

Technical Session I: National Mineral Exploration Policy

Time: 4:00PM to 6.00PM, Venue- Jade Ballroom (Ground Floor)



Dr. N.K. Singh, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Mines, delivering the presentation on NMEP

During post lunch session of 4/07/16, the Technical Session I on National Mineral Exploration Policy was held in the Jade Ballroom of Hotel Courtyard. The session was well attended and was chaired by Shri R Sridharan, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Mines. In his opening remarks Shri Sridharan informed that NMEP is the first of its kind in the country and he stressed that contrary to the general perception the NMEP does not deal solely with private sector participation in mineral exploration but has substantial part focusing on the vital issues like acquisition and dissemination of geoscience data. In this connection he conveyed that after long deliberation relaxation has been obtained from Ministry of Defence on geoscience data sharing restrictions which were prevalent since the late sixties. He said, the Ministry was looking forward to the comments of stakeholders on the NMEP proposals. He invited Dr. N.K.Singh, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Mines to deliver his presentation on the NMEP. Dr. Singh in his presentation outlined the main features of the NMEP after providing a brief background on the development of the various instruments for regional exploration through the amendments in the MMDR act in the last two decades. He informed that SBICAPS has been engaged as a consultant for drafting model templates for engaging private exploration agencies as per the provisions of the NMEP. Shri S B Prasad of SBICAPS presented a brief outline of the models that are being considered for engaging exploration companies. Dr. Gopal Dhawan, CMD, MECL delivered a lecture on the essential issues of exploration for making blocks ready for auction and the steps that have been taken by the Ministry and MECL in this regard. Shri P Tarafdar presented the rationale and the outline of the 100 blocks identified by GSI for auctioning

for regional exploration on the basis revenue sharing model proposed in the NMEP. Secretary, Mines joined and shared the dais at this stage.



Shri Balvinder Kumar, Secretary, Mines responding to a query of a delegate

The chairman invited comments and queries from the delegates. There appeared to be a lack of comprehension among delegates regarding the difference of NERP of the MMDR Amendment Act 2015 and the proposal of engaging private exploration agencies with a revenue sharing model. The basic difference between the two was clarified by the chairman. There was a query regarding the feasibility of private agencies themselves carving out exploration blocks for operationalizing under the revenue sharing scheme. The chairman informed that the consultant will develop a mechanism for this condition. The requirement of finalising cost of exploration for evaluating the bids/proposals submitted by private explorers was expressed by some DGMs. Secretary, Mines informed that normative costs will be finalized soon by a committee. The necessity of technical audit of the work carried out by the explorers and the data furnished after completion of work was expressed by some delegates. Secretary, Mines conveyed that to address these issues a committee of technical experts will be constituted who would evaluate the work carried out and the data submitted by the private explorers. Some delegates also expressed that the regional data can only be indicative and to bid on some percentage of revenue share on the basis of such data may be akin to guess or a gamble. Secretary, Mines stressed that exploration involves some risk and investments are always made on the analyses of available geoscience data. The NMEP however has provisions for mitigating the risks involved to a large extent. A delegate proposed the declaration of high potential areas as mining land which will ease the process of forest clearances for exploration. Secretary, Mines informed that MoEFCC is going to notify a new guideline in this regard on the basis of canopy cover which will facilitate the issuance of necessary clearances for exploration. The

chairman thanked the delegates for the detailed deliberations and also informed that the stakeholders will be consulted while finalizing the models for engagement of private exploration agencies in regional exploration.



Shri P.Tarafdar, Director, GSI delivering the presentation on the 100 blocks identified by GSI for regional exploration