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NOTIFICATION

No.B.12011/21/03-FST, the 4th March, 2004. Whereas the Environment & Forests Department has taken up a massive programme of Wildlife conservation in the State and established a number of Wildlife protected areas, i.e. sanctuaries and national parks, for protection and conservation of Wildlife of the Protected Areas.

And whereas successful implementation of the programme is dependent to a large extent on active participation and involvement of the local people.

Now, therefore, the Governor of Mizoram is pleased to notify that Eco-Development Committee (EDC) shall be constituted in each village of the periphery of each of the Protected areas and for the purpose of protection and development of wildlife Protected Areas (sanctuaries and national parks) and beneficiary members of such committee shall be allowed benefits of usufruct sharing and eco-development activities, subject to observance of the conditions provided in this Notification. This notification will become effective from the year 2003-2004.

The composition, duties and functions, the usufructuary benefits and restrictive measures pertaining to such committees shall be as follows :—

1. COMPOSITION

- (i) The Divisional Forest Officer/Officer-in-charge of the protected areas (therein after referred to as the forest officer), in consultation with the President of the Village Council and Non-Government Organization like Young Mizo Association (YMA) and Mizo Hmeihhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP) shall select members for constitution of the Eco-Development Committee within the framework of this Notification.

- (ii) The beneficiary members shall ordinarily be economically backward people living in the vicinity of the protected areas concerned. Every family living in the vicinity of the protected areas shall, however, have the option of becoming a beneficiary member of the Eco-Development Committee.
- (iii) There shall normally be a joint membership of each household (i.e. husband becoming member, Wife automatically becomes a member or vice versa). Either of the two can exercise the right to represent the household at any annual general meeting.
- (iv) Constitution of the Eco-Development Committee will be approved by the forest officer on recommendation of the Village Council & Non-Government Organization of the village concerned.
- (v) The Village Council (s) concerned shall extend necessary support and help to such Committee to ensure their smooth and proper functioning.
- (vi) The Village Council & Non-Government Organization of the respective village will monitor, supervise and review functions of the Eco-Development Committee.
- (vii) Each Eco-Development Committee shall have an Executive Committee to carry out the various activities as assigned to the Committee. The composition of the Executive Committee shall be as follows :—
 - (a) The Range Officer concerned — Chairman
 - (b) President of any Non-Government Organization or any member of the Non-Government Organization as may be nominated by the Non-Government Organizations — Member
 - (c) Village Council President as ex-officio — Member
 - (d) Member, Village Council - 2nos. — Member
 - (e) Elected representative from amongst the beneficiary members, not exceeding 10% of total membership-subject to minimum number of 6 and minimum number of 11 elected representatives not less than 2 from the local woman Non-Government Organizations shall be woman — Member
 - (f) Concerned Beat Officer — Member Convener.

- (ix) The Members of the Executive Committees shall elect a Secretary from amongst the elected members, who will function as Joint Convener.
- (x) If any inclusion or change in the Eco-Development Committee/Executive Committees is necessitated, after initial constitution the Executive Committee shall make suitable recommendation to the forest officer duly endorsed by the Non-Government Organization for approval.
- (xi) The Beat Officer, as Member Convener, and the Secretary shall convene the meetings of the Executive Committees, annual general meeting and other meetings of the Eco-Development Committee.
- (xii) Quorum for each meeting of the Executive Committee shall be 50% of the elected members and that for annual general meeting, 30% of ordinary members.

2. FUNCTION OF ECO-DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- (i) The Secretary of the Eco-Development Committee shall maintain a Register showing necessary particulars of the members of the Eco-Development Committee, e.g. name, father's name/spouse's name, address, age, number of family members, name of the nominee, etc. The nomination forms duly filled in and approved by the Executive Committees should be pasted in the Register. Such Registers are also to be maintained in the Beat and the Range Offices concerned of the Forest Department for permanent record.
- (ii) The Secretary of the Eco-Development Committee shall maintain a "Minutes Book" wherein proceedings of the meetings of the Executive Committee held from time to time as well as the proceedings of the Annual General Meeting of the Eco-Development Committee will be recorded under the signature of the Chairman, Member-Convener and Joint Convener.
- (iii) The Eco-Development Committee shall hold an Annual General Meeting once every year where activities of the Eco-Development Committee as well as detail of distribution of usufructuary and eco-development benefits are to be discussed, besides electing representatives of the members to the Executive Committee.
- (iv) Every Eco-Development Committee will have an account in bank/post office for maintaining a common fund by deposits from the member and/or other sources. The fund will be operated jointly by the Beat Officer and the Secretary as per written resolution of the executive committee. Receipts and with-drawals from this account shall be presented in every annual general meeting for approval. The account maintained by the Eco-Development Committee will be audited annually by an officer not below the rank of Assistant Conservator of Forests.

