

PUBLIC HEARING ON CLIMATE CHANGE

TOR FOR THE JURY

1. Background and context

India is among countries most threatened by climate change with experts warning that rising temperatures will lead to more floods, heat waves, storms, rising sea levels and unpredictable farm yields. Various studies show that surface air temperatures in India are going up at the rate of 0.4 degrees Celsius every 100 years, particularly during the post-monsoon and winter seasons. While mean winter temperatures could increase by as much as 3.2 degrees Celsius in the 2050s, summer temperatures could go up by 2.2 degrees Celsius in the 2050s, spurring climate variability.

Extreme temperatures and heat spells could alter patterns of monsoon rains, vital for India's agriculture and water needs. Scientists warn that India will experience a decline in summer rainfall by 2050. The monsoon accounts for almost 70 percent of the country's total annual rainfall. Winter rains are also predicted to fall by 10-20 percent. Higher temperatures also mean faster melting of Himalayan glaciers and as the melting season.

Agriculture will be adversely affected not only by an increase or decrease in the overall amounts of rainfall, but also by shifts in the timing of the rainfall. Higher temperatures reduce the total duration of a crop cycle, leading to a lower yield per unit area, especially for India's wheat and paddy crops. Soil erosion, increased numbers of pests and weeds brought by climate change will also affect agriculture in India. The arid regions and rain fed agriculture is likely to be worst victim of climate change and variability in the monsoon.

Besides climate change is also likely to have huge impacts on rural urban migration, livelihoods, public health, poverty and sustainable development.

However, it has been generally felt that preparedness of India for meeting challenges imposed by climate change is far from adequate. The National Action Plan on Climate change (2008), has been declared by the govt through an opaque process and without having received inputs from a range of stake holders who are supposed to be the worst victims of climate change. The plan does not provide any road map on how missions would be achieved. The government is approaching climate change mainly from the point of view of international negotiations, and seriousness on ground is severely wanting. States are completely oblivious of requirements and investment in policy to meet the challenges. Climate change has already claimed thousands of victims in recent cyclones, floods and droughts.

2. Objective & purpose

The objective of the public hearing is to testify that climate change is taking place and manifesting definite and certain impacts on agriculture food security, health, migration and poverty. The public hearing would also take stock of preparedness of the state agencies to take into consideration impact of climate change at grassroots level and introduce desired changes in policies, and programmes.

3. Mandate of the Jury

The Jury will take into consideration written/oral testimonies from the people/agencies and victims of climate change and in particular determine, make their observations and recommendation on

Manifestation of climate change and weather patterns

Impact of climate change on agriculture, food and water security, health, migration, poverty and other critical aspects of life

Make their observations based on the facts and information provided through the testimonies

Appreciation of facts, law points concerned and violation of laws /constitutional mandate, if any, by the concerned state agencies/department

Interim order providing a set of recommendations/prescriptions for policy options to mitigate negative impacts of climate change and support positive developments wrt agriculture, food and water security, livelihood and livelihood outcomes, and identify policy coordination needs and institutional mechanism for climate change adaptation, implementation and climate proofing of national development policies and strategies

4. Composition of the Jury

The jury will be composed keeping in consideration principles of plurality and independence, and would also include women to address concerns related to women. The members of the jury may be formed with representation from judiciary and legal fraternity, Scientists, Press and media, Civil society, Public figure/celebrity, and People from state agencies/govt

5. Report of the public hearing

The report will capture summary of testimonies, the issues in contention, observation and recommendation of the Jury. The structure of the report can be foreseen as follows

Foreword: by chair of the Jury

Brief profile of the Jury

Introduction and background to public hearing

Executive Summary

Issues/concerns taken up by the Jury

Summary of the testimonies

Observation of the Jury

Recommendations by the Jury

Annexes will list names of the participants, names of the persons providing testimonies, written submission to the Jury etc.
