

Green Agenda for Odisha

Enabling political parties in Odisha to have a Green Agenda in the discussion in the State Assembly to take strong action.

Forum for Green Governance in Odisha(FoGGo)

Feb. 2011

We, the undersigned, members of the **Forum for Green Governance in Odisha**, an independent, non-partisan, growing network of concerned individuals and civil society organisations, **APPEAL TO ALL POLITICAL PARTIES** in Odisha to take up the cause of a **'Green Agenda for Discussion in Assembly and to take necessary Action'**, as stated below.

Preamble

We, as environmentally conscious people of Odisha,

United in our acknowledgement that we survive on mother earth's resilience, vitality and fecundity, and that it is our duty to preserve this planet as we inherited it, for future generations

Concerned about the increasing patterns of human consumption and greed, the desire for rapid economic growth at the cost of gross environmental degradation

Recognizing that it is the poor, the marginalized and the excluded sections of society who bear the brunt of the evils of pollution, natural resource exploitation and habitat destruction,

Committed to bringing to the fore the principles of social and climate justice,

Convinced of the need to look beyond short term gains and the need to work towards sustainable approaches to development,

ASSERT the need for all political parties in Odisha to have a green agenda in their manifestos

DECLARE the formation of 'Forum for Green Governance in Odisha', a collective of individuals, Civil Society Organisations, Youth Clubs ,Women Federations , Community Based Organisations, Think Tanks, Workers' Unions and other organisations who have come together with common cause to advocate for a greener Odisha:

APPEAL to all political parties to discuss the following causes and recommendations and to take concrete decisions for policy level changes in the coming Assembly session and to take strong action for Green Odisha.

Promoting sustainable agriculture

- i. Shrinking land-man ratio is a critical problem and productive agricultural lands should be safeguarded for betterment of agricultural activities and should not be put into industrial use.
- ii. Address climatic variability and climate change through risk management strategies that minimize the adverse impacts of weather extremes, and encourage the adaptation of agricultural processes to climate change.
- iii. The agricultural extension system should focus on capacity building of farmers on practicing sustainable agriculture and organic farming, and should scale up these activities with more number of farmers as a step towards 'green agriculture'.
- iv. Traditional wisdom and indigenous knowledge on farming practices in agriculture should be documented, preserved and promoted.
- v. Stringent regulations need to be implemented to prevent over exploitation of ground water by any means like the drilling of bore wells. But check dams, rain water harvesting, and management of water bodies by local Panchayats need to be encouraged.
- vi. Ban corporatization of agriculture, use of Genetically Modified (GM) inputs such as seeds, harmful chemical fertilizers and pesticides.
- vii. Promote eco-friendly cultivation and incentivize organic farming to protect soil fertility. The state must promote the branding of organic foods for appropriate quality control and access to better markets. Natural packaged foods such as canned coconut water and palm products must be promoted by the state, providing marketing and technical support to small-scale growers.
- viii. Encourage for diversified cropping system in rural Odisha ,Hill region and tribal society including traditional variety of Minor millets.
- ix. Develop Greenery in the agriculture field through fruit bearing plants on the open spaces or land site by area where is possible(without affecting agriculture crops).

Protecting the coast

- i. Coastal Regulation Zone Act in its original version should be revisited without any dilutions or amendments.
- ii. Bio conservation efforts such as Biosphere Reserves, Marine Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries should be community centric and pay due importance to local traditional livelihoods and not act as a barrier.
- iii. Coastal Zone Management Authorities should have adequate community representation to voice local concerns, and due role in the decision making processes. Introduce Community Based Coastal Management, by giving greater role and power to the Panchayats.

iv. Ecologically harmful fishing practices should be banned to protect marine resources in a sustainable manner.

v. Traditional and customary rights of all the communities on the coast should be respected and upheld.

vi. Untreated wastes in any form should not be released into the sea. Violations should be strictly monitored and heavy penalties to be levied on the violators.

vii. Early Disaster Warning Systems need to be revamped along the coast in lieu of the threat from natural disasters like tsunamis, cyclones, floods and wave surges. Community based disaster risk management system should be strengthened in all coastal villages.

viii. Natural bio-shields of all types, such as mangroves, sand dunes and coastal vegetation should be protected and preserved.

ix. Mining of minerals like sand and limonite along the coast should be immediately banned as they pose a greater threat to the communities along the coast.

