA accorded in-principle approval on the same, while emphasizing the need for site specific examination.

Agenda item No. 9

Preparing a blue print for improving the field delivery system

The NTCA appreciated the need for the same. The Chairman stated that a Committee under the Chairmanship of DGF & SS would discuss the subject and suggest recommendations.

Agenda items No. 10 to 15

The Chairman invited suggestions from all the expert members / special invitees / Chief Wildlife Wardens. The salient points of interventions made are as below:

(i) Shri Valmik Thapar

- Non-official NTCA expert members should be given the mandate as “Ambassador” to visit some of the tiger States for discussing State specific issues relating to tiger conservation with a view to improve field delivery
- Need for training / specialization
- Review of tiger reserves vis-à-vis their status and dropping the less potential ones
- Action on Panna debacle
- Consultation with NTCA members on village relocation



- (ii) **Ms. Urmila Pingle**
- Facilitating money flow to the reserve specific Tiger Conservation Foundation
 - Ensuring settlement of rights prior to relocation of tribals
 - Evolving a grazing policy for people residing in and around tiger reserves
- (iii) **Shri Prakash Murlidhar Amte**
- Payment of compensation for depredation by tiger / leopard
 - No clearance for Adani and other mining proposals in the Tadoba landscape
 - Issue of settling people from Bangladesh in forest areas
- (iv) **Shri Samar Singh**
- Persuasion and persistence for ensuring field delivery
 - State-by-State analysis at the highest level for securing priority towards wildlife conservation
- (v) **Shri P.K.Sen**
- Need for adopting the FDA model to expedite fund flow
 - Developing Sariska as a model reserve by the NTCA
- (vi) **Dr. K. Ullas Karanth**
- Waning of leadership in parks and decline in protection
 - Loosing focus due to heavy funding by World Bank projects, NREGA, CAMPA
 - APOs should be dictated by the biology of tiger to prevent unwanted interventions
- (vii) **Shri Brijendra Singh**
- Priority to field protection
 - Expediting fund flow
- (viii) **Ms. Belinda Wright**
- Intelligence based enforcement
 - Site specific management plans and their monitoring by scientific experts
 - Training and motivation
 - Cooperation with State Governments
- (ix) **Shri Bittu Sahgal**
- Valuing tiger reserves vis-à-vis carbon sequestration and mitigation of climate change
 - Need for establishing inviolate core areas
 - Complementary interventions through NREGA etc. for improving the status of local people
 - Involving school children to strengthen tiger conservation
- (x) **Shri Hemendra Kothari**
- Need for motivating State Governments
- (xi) **Shri Santosh Bagrodia, Member of Parliament**
- Need to ensure proper relocation of villages
 - Need for improving the delivery system



- Timely release of funds

(xii) Smt. Maneka Gandhi

- Including a recognised NGO in the Tiger Conservation Foundations
- Creating armed protection force
- Stopping early burning of grasslands and burning of fire lines
- Penal action against officials responsible for poaching
- Creating a professional force for tiger protection
- Using NREGA money for water development in tiger reserves
- Establishing a central crack / response team
- Establishing wildlife rescue centres in the fringe area of tiger reserves

(xiii) Shri B.K. Singh, Chief Wildlife Warden

- No large scale use of NREGA money in the tiger reserves of Karnataka
- Forest Department has a proven track record of tiger conservation, and is the only agency which would be in a position to save tigers
- Wildlife Crime Control Bureau cannot act on its own without involving the Chief Wildlife Wardens
- Funding support for buildings should be reduced

Agenda Item No. 16

Recommendation of NTCA under section 38V of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 on proposals received from States

The NTCA ratified the proposals.

Agenda Item No. 17

Guidelines / advisories issued by Project Tiger / NTCA

The NTCA ratified the guidelines / advisories.

Agenda Item No. 18

Approval of Tiger Conservation Plan as received from States under section 380 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972

The NTCA approved the suggested line of action as below:

- (i) Advice the Orissa State Forest Department to incorporate the recommendations of the specially constituted team in the context of Similipal Tiger Reserve.
- (ii) Advice all other States to expedite preparation of the Tiger Conservation Plan for both core and buffer areas.

Agenda Item No. 19

Resourcing the NTCA and incentives to field staff / officers working in tiger reserves

The NTCA approved the proposed line of action.



Agenda Item No. 20

Compliance of statutory provisions

The NTCA approved the suggested line of action for advising the States to expedite constitution of Tiger Conservation Foundation as required under section 38X of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Agenda Item No. 21

Update regarding forthcoming All India Tiger Estimation and Global Tiger Summit

The NTCA took note of the same.

The Chairman wrapped up the discussion and highlighted the stand of the Ministry on several high profile issues which, interalia, included proposals for mining in the Tadoba landscape, Neutrino observatory near Mudumalai and widening of the NH-7. He also directed the MS (NTCA) for preparing a concept note on developing the corridor areas around tiger reserves for soliciting external assistance, besides a status report on village relocation. Further, it was also directed that the non-official NTCA members would be mandated with the task of acting as "Ambassadors" for tiger States to improve the field delivery. The next meeting of the NTCA was fixed for the 6th of January, 2010.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.
