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(no subject)

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Dear All:

These are some of the points I would like to draw your kind attention due to the recent plans and announcements that have been made by the Island administration. What has been most disheartening is that in spite of the Island administration's stated sensitivity towards the problems of the Jarawas, local politicians and Central Ministries have gone ahead and decided to broaden the ATR into a fancy two lane highway complete with two bridges. This, in the limited imagination of some people would be the ultimate marker of progress and development in the Islands. Many right thinking citizens are appalled at the fact that such a decision could have been taken unilaterally without consulting the relevant agencies looking after the interests of the tribal communities who are to be most impacted by this initiative.

At the local level institution like ANTRI could have been taken into a consultation process given its close and collaborative relationship with the main agency looking after Jarawa and other PVTG interests in the Islands. The points that I would like to make are not just in my capacity as an official of ANTRI but also as a concerned anthropologist and citizen who has worked among the tribal groups of the island over a very long period.

The broadening of ATR and building of two bridges on it is bound to have long-term negative impact on the future of the Jarawas. It would negate the entire premise of welfare policy as implemented by the AAJVS in collaboration with ANTRI and supported by the Department of TW. These agencies have been following a clearly stated policy that involves implementing programmes that would not accelerate the assimilation of Jarawas into "mainstream" society. The entire