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No.IV-14126/CD/DGCD
Government of India
Ministry of Home Affairs
Directorate General of Civil Defence
CD Section

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East Block-VII, Level-7,
R.K. Puram, New Delhi-110 066.

Dated the 30th April, 2008

Sub:- Minutes of the Home Minister's Advisory Committee Meeting.

Home Minister's Civil Defence Advisory Committee Meeting was held on 2nd April, 2008 at New Delhi to discuss National Policy Approach Paper regarding revamping of Civil Defence set up in the country.

2. Minutes of the meeting are enclosed for your information and necessary action.

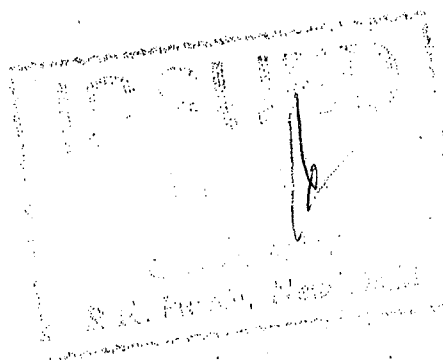
(K. Koshy)
Director General (NDRF & CD)/
Member Secretary Advisory Committee

To

Chief Secretaries
Govt. of all States/UTs

Copy to:-

1. Directors Civil Defence
Govt. of all States/UTs
2. All Participants of the Meeting.
(List attached)



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Minutes of the meeting of the Home Minister's
Civil Defence Advisory Committee

A meeting of the reconstituted Home Minister's Civil Defence Advisory Committee was held on 2nd April 2008 at 1500 hrs in Seminar Hall, DRDO Bhawan, New Delhi.

The list of participants is enclosed.

3. In his welcome address, the Union Home Secretary, Shri Madhukar Gupta, recalled the important role played by the Civil Defence organization in the past. He mentioned that of late, the Civil Defence organization had lost motivation and there was a need to revamp the organization. He hoped that the deliberations in the meeting would provide a platform for making useful suggestions in the direction of revitalizing the Civil Defence set up.

4. Following the welcome address, the agenda was taken up for the discussion.

Agenda Item No. 1

5. The first item on the agenda was the presentation on the K.M.Singh Committee Report, which was made by Shri J.K.Sinha, Member, NDMA. The presentation brought out the history of Civil Defence, the recommendations of the various committees on Civil Defence in the past, the present status of Civil Defence in the country and highlighted the key recommendations of the K.M.Singh Committee report. These are :

- i) Integration of Civil Defence in disaster management framework;
- ii) Town specific concept of Civil Defence to be changed to district oriented concept;
- iii) Civil Defence coverage to be extended to all the 604 districts in three phases;
- iv) Encouragement to public-private partnership and involvement of corporate sector; and
- v) Adoption of measures to enhance participation and motivation of Civil Defence volunteers.

6. Following the presentation, comments and suggestions were made by the participants on the recommendations of the K.M.Singh Committee report. These are as under: -

NDMA

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- i) VC, NDMA mentioned that the crux of the K.M.Singh Committee report is that the Civil Defence set up should become district centric. He stated that the requirements of Civil Defence in war-like situation have declined over the years. He also mentioned that training level of the people is very poor and that no formal organization exists in many of the States for undertaking training for disaster preparedness and efforts should be made to enhance this.

Govt. of NCT of Delhi

- ii) Shri U.K.Katna of Delhi Police mentioned that the district centric approach is an appropriate recommendation. He further mentioned that the Home Guard training should not be de-linked from the Civil Defence as they have much in common. Principal Secretary (Home), Government of NCT of Delhi mentioned that the Government of Delhi has agreed with all the recommendations of K.M.Singh Committee and have appreciated the need for making the Civil Defence district centric.

Maharashtra

- iii) Smt. Chitkala Zutshi, Addl. Chief Secretary (Maharashtra) also welcomed the district centric approach and further stated that the Central Government should bear 100% of expenditure on recurring and non-recurring cost towards the implementation of the recommendations of the K.M.Singh Committee report.

Madhya Pradesh

- iv) Shri Himmat Kothari, Home Minister, Madhya Pradesh mentioned that the Madhya Pradesh Government has agreed to the expansion of the Civil Defence set up to all the districts. He further mentioned that the Madhya Pradesh Government has earmarked 300 acres of land for a Civil Defence Training Centre. He expected that the Centre would provide financial help in

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setting up of the training centre and expansion of Civil Defence set up to the districts.

Gujarat

- vi) Shri. Sanjiv Bhatt, the representative of Gujarat mentioned that their Government has agreed to the K.M.Singh Committee report in totality.

Chattisgarh

- vii) Shri Ramvihar Netam, Home Minister of Chattisgarh welcomed the recommendations of the report and mentioned that the Government has agreed to expand Civil Defence to all the districts.

Agenda Item No.2 &3

7. Shri K. Koshy, DG, Civil Defence made a presentation on the proposed project of the Ministry of Home Affairs on revamping of Civil Defence. In his presentation, DG, Civil Defence mentioned the background of the Civil Defence and the salient components of the proposed new Scheme for Revamping of Civil Defence, highlighted the investments to be made in the training institutions, and discussed the features of the pilot project on involving Civil Defence set up in community policing, and expansion of the Civil Defence set up from the towns to cover all the districts.

Following the presentation, the agenda was taken up for discussion.

