



### FOREWORD

Section 2(b) of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006 defines Critical Wildlife Habitats as:

*“...such areas of National Parks and Sanctuaries where it has been specifically and clearly established, case by case, on the basis of scientific and objective criteria, that such areas are required to be kept as inviolate for the purposes of wildlife conservation as may be determined and notified by the Central Government in the Ministry of Environment and Forests after open process of consultation by an Expert Committee, which includes experts from the locality appointed by that Government wherein a representative of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs shall also be included, in determining such areas according to the procedural requirements arising from sub-sections (1) and (2) of section 4.”*

The purpose of these guidelines is to harmonize the provisions of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006 and the Wildlife Protection Act 1972, and to seek consensus on the protocol that will determine critical wildlife habitats within National Parks and Sanctuaries.

There has been concern that the earlier guidelines of 2007 were inadequate and need to be substantially improved. Accordingly a completely revised set of guidelines has been prepared after extensive consultations with wildlife experts and social scientists.

Now these **revised draft guidelines** are being put up on the Ministry of Environment and Forests' website for a period of 30 days to reach out and seek the inputs of a wider spectrum of stakeholders.

(Jairam Ramesh)

4<sup>th</sup> May 2011