

with in above orders. Ministry of Environment & Forests and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands Administration shall file an affidavit within three months giving details of action taken by them on each of such recommendations."

3. While expressing the gratitude of the Administration to the Hon'ble Court for the reasoned order in the interest of preserving the ecology and environment of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the Administration would like to reiterate the following submissions before the Hon'ble Court,

4. That, firstly, the Administration is fully seized of the importance of biodiversity resources and their conservation and also its responsibility to take due care of the socio-economic perspectives of the islands in a manner that is ecologically sustainable, economically viable and administratively feasible. With these objectives in mind, the Administration has set aside 70% of its forests under the Protected Area Network comprising of National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries and Tribal Reserves, where forestry operations of any kind are prohibited and the forests are maintained in their pristine state. In these areas, conservation is the priority and all efforts are taken to protect these areas from biotic pressures. Even entry into the National Parks, Sanctuaries and Tribal Reserves without the permission of the Administration is prohibited and the staff of the Forest department and Police department is posted in these areas for their protection.

5. That secondly, the Administration humbly submits to intimate that the Andaman and Nicobar Islands support a population of about 3,56,000 who are placed in a