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Media Statement

The MoEF final order dated January 17, 2011 states that EIA notification 1994, 2004 & 2006 is applicable to LCL and Lavasa has damaged the environment. In light of this, status quo is to be continued. MoEF is prepared to consider the project on merits, with imposition of various terms and conditions.

A quick review of the MoEF order and its attached reports indicates the following.

1. MoEF Order on Lavasa is more on jurisdiction than on environment issues
2. MoEF Order states that the Maharashtra State Government does not have authority for giving the 2001 and 2004 clearances ("State Government was not empowered or authorized to issue such clearances"). It also challenges the Maharashtra State Government's Hill Stations policy of 1996 saying it should be reviewed. This clearly indicates that the key issue is over jurisdiction between the State and Central government and not one of environment
3. Clause 3.78 in the report indicates that MoEF themselves accept that their EIA notification 2006 is wrong and they need to relook at critical aspects. This clearly proves that Environment is still an emerging subject / science and needs detailed deliberation and rethink
4. MoEF does not have objective and measurable norms. Therefore instead of restricting themselves to environmental issues, MoEF has resorted to questioning State Government jurisdiction, Special Planning Authority (SPA), MKVDC land transfer, Land purchase, Lavasa Master Plan approval by Collector, Hill Station policy, regional development plan, MRTP act etc. These have nothing to do with environmental issues which the court had directed them to study
5. The State Government has given environmental clearance for 2000 hectares in the year 2004. In August 2009, Lavasa applied to the MoEF for environmental clearance under their 2006 Notification for project expansion of 3000 hectares. In spite of submitting all the relevant documents MoEF is yet to give environment clearance. The MoEF Order is conveniently silent on their delay of 18 months in granting their clearance.
6. No weightage or consideration has been given to the huge body of data submitted by us on environment protection and enhancement initiatives, which included various lab test reports from MoEF approved labs and the visual evidence shown to them during their site visit. The entire focus of the technical committee report is on the legality of jurisdiction and application of notification rather than the environment enhancement and protection work done.
7. Mr. Naresh Dayal, Chairman of Technical Committee after completing his site visit made a statement to media in Pune that there was no major environmental degradation and yet the report seems to magnify minor environmental issues to justify continuance of the stop work order.
8. The villagers supporting Lavasa were more than 1000 in numbers whereas those supporting Medha Patkar were a mere dozen. Yet the committee gives disproportionately more space to highlighting issues of Medha Patkar supporters.
9. Any road under construction in hilly regions requires cutting which looks harsh and bare initially. Reference photographs included in the report only show such roads in the early stages of construction and which were only about 5 km in length. It has conveniently kept out the

photographs of over 100 km of roads that have been completed with slope stabilization and enhanced green cover.

10. The entire process of restoration and enhancement of the ecology of the place which was substantially denuded to begin with, was presented to the committee and even demonstrated at site. It has neither been acknowledged nor appreciated anywhere in the report. Wherever it does find mention, it is shown as a mere submission by Lavasa.

To conclude, the task entrusted to the technical committee was to survey / inspect the site and present the report which would be of great consequence to the competent authority to pass the final order. If the report misrepresents state of affairs at the site by amplifying minor faults and ignoring the environmental work done, it is bound to have a negative bearing on the decision of the competent authority.

LCL legal counsels are studying the order and will explore all options available to the Company.

For clarifications if any, please contact

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