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Dear Shri Singh,

I attended the meeting of the sub group for primitive tribal groups constituted by the Planning Commission for advising the working group for the development and welfare of Scheduled Tribes during the 9th five year plan.

Broadly, I reflected the need of having a tribe specific approach specially for the primitive tribes of Andaman & Nicobar Islands which are not only unique but also in terms of age and stage of development very much behind the other identified primitive tribes. Besides this, I also requested that we must have a long term perspective plan approved by the Planning Commission for the development of these tribes so that we are clear whether to adopt the conservationist or development approach towards these tribes. As you are already aware there has been considerable controversy on whether we should work only towards the preservation and biological survival of the tribes or alternatively also work towards their development in the sense that they should be brought within the mainstream of society. The Chairman did feel that enunciation of a policy in this regard was imperative and said that he would have this matter taken up.

The representative from the Ministry of Welfare pointed out that the Andaman & Nicobar Administration had not supplied the upto date figures regarding the present population of each of the tribes. This was required as population data is intrinsic to any further planning. We were also requested to ensure that information regarding population and present stage of development of each of these categories in so far as economic and health conditions are concerned should be supplied forthwith. They also wanted to have full details of the administrative arrangements proposed keeping in view the substantial requirement of dedicated persons.

/and particularly the Sentinelese and Jarawas.

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