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SUBJECT: TAKE BACK EIA 2020; ONLY A PROGRESSIVE LAW ON PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENT CAN HELP US

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(Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change)
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We, the people of India, reject this draft EIA 2020 as a potential law of this country for the reasons listed below:

The draft does not acknowledge the best practices in EIA from across the world. Many countries have EIAs that are implemented at the sectoral (power or transport), strategic (energy transition) and crosscutting (health and biodiversity) scale for greater effectiveness and better environmental governance. Your draft is regressive because it aims at approving projects more than assessing them. This kind of law is the reason why India remains unprogressive.

It is unacceptable that we, the people of this country, are not allowed to speak about the projects that are imposed on our neighbourhoods, our coasts and forests. The draft EIA 2020 proposed by the Ministry clearly reflects the fear of public participation in the central government. The draft gives impunity to so many projects from public hearings that it makes us think if these projects are for the good of a select few.

The Covid pandemic lockdown has shown us how unequal our society is. The poorest people of our country and the communities that live in forest areas, coastal regions and the mountains, rely on environmental resources to survive. There are enough studies to show that nature thrives only when environmental communities are safe and prosperous. We demand that the government must draft laws that enable marginalised communities to prosper and be able to conduct practices that sustain their livelihoods. The government must do away with EIA dilutions that entrust our valuable natural resources to private industries.

The central government has done so little to combat climate change, environmental degradation and biodiversity loss even after the responsibility bestowed upon us by the Paris Climate Change Agreement. If we do not change our approach to the environment, the future generations of India will suffer the most. This government, which is mostly made up of seniors, may not foresee the next few decades while planning, but as parents and young people, we do. Therefore we are morally bound to demand the Ministry to withdraw the EIA 2020 and replace it with a progressive law that promotes sustainability and combats climate change.

The covid pandemic has taught the world a very important lesson. We must focus on the long term health of people rather than making short term environmentally downgraded decisions. We demand that the central government and the environment ministry stop ignoring the voices from across the country and fulfill our educated demands. The world has already changed forever. It's high time we adapt to the rules.

Concerned citizen of India.