**Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee of Common Cause held on January 6, 2013**

The Executive Committee of Common Cause met on January 6, 2013 at 11.30 A.M at Common Cause House. Shri Vikram Lal, Maj. Gen. (Retd.) J. P. Gupta, Dr. Ashok Khosla and Shri Kamal Jaswal attended the meeting.

The Committee considered the request of Centre for Environment & Food Security (CEFS) for continued financial assistance for pursuing its campaign for systemic reforms in the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act. The Committee noted with satisfaction the impact made by the field surveys conducted by CEFS to document the gross irregularities in the implementation of the Act in UP, MP, Odisha and Bihar. It was agreed that CEFS should be asked to submit a specific project proposal, indicating, *inter alia,* the expected outcomes against which the performance of the project could be measured.

The Director briefed the Executive Committee on the initiative to widen the civil society platform for police reforms. In response to the public notice issued by the Justice J. S. Verma Committee inviting suggestions for amendment of the laws to deal with the scourge of growing sexual violence against women, four civil society organizations, viz. Common Cause, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, Foundation for Restoration of National Values and Manushi Sangathan, came together to make a joint submission to the Committee, underlining the urgency of a comprehensive revamp of the criminal justice system, including policing. An additional submission was also made by Common Cause urging that the Committee should finalize its report after extensive stakeholder consultations and a public debate over its draft recommendations. The Executive Committee felt that the partner organizations should ascertain whether the Verma Committee needed any assistance in processing the very large number of suggestions that it has received from the public.

The Executive Committee was also apprised of the progress in drawing up a petition for challenging certain provisions of the Information Technology Act, 2000, which give arbitrary and sweeping powers to the enforcement agencies to curb the citizens’ fundamental rights to the freedom of speech and expression and personal liberty. The PIL has been prepared by Shri Pavan Duggal, a renowned expert in cyber law, who has agreed to take up this cause *pro bono*.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

 (Vikram Lal)

 President