

Minutes of the first meeting of the Committee constituted to review the National Mineral Policy 2008 held on 28.08.2017

1. The first meeting of the Committee constituted under the Chairmanship of Dr K Rajeswara Rao, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Mines, to review the National Mineral Policy 2008 was held on 28.8.2017 in New Delhi. The list of participants is given as **Annexure**.

2. At the outset, Shri. Bipul Pathak, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Mines and Member Secretary of the Committee welcomed the members of the Committee and other participants present. Shri. Pathak gave a brief presentation on the background to the constitution of the Committee in pursuance of compliance of the directions given by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in its judgment/order dated 2.8.2017 in writ petition No.114/2014. He also highlighted the salient provisions of National Mineral Policy, 2008 (**NMP 2008**) and the subsequent actions taken by the Ministry of Mines in amending the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (**MMDR Act**) for implementation of some of the important provisions of NMP 2008. Shri. Pathak also presented the way forward for working of the Committee in reviewing NMP 2008; and in this regard requested all the members to give their written comments/suggestions for consideration of the Committee.

3. In his address Shri. Arun Kumar, Union Secretary of the Ministry of Mines said that one impetus for revisit of the NMP 2008 has come from the Supreme Court's verdict of 2.8.2017; and that as this issue was not part of the subject matter of the writ petition the Ministry had not apprised the Court of the various reform changes and developments that took place in the mining sector in the recent past. He reflected on the amendment to the MMDR Act in 2015 as a paradigm shift in the way mineral concessions are granted and also on certain other measures that the Ministry has taken up thereafter for strengthening the regulatory framework. He mentioned that drawing on the experience of working with the amended provisions of the MMDR Act in the past two years there may be some areas in the NMP 2008 which may require revisiting. Added to this he said there may be certain new issues that might be considered by the Committee for incorporation in the policy document like surveillance/monitoring, efficient mechanisms for grant of statutory

clearances, sustainability, inter-generational equity, macro environmental impact assessment, etc. He requested the members to send detailed comments so that the considered views of the State/industry associations being represented are properly reflected; and since the mandate allows the Committee to consider any other matter which it feels relevant he also asked the members to feel free to send their views on any issue which they feel would be relevant to the exercise being undertaken. Shri. Arun Kumar in his concluding remarks exhorted the members that there has to be an element of realism so that the policy is practically implementable on the ground; and he hoped for realistic workable solutions coming from the members for making of an improved, effective and implementable policy which would provide a roadmap for the future.

4. Dr. K. Rajeswara Rao, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Mines and Chairman of the Committee welcomed the members and the participants present in the meeting and mentioned that the Committee is embarking on a major exercise as certain developments in the mining sector in some states have drawn the attention of the civil society and the Supreme Court. In this context he stated that the mandate before the Committee is to work for an improved, implementable and practical policy as mentioned by the Secretary Mines. Dr Rajeswara Rao requested for wholehearted participation of the members in giving their considered views/suggestions and by taking active part in the deliberations. He also requested that it would be helpful if the views are structured as per the existing NMP; and requested for representation by the same members in all the meetings of the Committee so that there is consistency in thought and approach. Using the forum Dr. Rajeswara Rao also requested all the States and all the associations representing the mining and mineral sector to give their inputs/suggestions; and mentioned that two to three meetings would be held to consider all the suggestions, to consolidate opinion and take a common view before placing the draft policy in the public domain.

5. After the inaugural observations, Shri. Pathak co-ordinated the proceedings of the meeting by requesting the members of the Committee and other participants to present their views/comments.

6. Shri. N K Rao, Director General, Geological Survey of India stated that the goals and perspective of NMP 2008 are dynamic and responsive to the changing global economic scenario as a result of which revision and review are inbuilt features of the NMP 2008. He said that the gap areas in the NMP 2008 have already been addressed through the amendment to the MMDR Act in 2015 and through formulation of the National Mineral Exploration Policy 2016. Even so, Shri. Rao said that the NMP 2008 is dynamic enough to accommodate changes to reflect ongoing developments. DG, GSI said that leaving aside the issues already covered in the NMEP 2016, there are a few issues that require the attention of the Committee. The concerns expressed by Shri N K Rao, DG, GSI for consideration of the Committee are summarised as follows:
 - i. Forest clearance issues during exploration need to be streamlined for facilitating conduct of proper exploration to establish mineralisation as per the prescribed norms.
 - ii. State Governments to extend all possible assistance and cooperation to GSI in sorting out local issues, for enabling them to carry out exploration.
 - iii. Addressing urbanisation issues i.e., the difficulty in conducting exploration of potential mineral deposits close to populated areas.
 - iv. Smooth and efficient functioning of National Mineral Exploration Trust.
 - v. Collaboration with scientific and research bodies, universities and industry for scientific and technological research to address the mineral exploration challenges in the country through the National Centre for Mineral Targeting.
 - vi. Collation of all baseline and mineral exploration information generated by various central & state government agencies and also mineral concession

