

'A Ridiculous Claim' - Greenpeace response to the Indian Internal Bureau accusations

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Greenpeace responds to the leaked IB Report that Greenpeace and other NGOs have impacted India's GDP by 3%.

We wrote to the MHA requesting to see a copy of the official IB report but so far have not received it. Last night a report claiming to be the IB report was leaked on a web portal and based on that version Greenpeace is happy to give our response below. We are accountable to more than 3 million Indian supporters and they need to know what the truth is. If IB approaches us officially with either the report or questions related to the report we will be happy to engage with them.

Greenpeace is an independent global campaigning organisation present in 40 countries across Asia, Africa, Europe, the Americas, Europe and the Pacific. We act to change attitudes and behaviour, to protect and conserve the environment and to promote peace by:

- Catalysing an energy revolution to address the number one threat facing our planet: climate change.
- Campaigning for sustainable agriculture by rejecting genetically engineered organisms, protecting biodiversity and encouraging socially responsible farming.
- Protecting the world's ancient forests and the animals, plants and people that depend on them.
- Defending our oceans by challenging wasteful and destructive fishing, and creating a global network of marine reserves.
- Working for disarmament and peace by tackling the causes of conflict and calling for the elimination of all nuclear weapons.
- Creating a toxic free future with safer alternatives to hazardous chemicals in today's products and manufacturing.

To maintain its independence, Greenpeace does not accept donations from governments or corporations but relies on contributions from individual supporters and foundation grants.

1. The IB claims that GP and other NGOs have impacted GDP by 3%

This is a ridiculous claim - 3% of India's GDP is over 3.3 lakh crores - more than the coal and 2G scams put together! Leaving aside the IB's questionable math and understanding of economics, the burden of proof is on them to substantiate their wild claims with evidence. However, we must also

realise that environmental degradation is believed to be reducing India's GDP by 5.7% p.a. according to the World Bank [1]. Lastly, GDP figures by themselves are a poor indication of progress, and say nothing about the quality of life, education level, health etc, particularly for the hundreds of millions that are not benefitting from India's current model of growth. It is clearly not possible to delink development for all from environmental protection.

2. Using "people-centric" issues

Yes, Greenpeace does run "people-centric" campaigns - why is this seen as negative? People have a right to, and to demand for, clean air, water, forests, livelihoods and a liveable climate. Greenpeace works to show that protecting our environment is beneficial for all Indians, particularly the poor and not a luxury past time of the idle rich. As a result, we enjoy the support of hundreds of farmer groups fighting for organic agriculture and against GMOs, thousands of villagers in Singrauli who fear being forced off the forests they depend on, and many others in places like Bihar, who are accessing modern electricity for the first time, in part because of work done by Greenpeace on renewable energy access.

3. GP claims to rely on individuals, but you also get money from foundations, some of them linked to corporations. Explain.

Greenpeace India has approximately 3 lakh individual financial supporters in all. These are individuals who have contributed on a monthly or annual basis in amounts ranging from a few hundred to a few thousand rupees. We do not accept money from corporations or governments. We do accept money from philanthropic foundations whose objectives are aligned with ours. We do not accept money from corporate foundations. We exercise complete independence over our activities, i.e. we raise funds to implement plans that help us meet our objectives; we do not draw up objectives in order to raise funds.

Our funds raised in India currently account for about 61 % of our annual income. The remaining 39 % comes from International sources almost entirely from Greenpeace International. GPI, like Greenpeace India, is also funded only by individual donors and philanthropic foundations, with no corporate or government funding. The money that Greenpeace India has received from international donors has primarily been used in renewable energy work - to demonstrate a working solar energy set up in a rural area in Bihar and showcase the fact that RE is a viable alternative to bring electricity to millions that have not received it via the national grid or coal fired power plants.

Regarding foundations being linked to corporations, GP does not accept money from foundations or trusts that are directly linked to companies. However, several foundations have been set up by business individuals. In such cases, Greenpeace accepts money from such foundations provided their objectives are in consonance with ours and that Greenpeace retains complete autonomy over what the funds are used for. In 2012, Greenpeace received approximately 1.1 crore from Climate Works - a global foundation that funds work on climate change in several countries across the world, including Europe and the US.

4. Why is GP anti-nuclear?

GP believes that nuclear energy is an inherently unsafe and risky technology that is not required. We oppose nuclear energy across the world, including in the US, UK and France. Our very origins were, in fact, in opposing nuclear tests by the US. We are also opposed to nuclear weapons. We ally, support and stand in solidarity with all those who work on this issue. We work to expose nuclear accidents/safety loopholes because they are a public safety issue. We believe the industry must be held accountable for accidents arising out of faulty equipment. Nuclear accidents are potentially

catastrophic with consequences lasting for centuries. If an industry insists on profiting from proliferating this technology, then at the very least it must be held to account for any disasters arising from this and must be prepared to pay for consequences. The nuclear civil liability law that GP has worked to bring to the country is intended to ensure recompense for citizens by the equipment company in case of a disaster. This ensures the Indian tax payer is saved crores of rupees in case of an accident and the foreign nuclear supplier is not let off scot free - how is this anti national?

5. Why is GP anti-GMOs?

As with nuclear, we believe the risks outweigh the benefits. GMOs pose a potential risk to public health, environment and to farmers. It's so far been an unpredictable technology and once the GMOs are released into the environment, it can't be controlled or called back. While the IB accuses us of representing foreign interests, GMO technology is being pushed in India by US multinationals like Monsanto. Several respected scientists, experts and bodies such as Parliamentary Standing Committee and the Supreme Court appointed panel of experts has recommended a moratorium on GM technology and a precautionary approach to GM technology. Many countries across the world restrict GM food crops. India does not need GMOs for food security - we already produce enough food to feed our population and the challenge lies in setting up efficient distribution systems. Instead of investing in false solutions such as GMOs, the government should focus on rejuvenating our natural resources through ecological agriculture practices which is critical to ensure food security of the country.

