

PRESS NOTE ON NEW POLICY ON EXPANSION OF EXISTING PORTS AND INITIATION OF NEW PROJECTS ALONG THE COASTLINE

The Ministry of Environment and Forests had constituted an Expert Committee under the Chairmanship of Prof. M. S. Swaminathan to review the comments received on the draft Coastal Management Zone 2008. The Committee in its Report dated 16th July, 2009 at para 7.4 had recommended an immediate study to be undertaken to examine the cumulative impacts of port projects on the coastline, pending which there should be a moratorium on expansion of existing ports and initiation of new projects.

2. Accordingly, the Ministry issued an Office Memorandum (OM) dated 21st August, 2009 in which it was decided to defer consideration of proposals pertaining to development the ports and its expansion projects received in the Ministry after 31st July, 2009 and not to accept any new projects seeking environmental/ Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) clearance till a policy is finalised.

3. As a part of the above decision a study was assigned to the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) for identifying the coastal stretches with regard to erosion/accretion.

4. The Report has been received and has been put up on the Ministry's website <http://www.envfor.nic.in>. Based on the Report, the Ministry had issued an OM for undertaking development with regard to ports and harbour:-

A. Expansion of existing ports and harbours, jetties etc., within their notified port limits shall be undertaken subject to the condition that:-

- (i) The hydro-dynamic studies indicate that the expansion activities of the existing port do not have significant impact to the shoreline abutting the project; and
- (ii) has no significant impact on the ecologically sensitive areas along the stretch.

B. New projects to be located in the identified sites shall be subjected to **Comprehensive Environment Impact Assessment (EIA)**, based on a minimum of 3 seasons data, and EIA Report prepared based on actual field measurements, appropriate modelling studies etc.

C. With regard to the hotspots stretches viz. those areas which are prone for high erosion above 1 meter per year (identified by the concerned Central/State Government agencies), locations identified within 10 km on either side of the eco-sensitive areas categorized as CRZ-I(i) and water bodies with high bio-diversity, shall not be considered for locating ports and harbours. However, fishing jetties/embarkation facilities for local communities could be set-up with EIA as per Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006.

D. With regard to Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands, the port and harbour projects shall be undertaken in accordance with CRZ Notification, 1991 and approved Coastal Zone Management Plans. The port projects of more than 5 Million Tones per annum in these islands which are to be located in these islands, shall be subjected to Comprehensive EIA including physical and mathematical modeling and ground verification.

6. Institute for Ocean Management (IOM), Chennai and ICMAM shall identify the shoreline changes at micro level and map them in atleast 1:25000 scale map. A decision with regard to specific conditions will be taken by 31st October, 2010. Subsequently, a National Policy in this regard shall be drawn up.

7. An OM dated 3rd November, 2009 in this regard has been issued which is enclosed.