
National Consultation on Sustainable Just Transition in Jharkhand

14 December, 2022 | India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

Introduction

India is actively pursuing low-emission growth paths and making significant efforts to implement climate actions in its economy and society. India's commitment to reaching a 500 GW non-fossil fuel target by 2030 and becoming a net-zero carbon emitter by 2070 was underlined during the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) led COP-26 meeting (at Glasgow, 2021) and was emphasised at COP-27 (at Sharm El-Sheikh, 2022) by focusing on the Mission LiFE which suggests adopting Lifestyle for Environment and building a climate-resilient future. India has also recently updated its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), as agreed under the Paris Agreement, which translates the 'Panchamrit' into enhanced climate targets. Further, India also submitted its Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy to UNFCCC. These massive actions will help India usher in low emissions growth pathways.

Jharkhand is a resource-rich state in India with large mineral reserves, robust industrial sectors, and captivating ecological landscapes. Given the climate vulnerability, dependency on fossil fuel ecosystems, and looming concern of resource depletion the state is poised to face multiplier effects on its economy and people at large. The Net-zero goal set by India cannot be achieved without the active lead taken by Jharkhand. There is growing agreement that while the shift to climate neutrality has the potential to create jobs and have a net positive impact on health, the economy, biodiversity, and the environment, there will be challenges for some regions due to the concentration of fossil fuel dependent industries and sectors that will need to be phased out or transformed. Without farsighted transition plans and action points, there will be loss of livelihood, decline in state revenue, and socio-economic disruptions. In order to prepare for this transition that is sustainable, inclusive, and just, it is crucial to understand the effects of these commitments on the state and its population.

Path-breaking initiative taken by Jharkhand

The Government of Jharkhand has constituted a 'Sustainable Just Transition Task Force' vide notification no. 3247 dated November 9, 2022, to work towards a just, sustainable and inclusive transition. Jharkhand has been the first state in the country to set a policy direction through the task force to work towards a net-zero scenario and sustainable development goals. The task force has been mandated to frame and develop a roadmap for implementing a just sustainable and inclusive transition toward a green and sustainable model of development for the state of Jharkhand.

The State Government has outlined the following broad objectives for the task force:

1. Assess the magnitude and nature of the effects that accelerated phase-out of coal mines and coal-based industries have on the economy and on workers and communities that are directly or indirectly dependent
2. Study the effects of the transition from fossil fuel-based to non-fossil fuel-based energy eco-system on the communities and workers particularly those impacted by planned / unplanned closure of mines,
3. Study new opportunities in key green sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, forest, manufacturing, and renewable energy,
4. Explore the role of community initiative in climate change mitigation,
5. Propose sustainable finance models to promote industry and entrepreneurial activities, particularly MSMEs, in the wake of the transition to non-fossil fuel resources,

6. Recommend policy initiatives and interventions for key sectors on infrastructure, investment, development, and industry to ensure an effective and smooth transition to a green and sustainable new ecosystem based on low carbon emissions,
7. Formulate district action plans for identified districts to ensure a focused, sustainable and inclusive transition for workers and communities in the new ecosystem based on low carbon emissions,
8. Develop a roadmap for the implementation of a just, sustainable and inclusive transition toward a green and sustainable development model.

To achieve the aforesaid objectives it has been agreed to frame a Term of Reference (ToR) after a series of consultation with all stakeholders ranging from industries, coal Public Sectors Undertakings (PSUs), business associations, think-tank, labour unions and civil society to communities. Apart from two inter-departmental meetings, two more consultations with industries, and commerce & business associations have been organised and now the national consultation is being organised to seek further inputs on framing the contours of the ToR.

Broader Pointers on ToR emerged through various consultations held in Jharkhand:

- Macro-level mapping of coal mining and its impact on the local economy and society at large
- Vulnerability assessment of coal mining districts and related indicators for developing district plan
- Socio-economic impact assessment of coal mines (planned and unplanned closure of coal mines)
- Decarbonisation pathways for coal mines and fossil fuel industries through cleaner coal technologies
- Livelihood assessment of vulnerable sections including indigenous communities in coal-rich districts
- One pilot of coal mining closure based on SoP developed by Coal Controller for further replications
- Land and Environmental restoration to build a long-term social and economic asset
- Energy security mapping for an effective and inclusive energy transition in the state
- Energy transition pathways in key sectors with RE integration and scaling up RE production in the state
- State Hydrogen Mission with a focus on helping out hard-to-abet industries
- Low carbon pathways through energy efficiency, sustainable mobility, carbon capture & sequestration
- Roadways towards clean manufacturing for industries with a focus on MSME
- Localisation of climate action plan and developing a climate governance system of the state
- Disaster risk reduction mechanism and its coping mechanisms
- GHG inventorization, Environment, Social, and Governance reporting and Sustainability reporting
- Green finance, innovative financial model and carbon trading to facilitate just transition
- Developing an SoP for carbon-free agro practices and climate-resilient agro infrastructure
- Industrial pollution control regime and climate proofing mechanism in infrastructure development
- Economic diversification and social security plan for Jharkhand
- Ensuring energy security, reliability and quality electricity in the state
- Encouraging circular economy within the state
- Ensuring water security, food security and livelihood security for a sustainable transition
- Adopting future technologies such as carbon capture, carbon sequestration, energy efficiency
- Development of LiFE strategy for climate action
- Adoption of a single window system for smoother adoption, swift implementation and coordination
- Diversifying the Energy-Mix in the state including the provisions for energy storage
- Mapping of learnings and best practices from transition initiatives taken by other countries across globe
- Channelize bilateral and multilateral funding for an inclusive and just transition
- Action plans and roadmap for a focused, sustainable and inclusive transition in Jharkhand

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