

India's Rights of Mother Earth Petition



To

Dr. Manmohan Singh
Hon'ble Prime Minister of India
New Delhi
South Block, Raisina Hill,
New Delhi – 110 101.

Subject : Stand up for the Rights of Mother Earth

Dear Sir,

India today may be revelling in its nearly double digit growth but it is forgetting its ancient legacy of reverence for Mother Earth and the need to protect nature for future generations. On the occasion of the 150th birth anniversary of India's National Poet, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, let us also be reminded of his innate wisdom and warning that "the greed of gain has no time or limit to its capaciousness. Its one object is to produce and consume. It has pity neither for beautiful nature nor for living human beings. It is ruthlessly ready without a moment's hesitation to crush beauty and life out of them, moulding them into money."

On World Environment Day in 1972, the United Nations Conference on Human Environment began in Stockholm. Smt. Indira Gandhi, our then Prime Minister, was the only Head of Government who travelled to Stockholm to participate in it. She addressed the gathering by quoting our ancient scripture the Atharva Veda and said "O pure Earth, May that we utilize your soil well, without causing you injury or harm or disturbing any vital element in you." This is our civilization's legacy – for which we have stood up and spoken on behalf of the Rights of Mother Earth and her people, and against apartheid of any kind. You are the custodian of this legacy as our Prime Minister.

We have given the world the concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakum – the Earth family which represents the democracy of all life. Our indigenous traditions of reverence for the earth are still upheld by our tribal cultures and rural communities. The Indian constitution has also reflected this spirit by adopting the PESA act. Across India, tribals are adopting resolutions under PESA, declaring: "We pledge that the resources of our village do not belong to an individual, they belong to the community.... From today we will refer to the Earth that sustains us as Mother Earth. Our Mother Earth is not a tradable commodity."

In the wake of Rio +20, twenty years after the first Earth Summit held at Rio in 1992, we urge you to uphold our moral, political and spiritual heritage and support the Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth during the Earth Summit and be guided by its spirit in your action and policies as well.

We hope that our voices reach you and give you courage to represent our unique ecological civilization which has always stood for non-violence, peace and trusteeship of the Earth. We hope India will join the ranks of the people and nations who have the vision to endorse, support and champion the cause of the Rights of Mother Earth.

For the Earth