holders and to maintain these on geospatial database through the National Geoscientific Data Repository.

- vii. Open dissemination of geoscientific data as a public good.
- viii. Addressing environmental issues adequately.
- ix. Addressing issues related to coking coal exploration i.e., issues related for freeing coal bed methane leasehold areas to release these blocks for coking coal exploration.
- x. Addressing issues related to mineral development in the offshore areas.

7. Shri. R K Sharma speaking on behalf of Federation of Indian Mineral Industries (FIMI) started with the issue of sustainable mining. Sharing statistics on the texture of mining in the country he said that mining leases upto 50 hectares account for 74% of the leases covering 9% of the total area under mining. He said that these small mines accounting for the majority of the leases, which are not sustainable are the public face of the mining industry inviting criticism for unscientific and haphazard mining; and therefore expressed the need for taking into view the texture of the mining industry while addressing the issue of sustainable mining.

8. Shri. R K Sharma recounted the history of development of the mining policy in the country and in this regard mentioned that the NMP 1993 and the NMP 2008 adequately focussed on inviting foreign investment and technology into the mining sector. Shri. Sharma focussed on the need for concentrating on exploration and stated that unless there is adequate exploration the country cannot develop mineral resources - as the level of exploration reflects the level of resource development in any country. There are hardly any foreign companies presently undertaking exploration in the country and said that we also do not have the required levels of technology in exploration. He said that unlike in India where the government uses tax payers money for exploration, developed countries like Australia, Canada, Chile, USA, Brazil, Argentina etc invite junior companies who have expertise in exploration and are willing to take the risks associated with exploration which is an unpredictable and highly risky venture. Exploration is kept as a separate branch all

together and he said that governments in these countries allow the junior companies to sell their data which allows them to defray the costs and losses incurred in exploration.

9. The thrust of Shri. Sharma's concern was on allowing private participation in exploration, and mentioned that unless the statutory framework allows for a seamless transition from reconnaissance to prospecting and thereafter to mining coupled with the provisions of easy transferability of concessions the exploration in the country will not be successful. In this regard he stated that NMP 2008 has all the necessary ingredients for encouragement and development of exploration by way of envisaging seamless transition from reconnaissance to prospecting and then to mining; but unfortunately he said that our present statutory framework is not aligned with the mineral policy. The amendment Act of 2015 has the feature of auction which though transparent he said may not deliver the results the government has in mind as nowhere in the world mineral resources are developed through an auction based system. He said that the focus should be on having an efficient regulatory mechanism in place unless which even a system as one based on auction will degenerate into corruption. The cost of auction money, the cost of land, NPV and payments for compensatory afforestation, royalty, contributions to DMF & NMET, GST charges of 18% on royalty, etc all added together he said will make the cost of raw material to the manufacturing industry so much more costlier which might compel the industry to look at imports for meeting their raw material requirement.
10. The other concerns expressed by Shri. Sharma representing FIMI are summarised are follows:
- i. Addressing the issue related to high costs involved in mining in the country, which is highly taxed and uncompetitive in overseas market due to the various levies to be paid like Royalty, NPV, 18 % GST on Royalty, SPV Cess, contributions to DMF and NMET, etc.

- ii. Need for focussing attention on development of minerals like diamond, gold, and strategic minerals like nickel, copper, cobalt, and rare earth minerals, to provide for: (a) private participation in exploration by ensuring seamless transition from reconnaissance to prospecting; and (b) investment and latest technology for making the mineral based industry viable and profitable.