Making cities greener and cleaner

i. Integrated public transport schemes to be introduced and promoted.

ii. All vehicles that run on clean technologies should be given tax concessions and a stiffer tax needs to be levied on fuel-inefficient luxury vehicles such as SUVs and sports cars.

iii. All areas in cities and towns with good connectivity by public transport systems should have high parking fees for cars and other four wheelers. This along with other initiatives should incentivize the greater use of public transport systems.

iv. Bicycle lanes should be introduced in multiple sections of cities to promote healthier and more eco-friendly transport in the state.

v. The current pollution control norms for vehicles have to be strictly enforced.

vi. Pilot projects in using plastic waste in road laying should be scaled up quickly.

vii. All office and apartment complexes above a given size and within municipal limits should have strict “green” codes: green building codes that mandate good ventilation and use of natural light standards that promote energy efficiency; minimum tree cover per acre of land; in-house segregation and management of the solid wastes generated; and rain-water harvesting.

viii. Government buildings should set the example for implementing green building codes.

ix. Norms should be created for the use of solar panels in large buildings.

x. Create markets for composts by promoting their use in public parks and gardens.

xi. Public toilets have to be converted to ECOSAN toilets and increased in number. Norms related to density of public toilets should be implemented strictly.

xii. Government departments and offices should go ‘paper free’ as per the National E-Governance framework.

xiii. Conventional lighting should be heavily taxed and Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs) should be distributed at subsidized rates through the public distribution system. All government buildings should also compulsorily be fitted with CFLs.

xiv. Responsibility of City management authority to make the city green and eco-friendly including the responsibility of individuals to make their open space with green coverage.

Encouraging responsible industrial development

i. Conversion of productive agricultural land to industrial land use should be strictly prohibited.

ii. Tax holidays and subsidies should not be extended to new industries, and existing tax breaks should be revisited.

iii. Industrial Master Plans need to be made public, and easy online and offline access to them needs to be provided in English and Odia.

iv. Strict compliances to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and public hearing with community participation and consent. Zero waste plans should be mandatory and monitored by communities.

v. The State Pollution Control Board should be made transparent & accountable by placing their annual report for scrutiny in legislature.

vi. Risk and vulnerability assessment must be made mandatory. Comprehensive Disaster Management plans with off-site plan components need to be devised. Early warning systems and evacuation plans need to be in place.

vii. Complete Relief and Rehabilitation package with comprehensive resettlement policies should be framed and implemented in an eco-friendly zone.

viii. The government should mandate that a portion of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities of industries must involve sustainable environmental improvement for local communities.

Conserving forests and upholding tribal rights

i. Customary and traditional rights of the tribals over forests and forest resources should be recognized legally with immediate effect.

ii. The management of the forests and forest resources should be under the control of tribal communities through their traditional Gram Sabha. Any economic activity in forest areas like felling of trees or plantations or any other such activity should give joint ownership to tribals.

iii. Afforestation programmes need to be strengthened with significant local participation.

iv. Declared Plastic Free Zones need to be enforced and monitored strictly with sufficient budgetary provision.

Forging a green future

i. Chemicals used in the preservation of foods like vegetables, fruits, processed foods etc., should be restricted and regulated. The use of safe and organic alternatives should be promoted.

ii. Environmental studies at the school and college level must be strengthened.

iii. Well-funded seed-banks need to be set up at the regional and district levels to maintain all varieties of food grains and provide easy and inexpensive access to farmers.

iv. Multi-crop agricultural and plantation systems should be promoted by afforestation initiatives, agricultural universities and state agencies for greater climate resilience and better food security.

v. Tourism should not be promoted under the spurious title of 'eco-tourism', be it on the coast, in the hills, or in tribal areas. Local communities in tourism areas must be engaged to promote responsible and

truly sustainable tourism, along with the strict enforcement of best practices, waste management and minimal ecological footprints.