NDMA

8. Initiating the discussion, Shri J.K.Sinha, Member, NDMA wanted to know as to why the proposed project envisages investments in the Civil Defence towns instead of moving to the districts. Shri. Koshy, DG, NDRF & CD, in his reply, mentioned that the existing Civil Defence set up in towns can be used to kick-start the project. He also mentioned that the process of notifying the districts under Civil Defence Act, 1968 is cumbersome and could take some time. He further mentioned that as per methodology highlighted in the presentation, the Civil Defence set up would gradually move out to the districts on the basis of lessons learnt from the implementation of the pilot project.

MHA

9. Home Secretary and Secretary (BM) also mentioned that the new approach mentioned in the proposed project envisages transformation from the town specific to district centric approach through the implementation of the pilot project, in a phased manner.

Maharashtra

10. Shri P.P.Srivastava, Director, Civil Defence, Maharashtra mentioned that motivation levels of the Civil Defence volunteers who have not been called for duty for long time goes down and the skills learnt during training are also forgotten. He mentioned that the K.M.Singh Committee report has not given any concrete recommendations on enhancing motivation levels of Civil Defence volunteers

Minister of Defence

11. Hon'ble Minister of Defence, Shri A.K.Antony in his address mentioned that Civil Defence has contributed significantly to the country's security challenges in the past, but now must respond to the changing scenario, particularly in the area of disasters. He mentioned that Civil Defence should play a helping role in the management of disasters by providing prompt and timely response. He stated that the Ministry of Home Affairs has taken a timely initiative to involve Civil Defence set up in disaster management. He stressed the need for providing adequate training infrastructure and equipment for ensuring quick response and recovery. He emphasized the need for NGOs to be involved on a large scale in Civil Defence activities. He mentioned that awareness about Civil Defence should be raised and congratulated the Home Minister on the initiative of revamping of Civil Defence. He mentioned that Ministry of Home Affairs has made a good beginning by proposing an investment of Rs. 100 crore, but that this must increase over time and assured the full cooperation of Ministry of Defence in this regard.

Minister of Home Affairs

12. In his address, Hon'ble Home Minister appreciated the report prepared by Shri K.M.Singh and said that the recommendations were very useful. He further stated that India has not faced any conventional war in the last 2-3

ides but India has been constantly challenged by the problems of internal security and terrorism and continues to face proxy war by various elements. He emphasized that the Civil Defence volunteers would not directly involve themselves in facing these challenges but would help in preparing the communities to respond better to emergency situations caused by disaster and by the actions of terrorists and disruptive elements. He emphasized the need for pre-disaster planning and stated that NDMA has been brought into existence for this purpose. He was of the opinion that Civil Defence can play a very crucial role in Disaster Management particularly as thousands of people are affected by floods, cyclones or tsunamis in a very short span of time. He further mentioned that at present the Civil Defence Act, 1968 does not provide for involvement of Civil Defence volunteers in internal security duties but amendment to the Act will help to overcome this legal lacuna. He was appreciative of unanimity of the opinion in the meeting that there is an immediate need to revamp the Civil Defence set up. He mentioned that there is an urgent need to synergise the activities of Home Guard, Civil Defence, NCC cadets along-with other youth organizations such as Boy Scouts, Girls Guides and NSS/ NYKS volunteers. He was, of the opinion, that Civil Defence set up should move from the cities to cover the districts. He mentioned that a beginning can be made from the cities and gradually move towards covering the districts. He further mentioned that multi hazard prone districts should be covered by the revamped Civil Defence set up in the initial phase, and then it can spread to all the districts in the country. He emphasized the need for strengthening the training institutions wherever they are existing, and also set up new training centres in the States and Districts wherever they are lacking. He stressed the need for using modern methods of training and skill development like use of electronic gadgets and audio-visual techniques. While mentioning the amount of Rs. 100 crore to be spent on the revamping of Civil Defence, he said that it is a small but good beginning which needs to be augmented over a period of time.

13. Hon'ble Home Minister welcomed the idea of enhancing public-private partnership and encouraged contribution of private sector in making

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donations to the Civil Defence set up. As regards, the suggestions made by certain participants for availing tax concessions on the donations made by the private sector to Civil Defence set up in the States, Hon'ble Home Minister mentioned that the matter will be taken by the Ministry of Home Affairs with the Ministry of Finance.

14. He also categorically emphasized the need for recognizing the Civil Defence volunteers. He said that efforts of volunteers should be highlighted in media through annual conferences and workshops to enhance prestige of the volunteers. He also stated that the State Governments have a major role to play in revamping of the Civil Defence set up, and mentioned that the Central Government will make all efforts and do all that is necessary but the State Governments must come up with concrete plans to revamp Civil Defence organization.

15. Concluding his remarks, he noted with satisfaction that there was unanimity on the decisions of:

- i) Civil Defence set up playing a vital role in disaster management in accordance with the recommendations of KM Singh Committee;
- ii) Implementation of the proposed project for Revamping of Civil Defence set up at an estimated cost of Rs.100 crore, by the Ministry of Home Affairs, and
- iii) Bringing about amendments to the Civil Defence Act to cater to the needs of disaster management & internal security/terrorism related challenges.

16. Union Home Minister thanked the participants for expressing their views freely in the meeting and thanked the Hon'ble Defence Minister for his wholehearted commitment for revamping the Civil Defence organization. He also thanked the State Ministers present and the other officers and said that they have made useful contribution and given good advice regarding the way forward on the revamping Civil Defence set up in the country.

17. The meeting concluded with Secretary (BM) proposing a vote of thanks to the Chair.