11. Shri. Syedain Abbasi, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Steel mentioned that detailed written comments of the Ministry of Steel would be sent and expressed a few concerns of the steel sector for consideration of the Committee, which are summarised as follows:

- i. Policy should address concerns of minimising risks associated with acquirement of land, obtaining clearances etc., especially in an auction based system.
- ii. Conservation should be understood in the context of the particular mineral. A mineral like coal once consumed is lost forever. However, iron ore is different - as steel can be reused and 98% of steel is recoverable in the recycling process. Therefore any talk of iron ore in the context of inter-generational equity should be understood and viewed differently.
- iii. Promotion of use of low grade iron ore. Iron ore from Fe content of 45% and upto 55% is not usable unless beneficiated; and the policy should address the concerns of the beneficiating industry for getting support from the government.
- iv. Policy needs to relook the issue of area limits of mining lease, especially when there is a auction based regime in place. There is a need to encourage big players who can bring in technology and investment for scientific and sustainable mining.
- v. In the auction regime the end use players should not be put at a disadvantage in terms of restrictions on sale of ore or restrictions on use of ore in sister concerns or plants operated jointly or in collaboration with others. Rules should be relaxed for sale of ore.

- vi. In the context of lowering costs, it should be examined whether as manufacturers one can avail input tax credit against payments towards royalty, DMF, NMET and other levies.
- vii. Development of infrastructure facilities in a holistic manner particularly in mineral rich regions where bulk minerals are found, which require enormous amounts of infrastructure whether they are rail, roads, ports, slurry pipes, and inland waterways etc. Committee should examine these issues.

12. Secretary, Department of Mining and Geology, Karnataka, expressed a few concerns for consideration of the Committee, which can be summarised as follows:

- i. Mapping of demand & supply of major mineral should be done, based on which a plan for timely exploration should be prepared in order meet the national level demand.
- ii. Infusing technology and techniques available worldwide.
- iii. Strengthening state departments for managing resources as well as the State Geological Planning Board
- iv. Creation of a sophisticated data base for mapping of resources.
- v. Simplifying procedures in transition from reconnaissance to prospecting and then to mining especially when new minerals are discovered.
- vi. The concept of scientific mining should be properly defined.
- vii. Setting up of skill centres for imparting training to manpower deployed in the mining and mineral sector
- viii. Addressing environmental issues by creating synergies between mining and environment for dealing with environmental concerns
- ix. Restrictions linked to the specified end use at the time of auction should be minimal with regard to sale and use of minerals.
- x. A relook at reservation under section 17A with regard to reserving mineral blocks for PSUs which are only trading as this will be limiting/blocking state mineral resources.
- xi. Address issues relating to functionalising NMET with a greater participatory role for State governments.

13. Representative of ASSOCHAM expressed the concerns of behalf of the industry association, which are summarised below for consideration of the Committee:

- i. Different provisions for end users to tap the advantage of rich mineral resource available in the country. Policy should provide for direct allocation of mining lease to companies who have either set up a plant or who propose to make mega investments in the country with a provision for augmenting state revenues in the form of additional royalty or sharing super normal profits if the business cycle generates profits above normal.
- ii. Concept of inter generational equity should be understood in the perspective of the particular mineral and the emerging technologies associated with the mineral use. In a 50 years horizon use of coal as a fuel will be come down drastically. Similarly technology for conversion of steel scrap into steel is getting better by the day. Steel intensity (the amount of steel used to produce one unit of GDP) is increasing. There is enough scrap to meet the demand of steel metal and with the advances in material science and technologies for conversion of scrap to steel the kind of dependence on iron ore which we see now will not be there in the future. In the perspective of demand and associated technologies, conserving coal or iron ore in the sense of restriction/abstinence in use will actually result in losing an opportunity to unlock the mineral wealth.
- iii. Change in focus from bulk minerals to exploration of rare earth minerals and strategic minerals. We should take a step back and think holistically and comprehensively to understand where mineral industry would be moving in the future and instead of concentrating on bulk minerals we should rather involve NMET in undertaking exploration of rare earth minerals and strategic minerals as the top priority.
- iv. Auction system is a race to the bottom with no economic justification for the high bids. This has to be rationalized. There are early signs that this system is not working. We should see the totality of the situation and have a liberal policy to leverage the mineral resource to generate employment and revenue

to the states. A comprehensive amendment of the mineral policy through a new approach is required; mere tinkering of the existing policy in the light of Supreme Court's directions will not do as the need of the hour is to take steps for having a liberal policy for unlocking the mineral wealth and leveraging it for generating employment and revenue to the states.

