

Shri Ashok Chavan
Chief Minister of Maharashtra
'Varsha' Malabar Hill, Bhausaheb Hiray Marg,
Malabar Hill, Mumbai - 400 006, INDIA

March 2010

Your Excellency,

Stop Contaminating Environment and Health of Dharavi Bhet Communities – INDIA

We are writing with grave concern about the Indigenous communities in Dharavi Island, within Mira-Bhayandar municipal boundary adjacent to Mumbai. The villagers were threatened by the garbage recycling plant and some of those opposing the Plant have been harassed.

Dharavi Island used to be a beautiful land, enjoying abundant traditional culture in the past 700 years. Unfortunately, the garbage recycling plant, Hanjar Biotech Pvt. Ltd of the Mira-Bhayandar Municipal Corporation, inappropriately located on the hilltop in the midst of the green agricultural lands, has seriously damaged the natural environment and the villagers' health.

The waste drained from the plant is not properly treated, contaminating the lavish green field and nearby drinking water, and the stench from the plant is widely carried around by wind. Thus more and more villagers living around the plant have fallen sick. Moreover, protestors against the plant, including local villagers and supporting groups, have been falsely charged simply because they uphold the basic rights to adequate standard of living.

With the plenteous natural and cultural resources, Dharavi could be an ideal resort. We are deeply disappointed that no protection has been implemented while the lands are undergoing such damage. Please be reminded that **the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** has stated that: **“The principles of respect for and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples to self-determination and development”** and **“the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples must be obtained before investments are made on projects affecting their lands, territories and resources and before such projects are brought into indigenous lands and territories.** The statement echoed with the Article 11.1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which India is one of the signatories.

Therefore we strongly request your government to direct the concerned authorities to:

- stop the operation of Hanjar Biotech garbage recycling plant which runs without consent from Dharavi Bhet villagers; and
- stop harassment of protestors who oppose the Plant.

We are looking forward to your favourable response on the issue.

Yours faithfully,

[SIGNATORIES OF THIS LETTER BELOW]

CC:
Chairperson of National Human Rights Commission;
Shri. A. L. Jarhad, District Magistrate;
Shri. S. S. Sandhu, Konkan Division;
Chairperson of Maharashtra Pollution Control Board;
Shri. Manu Kumar Srivastava, Secretary of Urban Development (II) Special Projects,(Additional Charge);
Diplomatic representative of India in my country.

Chairperson
National Human Rights Commission
Faridkot House, Copernicus Marg,
New Delhi-110001, INDIA

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