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Note regarding information to be furnished in the meeting of 14th Island Development Authority with respect to the Department of Tribal Welfare. It is to place on record that no specific decision is sought for.

As flagged, the agenda is “**Initiatives of ANI Administration towards mainstreaming of Jarawas and Policies for different tribes of A&N Islands**”

A) Background

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands have originally been the abode of aboriginal tribes. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation, 1956, promulgated by the President of India provides for protection of the interests of aboriginal tribes and declaration of the geographical area as reserved areas for the exclusive community ownership of the tribes. Here there are six Scheduled Tribes, viz., Andamanese, Onges, Jarawas, Sentinelese, Nicobarese and Shompens notified by the President of India under Article 342 (1) of the Indian Constitution (Andaman & Nicobar Islands Scheduled Tribes Order No. 58, dated 31.03.1959. Except Nicobarese the rest of the 05 tribes are Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).

B) Present Status about the tribes of A&N islands and initiatives taken by the Andaman and Nicobar Administration:

Nicobarese: They are the largest group of tribes, numbering over 27000. They are already mainstreamed. The Administration extends benefits of scholarships, medical facilities and other developments through the District Administration and Integrated Tribal Development Project.

Andamanese: They were once a 8000 strong tribal population, however, due to the British policy of friendly contact, their numbers have dwindled to below 20. Today, after much effort by the Administration in terms of protection and preservation, it stands at 61. They are settled on the Strait Island.

Onges: Similarly, the Onges have been in contact with outsiders for more than 100 years. They are settled in Dugong Creek and presently are numbered at 115.

Both the Andamanese and the Onges have been provided with permanent houses at their settlement areas. The Andaman Aadim Janjati Vikas Samity (AAJVS) takes care of their requirements through involvement of various line departments. Potable water supplies, electrification of their settlements, free medical care, free schooling and other amenities like police wireless for communication, Community Hall, footpath, jetty for berthing of the boats etc. are being provided.

As far as the other three tribes are concerned, there are two schools of thoughts:

- i. To protect and preserve their cultural identity and avoid intermingling with the outside world and allow them to carry out their own activities as per their own terms
- ii. To mainstream them into the outside world so that they enjoy the fruits of development.

The Administration has taken a conscious decision to frame policy while involving various subject experts and after getting due sanctions from the Government of India. At present, for the said three tribes, calibrated interventions are being made through Andaman Aadim Janjati