- 14.** Shri. V S Gaur, Joint Secretary, NITI Ayog said that detailed comments will be made available. Speaking in the context of the recent amendment to the MMDR Act he said that even earlier when the statute assured seamless transition from reconnaissance to prospecting and then to mining not much of investment came and there was hardly any big level of exploration. The present statute does not assure seamless transition from reconnaissance to prospecting policy and this he said was actually a dampener on exploration clamping down the activity even further. Therefore he said the challenge before us is how to really go ahead for taking up exploration in a big way; and said that no mineral rich county has taken up exploration through governments funding. In the coming decades he said the sector will witness a shift in focus from bulk minerals to non-bulk minerals; and that we should really focus on rare earth minerals and take the present opportunity to encourage private sector participation in exploration and development of rare earth minerals which are strategically and economically valuable for the country.
- 15.** He said that an analysis of the past mineral policies will show that these mineral policies have not yielded in getting us the desired levels of exploration and development of minerals; and the reason for this he said was that the statutory framework was really not aligned to the policy framework. The NMP 2008 he said though being very good failed to work the results as there was a mismatch between the policy and the statute. Therefore, he said, the task before the Committee is set out for making an implementable and workable policy through well aligned statutory provisions complementing the policy. For encouraging exploration he stressed upon the need to strengthen the state government departments and buttress the efforts of private sector in exploration by giving them the 'right of first refusal'.

In the end he reiterated that the need of the hour is to make an implementable and workable policy for taking up exploration in a big way for development of minerals which will increase the GDP of the country.

16. Ms Alarnelmangai, Director, Geology and Mining, Govt of Chhattisgarh expressed her concerns for consideration of the Committee, which are summarised as follows:

- i. Implementation of mine closure plan for restoring the mined area.
- ii. Systematic audit using IT enabled tools to verify the quantum of excavation, the assessment of ecological damage, and the compliance of adherence to mining plan.
- iii. Taking up exploration in a big way to augment areas under mining, though use of latest technologies and techniques.
- iv. Up gradation and strengthening of laboratories for analysis of minerals resulting in more accurate exploration results.

17. The concerns on behalf of Cement Manufacturers' Association (CMA) for the consideration of the Committee were put forward by Ms Aparna Dutt Sharma, Secretary General and Shri U R Raju, Chairman, Committee of Mines and Minerals, which are summarised as follows:

- i. Areas where mineral occurrence is established, or where there is a possibility of occurrence, should be notified as mineral bearing lands in the revenue records and should be reserved for mineral excavation. Go & No-Go area should be clearly defined.
- ii. Once these areas are identified for mining activity, in-principle clearances should be obtained even before auction takes places.
- iii. Streamlining the process for land acquisition and statutory clearances.
- iv. Committee should take an overview of the tax regime followed in different states to ensure a uniform tax regime across all the states.
- v. Utilisation of waste generated from the cement industry.
- vi. Standardisation of exploration data before auctioning of mineral blocks.

- vii. Revisit of threshold values in the context of resources and reserves, with a reference to the cut-off value for end use industry.
 - viii. Participation of Ministry of Mines and IBM during the auction process conducted by the States should be ensured.
 - ix. Calculation of Stamp duty at the time of registration of mining lease deed needs to be streamlined to remove discrepancies and to ensure uniformity across states.
 - x. Reservation of areas for PSU should not be allowed especially for bulk minerals.
 - xi. Exploitation of deep seated mineral deposits should be assigned priority and existing lessees should be enabled to include non-mineralised areas so that excavation of deep seated mineral deposits is feasible.
 - xii. Formulation of uniform rehabilitation and re-settlement (R&R) policy to be implemented and followed uniformly across all the states.
 - xiii. Rejects from captive mines should be allowed to be sold to ensure zero waste mining policy requirements.
 - xiv. State level departments should be strengthened with state-of-the-art technology and trained manpower.
- 18.** Shri G G Pa, Director, Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance stated that it would not be possible for stating any specific fiscal measures in the mining policy with regard to direct or indirect taxation though the D/o Revenue would consider proposals received from the ministries/departments for taking fiscal measures to incentivize exploration and production of minerals.
- 19.** Shri. N B Dhal, Special Resident Commissioner, Govt. of Odisha said that while drafting a new policy one should carefully consider the welfare of people affected by the mining. He said that revision of royalty should be undertaken by the Central Govt. periodically without much delay; and also said that there should be transparency in decision making. These practical considerations/ground realities

should be kept in mind while framing the new policy while reminding ourselves that any policy is only as good as its implementation.

