



WTI's statement on FRA petition

Statement issued by Vivek Menon, ED and CEO, Wildlife Trust of India (WTI)

Wildlife Trust of India is a conservation organisation guided by its mission to conserve wildlife and its habitat and to work for the welfare of individual wild animals, in partnership with communities and governments.

We recognise and attribute our success over 20 years to have worked in conjunction and shouldering responsibility with communities integral to wildlife habitat and indigenous to the forests and which is stated in our founding mission statement.

The FRA petition in which the Hon. Supreme Court has recently passed a judgement is by several NGOs of which the first petitioner is an organisation called "Wildlife First" and not Wildlife Trust of India(WTI). WTI was historically one of the petitioners to a different litigation which was filed in 2008, **WP(C) 50/2008 for the Act to be brought up for debate within the legislative framework**. In this petition, **WTI chose to partner with All Assam Tribal Youth League and Wildlife Society of Orissa as co-petitioners**; to ensure views of the tribal people are included and represented in the court of law when making a case for wildlife conservation and habitat protection. The petition was framed in the context of not allowing vested interests to appropriate national natural heritage in the name of forest dwellers.

However, since the FRA rolled out, many of our initial fears have been allayed with relation to the Act and as a result WTI has not been involved in the court through its lawyers or by personal appearance for over 10 years in this case. Our name may be attached to the initial case only as PILs cannot be withdrawn once filed.

Wildlife Trust of India recognises the rights and role of the indigenous people in wildlife and habitat protection, yet we have been witness to the degradation and unchecked encroachment of wildlife habitats by people migrating in, settling in new areas and expanding their land usage. We stand by the rights of the indigenous forest residents and people who historically have been a natural part of the forest areas and we hope that the most powerful aspect of the Act that vests these indigenous people with the right to conserve and manage forest resources, serves to check further fragmentation of habitat and secure our natural heritage.

ABOUT WILDLIFE TRUST OF INDIA

Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) is a leading Indian nature conservation organisation committed to the service of nature. Its mission is to conserve wildlife and its habitat and to work for the welfare of individual wild animals, in partnership with communities and governments. WTI's team of over 150 dedicated professionals work towards achieving its vision of a secure natural heritage of India, in six priority landscapes, knit holistically together by nine key strategies or Big Ideas.

OUR WORK

<https://www.wti.org.in/what-we-do/>

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