3. DUTIES OF ECO-DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- A. (i) To ensure protection of the forest and wildlife inside the forest and those straying outside, through members of the Eco-Development Committee jointly with forest Department staff;
- (ii) To inform forest personnel about any person or persons attempting trespass and willfully or maliciously damaging the said forest(s) and/or wildlife therein;
- (iii) To prevent such trespass, encroachment, grazing, fire, poaching, theft or damage jointly with forest Deptt. staff;
- (iv) To apprehend or assist the forest personnel in apprehension of such person(s) committing any of the offence mentioned above.
- B. (i) To assist Forests Department staff in smooth and timely execution of all forestry works taken up in the areas protected by the Eco-Development Committee;
- (ii) To involve every member of the Eco-Development Committee in the matter of protection of forest and wildlife as well as other duties assigned to the Eco-Development Committee;
- (iii) To assist the concerned forest officials and the Village Eco-Development Committee in the matter of selecting/engaging labourers required for forestry works.
- C. (i) To ensure smooth implementation of Eco-development programme so that the members of the Village Eco-Development Committee get maximum benefit out of it;
- (ii) To ensure that Eco-development funds provided by Government and usufructuary benefits allowed by Government are not in any way misused by any of the member(s) & forest/plantation sites are kept free from any encroachment whatsoever.
- D. (i) To prevent any action in contravention of the provisions of the Indian Forest Act, 1927/Mizoram Forest Act 1955, District Council Forest Acts/ Forest Conservation Act 1980 and the Wildlife (protection) Act, 1972 as amended from time to time;
- (ii) To report about activities of a particular member which are prejudicial and detrimental to the interest of forest/wildlife, to the Beat Officer/Range Officer concerned which may result in cancellation of membership of the erring member;
- (iii) To assist the forest officials to take action under Indian Forest Act, 1927, Mizoram Forest Act 1955, District Council Forest Acts, Forest Conservation Act 1980 and Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and any rule made thereunder, against the offenders, including any erring member of the Eco-Development Committee.

4. Eco-Development activities:

- (i) Microplans in respect of eco-development activities will be drawn up in a participatory manner prior to commencement of the activities, involving the Range Officer and Beat Officer of the Forest Department and the members of the Eco Development Committee. Need-based and site specific work programme, out of a basket of options, will be chosen within specified monetary limits, both for community and individual benefit, for implementation. Every selected eco-development activity shall have direct or indirect linkage or relation with conservation of biodiversity and such linkage/relation is to be mentioned against each selected activity in the microplan.
- (ii) Protection provided to the wildlife protected areas against theft, grazing, fire, etc. will be considered as the involvement and contribution of the Village Eco-Development Committee. The forest officer may not release fund for village eco-development, unless he is satisfied that contribution by the Eco-Development Committee as stipulated above, has been fulfilled.
- (iii) Members of the Village Eco-Development Committee shall share a percentage of investment for every village eco-development work in cash, labour and/or physical resources. Agreed cost sharing arrangement will be incorporated in the microplan.
- (iv) The microplan will be signed by the Range Officer on behalf of the Forest Department and the Secretary on behalf of the Village Eco-Development Committee.

5. USUFRUCTUARY BENEFITS

- (i) The members of the Village Eco-Development Committee will have to protect and manage the protected area to the satisfaction of the forest officer for a minimum period of one year.
- (ii) Sale proceed and produces obtained from Eco-Plantation like fuelwood, fodder medicinal plants etc. on community land as Village eco-development activity will be shared in equal proportion among the members.
- (iii) Goods and services generated by community benefit oriented village eco-development activities such as group farming etc. will be enjoyed by each member of the Eco-development Committee in equal proportion. Those generated by individual benefit oriented eco-development activities will be enjoyed by the individual concerned.

TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP, DISSOLUTION OF ECO-DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE APPEAL, ETC.

- (i) Failure to comply with any of the conditions laid down herein before as well as contravention of provisions of the Indian Forest Act, 1927, Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972/Mizoram Forest Act 1955 /District Council Acts/Forest Conservation Act 1980 and any Rules made thereunder, may entail cancellation of individual membership and/or dissolution of the Executive Committee/or the Eco-Development Committee as the case may be, by the officers of the Forest Department as stated in (a) and (b) below.
- (a) The Forest Officer concerned shall stand empowered to take appropriate action including dissolution of any Executive Committee/ Eco-Development Committee on the grounds stated above, on the recommendation of the Non-Government Organization and the Village Eco-Development Committee concerned.
- (b) The Range Officer concerned may be authorized by the forest officer concerned to take action including termination of an individual membership on the above mentioned grounds on the recommendation of the Executive Committee of the Eco-development committee.
- (ii) Appeal against any such penal action by the Range Officer nor the Forest Officer concerned may be preferred to the Divisional Forests Officer,.
- (iii) A further Appeal against any such penal action of the Divisional Forests Officer may be preferred to the Chief Wildlife Warden concerned, as the case may be, whose decision shall be final.

Lalmalsawma,
Secretary to the Government of Mizoram,
Environment & Forests Department.