

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF COMMON CAUSE

Date: August 3, 2016
Time: 03:30 pm
Venue: Vikram Sarabhai Foundation, Core IV, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

Participants:

Mr. Vikram Lal	President Emeritus
Mr. Kamal Kant Jaswal	President
Maj. Gen. (Retd.) J. P. Gupta	Vice President Emeritus
Dr. B. P. Mathur	Vice President
Dr. Divya Jalan	
Mr. Lalit Nirula	
Dr. Ashok Khosla	
Prof. Madhu Kishwar	
Mr. Prashant Bhushan	
Mr. Jyoti Sagar	
Mr. Prakash Singh	
Dr. Vipul Mudgal	Director
Mr. Pankaj Gupta	Special Invitee

Mr. Paranjay Guha Thakurta was granted leave of absence.

1. Confirmation of minutes

Minutes of the Governing Council meeting held on March 12, 2016 were confirmed.

2. Presentation of the Society's activities

The Council noted the significant developments in the Society's public interest litigation detailed in the enclosed report. (Annexure 1)

3. Thrust Areas for Future Initiatives:

The Director apprised the GC of the progress made on the identified thrust areas of police reforms, common person's access to justice and proper implementation of the Right to Education. The Director also updated the Governing Council on the new developments on collaboration with ADR, CJAR, Vidhi and NCPRI on judicial reforms.

The GC appreciated the efforts made by the Common Cause team to connect with the younger generation through AMA (Ask Me Anything) platform of the social media site Reddit. It was felt that attempts like these will add to the strength of Common Cause and more and more young people will know and talk about us. The GC welcomed the efforts to attract small donations from a large number of people through the crowd funding platform. Some members felt that Common Cause team should step up its activities on Facebook and Twitter for wider publicity of its programmes.

On governments in power misusing political advertising, many members wanted to know if anything can be done after the Supreme Court has virtually reversed its own order. While it was clarified that the curative petition remains the last option of intervention, some members felt that specific complaints could be taken to the ombudsman, whose appointment in every state has been ordered by the Supreme Court. A view was expressed that Common Cause should explore the possibility of reviving the police reforms case by seeking to delegate the court monitoring of the implementation of the landmark Supreme Court judgment of 2006 to the state high courts.

4. Challenges of compliance for NGOs under the Lok Pal Act

The members expressed their concern that the Act which was intended to curb corruption by public servants has ended up threatening the citizens' rights to privacy and to form associations. While the members agreed that the NGOs and civil society organisations needed to follow strictest standards of transparency and internal governance, it was strongly felt that the trustees and office bearers of NGOs must not be treated as 'public servants.' A suggestion was made that Common Cause should consult other organisations to explore legal options and also make a representation in this regard to the Parliamentary Sub-committee on Lok Pal at the appropriate time.

5. Opening of the bank accounts of the society and trust at IndusInd Bank

The Governing Council approved opening of savings accounts of the Common Cause Society and Trust at the IndusInd Bank and passed the following resolutions:

- (1) “Resolved that a new Savings Bank Account in the name of **Common Cause** be opened with IndusInd Bank, Common Cause House, 5 Institutional Area, Nelson Mandela Road, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi 110070. Further Resolved that any two of the following may function as authorised signatories of the Common Cause for opening, operating, investing, renewing and giving instructions for the redemption of Fixed Deposits with IndusInd Bank.

1. Mr. Kamal Kant Jaswal President
2. Dr. Vipul Mudgal Director
3. Mr. Pankaj Gupta Head, Accounts & Administration”

(2) “Resolved that a new Savings Bank Account in the name of **Common Cause Trust** be opened with IndusInd Bank, Common Cause House, 5 Institutional Area, Nelson Mandela Road, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi 110070.

Further Resolved that any two of the following may function as authorised signatories of the Common Cause Trust for opening, operating, investing, renewing and giving instructions for the redemption of Fixed Deposits with IndusInd Bank.

1. Mr. Kamal Kant Jaswal President
2. Dr. Vipul Mudgal Director
3. Mr. Pankaj Gupta Head, Accounts & Administration”

The GC also approved the Life Membership of Prof. (Dr.) Srikrishna Deva Rao Pendyla, Vice Chancellor, National Law University, Odisha. The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

(Kamal Kant Jaswal)
President