

## SPEAKER BIOS

CONFERENCE TO REPORT ON CAUSES OF PERVASIVE LAND CONFLICTS PLAGUING INDIA; REVIEW STATUS OF RIGHTS OF RURAL, TRIBAL PEOPLES IN FORESTS, COMMON LANDS

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**Mr. Arvind Khare** – *Executive Director, Rights and Resources Initiative*

Arvind is a natural resources management specialist with more than 20 years of experience in the non-profit, corporate and public sectors. Currently Executive Director of the Washington-based Rights and Resources Initiative, he has made significant contributions to the critical examination of poverty-environment linkages, initiated a number of innovative rural development projects and was involved in social risk assessment of development investments in India. His work has also involved the development and analysis of policies in infrastructure, forestry, tribal development, social development and watershed sectors for the state and central governments of India. He chaired the External Advisory Group of the World Bank on Forest Sector Strategy Implementation from 2005-2006.

**Mr. Viren Lobo** - *Executive Director, Society for Promotion of Wasteland Development*

Currently Executive Director of SPWD, Viren has been engaged in Action research on various issues related to livelihoods, governance and ecology of natural resources. He has worked through and facilitated the development of various networks dealing with various aspects of natural resources, ecology and livelihoods. He has also written extensively to highlight issues related to food security, common land management, climate change, forest rights and the relevance of biodiversity in the life support systems of rural communities.

**Mr. Shankar Gopal Krishnan** - *Activist with Campaign for Survival and Dignity*

Shankar Gopalkrishnan is an activist with the Campaign for Survival and Dignity, a national platform of adivasi and forest dwellers' organisations. He is also an activist with the Uttarakhand NavNirman Mazdoor Sangh, an unorganised sector union in Dehradun. He has worked on issues of forest rights, human rights, labour struggles and communalism, and has written extensively on these areas as well on economic policy and political developments. His educational training is in mathematics, environmental studies and development studies, with a Bachelor's degree from Bard College in the United States, and a Master's degree from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

**Ms. Madhu Sarin** - *Fellow, Rights and Resources Initiative*

Madhu Sarin is a development planner who has worked on both urban and rural development issues for over 3 decades. Combining grass roots work with policy analysis, a primary focus of her work has been the role of forest and other common lands in supporting rural livelihoods. Having been actively involved in the campaign for forest rights, she was a member of the Technical Support Group set up by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs which drafted the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. She continues being involved in ensuring proper implementation of the Act.

**Dr. Luiz Carlos Joels** - *Former Director, Brazilian Forest Service*

Luiz Carlos Joels is an experienced forester and has a Ph.D. in geography. He has worked for over 30 years in the Brazilian Amazon on issues relating to forests, traditional communities, environment, rural development, science and technology. He was previously employed by the Amazonas State

Agricultural Extension Company, World Wildlife Fund, the Brazilian Institute for Research in the Amazon, the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Brazilian Forest Service. Joels has also participated in National Councils on Environment, Forests, Biodiversity, Agenda 21 and Deforestation Control.

**Dr. Jintao Xu** - *Professor of Natural Resource Economics, Peking University*

Jintao Xu is professor and director of the China Center for Energy and Development (CCED), National School of Development at Peking University. Currently he serves as senior editor for the journal "Regional Environmental Changes" and member of the policy board for "Environment and Development Economics". Jintao Xu also heads the Environmental Economics Program in China (EEPC) based at Peking University, one of the six world centers sponsored by SIDA. During 2000-2004, he was coordinator of the forestry and grassland taskforce under China Council for International Cooperation for Environment and Development (CCICED), and helped formulate advices to Chinese government on policies to improve implementation of China's ecological restoration programs. Jintao Xu received his master of economics degree in 1996 and Ph.D. in natural resource economics in 1999, both at Virginia Tech.

**Dr. Sudershan Iyengar** - *Vice Chancellor, Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Ahmedabad*

Dr. Sudershan Iyengar is currently Vice Chancellor of Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Ahmedabad. He is keenly interested in the issues related to common land management. He has carefully studied issues related to the life support systems of small and marginal farmers, and has consistently highlighted the continued relevance of the commons despite the increasing pressure of privatisation. His specialisation in Environmental economics has helped to highlight a number of critical issues related to sustainable livelihoods. As Vice Chancellor, he is engaged with an experiment in an alternate development paradigm.

**Dr. B. D. Sharma** - *Bharat Jan Andolan*

A former civil servant, Dr. Sharma is known for his letter to the President of India highlighting the condition of the tribals on land which they have lived on for centuries. Part of the work done by him on tribal land rights has been attempts to make PESA (Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas) legislation effective on the ground. Has written a number of books highlighting the conditions of farming and has also been in the forefront in issues related to forest dwellers rights.

**Dr. R. Sreedhar** - *Director, Environics Trust*

Dr. Sreedhar has been an active member of mines minerals and People. His work across the country has highlighted issues related to the condition of mine workers on one hand and local communities affected by mining on the other. Having specialised in Geology, he has highlighted many intricate issues in the mining sector among them being the complex function of the hydrology in the Bauxite rich regions of Eastern Ghats.

**Dr. Jagdish Purohit** - *Programme Director, Society for Promotion of Wasteland Development*

Dr. Purohit is a development professional with over 17 years of experience. He has practiced in action research, project designing, implementation and monitoring related to sustainable management of natural resources and strengthen community organisation to support developmental initiatives at grass root level. He is also affiliated with the education sector and involved in quality education drive in both mainstream and alternative areas, as well as understanding of learning processes, sound policy analysis, research and documentation, participatory programme, planning, monitoring and evaluation, and participatory training.