

For Immediate release

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New Delhi / Gurgaon, India
10-March 2010



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Fearing Criticism Govt. Withholds Key Climate Policy Information

RTI campaign exposes government's refusal to part with information on national and international climate policy formation process.

Ministry of Environment and Forests and the Prime Minister's office are refusing release of information on the process through which climate policy is formed, indicating that the release of this information might be embarrassing to the government, claims the group that filed several RTI applications.

Climate Revolution Initiative announced today that information sought by it on the proceedings of PM council on climate change, letters exchanged between the PM and Environment Minister on climate policy and information relating to international climate negotiations has been purposely prevented from release, directly denied and in some cases released only partially.

Replies to the five RTI applications, which are available on the group's website www.climaterevolution.net/rti, show a government steadfastly committed to hiding information which may prove embarrassing if released, as it might show that the government has no interest in seeking to mitigate climate change but only in ensuring unconstrained economic growth.

Manu Sharma, founder of the group that filed the RTI applications, says he suspects the government will be left unanswerable if this information is made public. Sharma argues that the recent furore in the parliament after Copenhagen conference when the opposition accused the government of acceding too much to developed countries is completely misplaced.

The truth, he says, is quite the opposite. Previously employed as a Copenhagen Campaign

Coordinator with a leading climate NGO from the country, Sharma said, "what happened at Copenhagen was that India ganged up with China and the United States to perpetuate status quo -- ensuring that no emission reductions are mandated -- which suits the interest of all three parties." The climate agenda was put on the back burner for future meetings.

Ultimately, India's primary interest in these negotiations should be mitigation of climate change which will hurt India's poor the most. On one hand Indian policymakers argue that it is the developed world's responsibility to reduce emissions but on the other they make no attempts to force them to reduce emissions.

It is to expose this conspiracy of inaction of Indian government that the RTI initiative by Climate Revolution group was conceived. The group argues, among other things, that climate change cannot be addressed through the UNFCCC platform because it has no mandate to force developed and developing countries to reduce emissions. It says change will only come through a social revolution if the people are educated about the extent to which their future has been put to risk by the government.

The disclosure from these RTI applications, out of over 124 it has filed with various government ministries, is part of a planned series of revelations the group plans to make over the coming weeks. Previously, Climate Revolution Initiative had revealed that Ministry of Environment and the Prime Minister's Office have no mechanism whatsoever to monitor international developments in climate science and inform the policymakers.

About Climate Revolution

Climate Revolution Initiative is a series of ambitious proposals and initiatives that can potentially transform the social and political climate on climate change in India and be replicated in any part of the world. Unlike environmental groups, Climate Revolution Initiative argues that there is no possibility that the climate crisis can be addressed through the UNFCCC process. The ambitious initiative aims to educate and mobilise the public to force the governments to change. Climate Revolution Initiative was founded by Manu Sharma, an activist and renewable energy expert. Details about its RTI Initiative, including scanned replies from various govt. authorities, are available on www.climaterevolution.net/rti