

Tuesday, November 11, 2008

Ministry of Tribal Affairs

OVER 60,000 LAND PATTAS DISTRIBUTED TO THE TRIBALS AND TRADITIONAL FOREST DWELLERS UNDER FOREST RIGHTS ACT**THE CENTRE REVIEWS IMPLEMENTATION OF FOREST RIGHTS ACT**

16:46 IST

The Centre has asked the State to expedite implementation of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers Act so that objective of recognizing forest rights and occupation of forestland of schedule tribes and traditional forest dwellers can be achieved as early as possible. Chairing the day-long meeting to review the implementation of the Act with the State Secretaries in charge of tribal affairs here today, Secretary of Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Shri G.B. Mukherji urged the States to take up time bound implementation of various components of the Act. He suggested apex level committee should take up regular monitoring of the implementation as being done in some State at the level of Chief Secretary. Awareness campaign in local language and dialects should be run to ensure awareness about the benefits of the Act and to reach the target groups of tribal's innovative methods and help of local opinion makers should be sought, Shri Mukherji said. The meeting was convened to discuss the problems in the implementation of the Act in some of the States lagging behind from the States, which already started distribution of land titles.

Appreciating the performance of some of the State, Shri Mukherji said the Centre is ready to provide all possible support and technical assistance to the States where implementation is slow. Such States could also copy the models adopted by other States. Union Tribal Affairs Ministry has already released over Rs 22.6 crore to the States, as grant .who have sought financial assistance for infrastructure support for the implementation of Act and it was waiting for more such requests from the other States also, he added. The State-wise road maps for time bound implementation of the Act were also proposed during the meeting by Shri Mukherji..

Participating in the review, most of the States said that initial work of formation of various committees for the implementation of forest rights Act has completed. Survey of the land, awareness campaigns about the provisions of the Act and work of inviting the claims was in pipeline. While some States have started distribution of land rights after verification of the claims, more than 60,000 land pattas have been distributed in these States. The meeting was also attended by senior officials of various central Ministries involved with the implementation of the Act.

The Act enacted in December 2006 recognizes rights of the tribals and forest dwellers to hold and live in the forestland under his occupation, to cultivate and to collect minor forest produce. It also recognizes community rights of uses such as fish and other products of water bodies and grazing etc.

NCJ/DT