20. The concerns expressed by FICCI for consideration of the Committee, are summarised as follows:

- i. There is need to auction large mineral-blocks with large ore bodies to attract large scale investments with latest technologies and techniques. As exploration is high risk business, Public Private Partnership (PPP) model should also be considered.
- ii. Tax holidays should be considered for exploration and prospecting especially in remote areas.
- iii. New policy should be aligned with other policies like the National Steel Policy announced by Ministry of Steel; and the Committee should take an overview of other policies wherein certain provisions like tax holidays and concessions have been extended, so that the NMP is in line with other policies.
- iv. SPV for obtaining regulatory clearances and land acquisition.
- v. Need of tenement registration so that details of free areas and held areas are made available in public domain; there should be dissemination of geospatial database through the National Geoscientific Data Repository.
- vi. Encourage constructing of slurry pipelines and close loop conveyors for transportation of mineral ore and address problems (like difficulty in getting Right-Of-Way) which are being faced in some states when companies are undertaking such projects.
- vii. Royalty or taxes paid to state or centre should be refunded back while exporting commodities like steel etc.

21. Shri Bipul Pathak, Joint Secretary (BP) mentioned that there should be a focus on mineral security especially with regard to strategic minerals, which should find a place in NMP and downstream regulations should be aligned for exploration and

development of strategic minerals, and for enabling/facilitating acquisition of mineral assets in other countries by private sector players.

22. Shri P Dansana, representative from the Railway Board, M/o Railway said that infrastructure for evacuation of minerals is an issue which needs urgent attention especially in the context of the requirement of 300 MT production of iron ore production for meeting the demands of the Steel sector. He also said that poor linkage between mines and rail-head causes problem in evacuation of minerals, and this requires strengthening by constructing railway sidings (which is generally financed by private parties) and by strengthening the road network for movement of minerals.

23. Shri S D Kaushik, Consultant from Ministry of Shipping said that from the environment point of view, mode of transportation of minerals should be shifted from rail and road network to coastal shipping. Navigation by inland waterways is being developed on a large scale which should be utilised as it is eco-friendly as well as a cheaper mode of transportation.

24. Shri Virendra Singh Khaira, Sptd Engineer representing M/o Road Transport and Highways said that though there is no special focus on laying road networks in regions where the mines are located specifically, he informed that the Ministry is involved in developing a robust national highway network especially in left wing extremism affected areas and about 4000 kms of road have almost have been paved. On a specific query by Dr Rajeswara Rao, Chairman of the Committee regarding utilisation of waste generated from power plants it was informed that fly ash is being used in construction of embankments and upper layers of the roads and similarly spoils from stone quarry are also being used in paving of roads. In this context Shri Manish Mishra informed that use of steel slag for road construction is being examined by NITI Ayog, which will decrease the load on use of stone aggregates in construction of roads.

25. Shri Asheesh Kumar, Director, Ministry of Coal informed that the concerns of Coal Ministry are common with the concerns of Mines Ministry and that detailed comments will be sent.
26. Shri Aboobaker Siddique P, Mines Commissioner, Govt of Jharkhand said that the major challenge in commencement of mining is obtaining FC and EC and that there should be convergence in the procedures adopted by the forest wing and environment wing in MOEFCC. The issue of carrying capacity especially in the Saranda forest region should be addressed. Capacity building of mining and geology departments of state governments should be given special attention to enable them for carrying out exploration and for conducting auctions. He also said that the Committee should consider having provisions for delegating powers to state level for simplifying procedures for granting FC for exploration.
27. The concerns expressed by Shri Vineet Austin, Director, Geology and Mining, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh for the consideration of the Committee, are summarised as follows:
- i. Simplification of the present auction procedure to make it easier to understand and to facilitate larger participation.
 - ii. Policy should also consider the interests of small and medium prospective miners for obtaining mineral concessions, who cannot take part in auction for want of large finances.
 - iii. Ease of doing business should be further strengthened.
 - iv. Improvement in methods of survey & exploration techniques should be discussed. Capacity building of state departments for provision of latest equipments and training needs to be addressed.
 - v. Exploration and development of strategic minerals to be focussed.
 - vi. Coordination amongst State Departments, IBM, and DGMS while conducting inspection in mines.
 - vii. Overview for simplification and coordination of various state and central department which oversee regulation in mining sector.