6. Why is Greenpeace anti-coal when India has no choice but to burn coal for electricity, power shortages, RE is too expensive etc.

Climate change is the biggest threat mankind has ever faced, and the science of climate change is clear. The burning of fossil fuels, primarily coal, are the main cause of climate change. If we are to slow the rate of climate change, we must burn less fossil fuel and build the clean energy systems of the future. The developed world is shifting away from coal and towards renewable energy; India is uniquely posed to avoid repeating the mistakes of others. Across the world, wherever Greenpeace is active, we work to get governments to adopt low carbon pathways. We have big anti-coal campaigns in the US, UK, EU, Australia, Germany, South Africa, China and Southeast Asia.

In India, we believe the country is at a particular advantage where it is poised to build a significant amount of energy infrastructure to provide energy for millions and has an opportunity to make the right investments - clean, sustainable, quickly implementable, and energy secure options. Instead of investing in a polluting dirty energy source such as coal, we have the opportunity to invest in renewable and clean energy, with benefits to our health, climate and our economy. If we fail to take this chance, we will lose the clean energy race to China, US and Germany.

Greenpeace works to demonstrate clean solutions at various levels - an aspect the IB report has conveniently left out of its purview. Our work on coal is focussed around ensuring that the laws of the land are not violated. These include the Forest Conservation Act, Wildlife Protection Act, the Forest Rights Act, etc. Our work in Mahan, SIngrauli has highlighted the ongoing violation of some of these laws. The people of Mahan are asking that their rights, guaranteed under the Forest Rights Act, are recognised, something that the state government has deliberately failed to do. We have played a critical role in educating people on the rights provided to them under the law so they may exercise these rights. We believe this to be essential to democratic process.

Coal has failed India - we still have 300-400 million people without any electricity access, and many millions more face hours of load shedding every day. This is despite decades of coal reliance.

Renewable energy is now at a technical and economic stage to meet our energy needs quickly, reliably and in many cases, at a lower cost. Wind is already cheaper than new coal power, and solar is expected to be cheaper within 3 -5 years. We believe that when the true costs of India's continued coal reliance are known, (air pollution, health risks, loss of forests, pollution of water etc, energy insecurity and a ballooning import bill) the benefits of renewables will be clear. We are upfront about this and information is contained on our website and publicised regularly in the media - there is no secret agenda here.

7. Why is Greenpeace against Palm Oil and the Indian import of palm oil?

Greenpeace is not against palm oil, we are against palm oil that is linked to tropical deforestation. Science shows that climate change is the biggest issue facing the planet, and that India is already one of the countries hardest hit. Much of the world's palm oil is grown in Indonesia, where forests are cleared and replaced with oil palm plantations, with devastating consequences for species like the Sumatran tiger and the orang -- utan, as well as the climate, as the felling and land clearance causes a spike in carbon emissions and an acceleration of climate change. India's imports of palm oil have skyrocketed in the last six years, to the detriment of our domestic oilseed sector. Globally, Greenpeace has targeted major food companies in the US and EU (Unilever, Nestle, Proctor & Gamble and many more) asking that they ensure they are not using palm oil linked to deforestation. We are making the same demand of Indian companies. MTR has in fact recently agreed to our demands.

8. Is Greenpeace going to launch a campaign on the Indian IT Sector?

Not unless the IT sector backtracks from its commitments to phase out toxics from its products. Greenpeace ran a successful campaign on e - waste, starting way back in 2005, focussing both on Indian (HCL, Wipro) and international companies (Dell, HP, Samsung, Apple) which resulted in the introduction of an e - waste law in the country. Both Indian and International companies were ranked by Greenpeace on how clean their products were. In several rankings, an Indian company, Wipro, came first. Even a cursory google search will show that any claim that Greenpeace selectively targeted Indian companies to undermine the sector is blatantly false. Such an "error" can only be a deliberate attempt to malign Greenpeace and generate public opinion against us.

9. Why does GP use encryption and Information security, do you have something to hide?

In the post Edward Snowden era, it is clear that the state can, if it wants, access private communications. Moreover, there is often a very clear nexus between government and corporations. Greenpeace takes on both governments and corporations and as such, we take every measure possible to ensure our information is secure. The use of info security measures is not only legal but also commonplace in corporations and is increasingly spreading to the NGO sector. Ensuring information security does not in any way jeopardise the interests of the country.

10. Who is Benjamin Hargreaves and what is he doing in India? Is he/GP working with construction workers in Mumbai?

Benjamin Hargreaves advises us on how to improve our trainings. He is not involved in our work with the IT industry, which in any case is not an ongoing campaign. He is also not working with construction workers, and neither is Greenpeace. This is another indication of the inaccurate information contained in the IB report.

11. Greenpeace contravened FCRA 2010 by getting into talks with AAP and declaring a Greenpeace consultant as an AAP candidate?

About 2 months before the national elections Pankaj Singh, a consultant to Greenpeace decided to use what he thought would be a great personal opportunity to join AAP. We were sad that he had to leave Greenpeace but completely respected his decision. Greenpeace did not contribute money to his campaign and we are clear that our supporter's money needs to be spent on campaigns and not on funding one political party or the other. Greenpeace continues to believe that we need to engage with all political parties to bring about a better planet.

P.S.

* <http://www.outlookindia.com/article/-A-Ridiculous-Claim/291080>

Footnotes

[1] <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2013/07/17/india-green-growth-necessary-and-affordable-for-india-says-new-world-bank-report>