28. Concerns expressed by Shri D S Maru, Director Mines, Government of Rajasthan for consideration of the Committee, are summarised as follows:

- i. Exploration and development of deep seated mineral deposit like Potash (the demands of which are being met 100% through imports at the present). Private sector should be encouraged. Provision of preferential right from reconnaissance to prospecting and then to mining should be given in order to attract private sector involvement.
- ii. Provision for transfer of mining lease in respect of non-captive mines should be incorporated.
- iii. Tenure of leasehold should be increased to 90 years from the present provision of 50 years.
- iv. Capacity building of state departments should be addressed.
- v. Provision for amalgamation of mines, surrender of mines should be considered.
- vi. Composite License for Bulk minerals should be considered
- vii. Mineral bearing lands should be identified and earmarked specifically for the purpose of mining only.
- viii. Area-limit for mining leasehold should be enhanced.
- ix. The issue of dumping of waste materials outside mining leasehold needs to be addressed.

29. Concerns expressed by Shri A K Kothari, President of the Mining Engineers' Association for consideration of the Committee, are summarised as follows:

- i. Illegal mining and violation of the provisions of the rules and regulations are separate issues and should be clearly differentiated in the Policy to avoid confusion in this regard.
- ii. Before conduct of auction the assessment of the quantum of resources should be certified by third party certifying agencies.
- iii. For the ease of doing business subsuming all mining related levies and royalty etc under a single mining tax should be considered.

30. Concerns expressed by Shri Manish Mishra representing by CII for consideration of the Committee, are summarised as follows:

- i. Regulatory environment needs to be conducive to conducting exploration and mining.
- ii. Sustainable Development Framework and Upliftment of people living in mining areas should get special focus.
- iii. Benchmarking of the national mineral policy with mining jurisdictions which are known to be progressive and developed like Brazil, Australia, Canada, etc to make the national mineral policy updated and current with regard to issues like taxation, allotment and tenure of concessions, etc. The mineral policy should have embedded provisions which would allow and require bench marking on a regular basis.
- iv. Periodic regulatory impact assessment to assess whether the statutory provisions in the Act and Rules have served their purpose and to take steps for course correction if the need arises.
- v. Effective use of funds under DMF for upliftment of persons affected by mining needs to be assessed so that these funds are utilised and spent properly and the possibility of setting up of an SPV for this purpose should also be considered.
- vi. Issues related to expiry of mining leases 2020 should be addressed urgently as huge amounts of disruption in supply of minerals like iron-ore is expected. Steps should be taken to ensure a smooth transition to ensure continued ore supply without employment loss.

31. Concerns expressed by Shri Kaushik Mukherjee representing JSW for consideration of the Committee, are summarised as follows:

- i. Draw up a programme of cooperation operation between various exploration agencies for speeding up exploration; and foreign companies specialised in exploration can also be identified and invited for this purpose.
- ii. The Mines Ministry should play a pro-active role to speed up the process of transfer of forest clearance to enable the companies who have won the

auctioned 'C' category mines in Karnataka for early commencement of mining. It was also impressed that since the decision to allot the mines is established the process of Stage I FC should be speeded up which will cut down the process by 18 months.

- 32.** Shri Ranjan Sahai, Controller General, IBM, clarified certain doubts/apprehensions raised by the members relating to geological reports, threshold values/cut-off values of mineral ore for captive/end-use, guidelines for final/progressive mine closure plan, size of the deposit while demarcating mineral blocks to be put on auction, etc.

- 33.** Shri. R K Sinha, former CG, IBM mentioned that even the previous regime which allowed for grant of an exclusive reconnaissance permit and seamless transition from reconnaissance to prospecting and then to mining, did not show the desired results as only about 3-4 reconnaissance permits got converted to prospecting out of around 401 permits granted. Now the present regime has an open sky policy for grant of non-exclusive reconnaissance permits. However, without an assured transition to prospecting even this open sky policy may not yield the desired results to ramp up exploration. It was therefore necessary he said for the Committee to examine what needs to be done in this regard.

- 34.** Dr Rajeswar Rao, AS (Mines) at the end thanked all the members for their active participation and expressed a desire that the Committee should work in a cohesive manner to bring out the revised National Mineral Policy within the stipulated timeframe.

The meeting ended with vote of thanks to the Chair.
