

Central Information Commission

National Convention on Right to Information (October 13 to 15, 2006)

Invitation for Submission of Papers

A Concept Note

The free flow of information and ideas is critical for empowering people to take charge of their lives and to enable them to realize their socioeconomic and political aspirations. The RTI Act 2005 has therefore been vigorously implemented to set out an information regime, in which transparency in functioning of public bodies and access to information would ensure accountability and good governance of public bodies.

The outcomes of a short period of merely one year of implementation of this Act may not be enough for assessing its achievements in terms of the realization of accepted goals. It would, however, be worthwhile to deliberate on various issues and the major challenges that are faced by the stakeholders, mainly the citizens, civil societies and public bodies. In view of this, the Commission, which has the mandate *inter alia* for monitoring the implementation of this Act, has planned to organize a National **Convention on Right to Information** during October 13 to 15, 2006 at Vighyan Bhavan, New Delhi.

The main objective of this event is two fold: One is to assess the extent of successful implementation of the Act by the Centre and the States so as to identify the major obstacles in providing access to information; and, the other is to evolve strategies for increasing peoples' participation in the development process through access to information. The deliberations would largely focus on issues pertaining to the aspects of maximum disclosure and promotion of open government, citizens'-government interface under RTI framework for ensuring people-centred approach to development, impact of RTI in containing corruption and the major challenges before the Information Commissions to effectively monitor the implementation of the Act.

Over 300 delegates are expected to participate in the Convention. The invitees, include, Information Commissioners, eminent scholars and experts from legal and academic

fields, senior civil servants, statesmen, media persons, RTI activists and the representatives of Information Commissions from the Commonwealth and other countries. The Chief Information Commissioner, Shri Wajahat Habibullah would present an Overview of Implementation of RTI Act. A tentative Programme is attached.([Annexure-I](#)).

The Convention would have the benefit of guidance of leading luminaries of the country. Among others, His Excellency President of India, Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam would inaugurate the Convention on October 13, 2006 and the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Dr Manmohan Singh would deliver the valedictory Address on October 15, 2006.

A Steering Committee, under the Chairmanship of Prof. M M Ansari, Information Commissioner, has been constituted to plan and oversee the organization of the Convention. The composition of the Committee is attached ([Annexure-II](#)). All those who are keen to participate in the convention may submit their papers, not exceeding 3000 words, to any Member of the Committee, latest by August 31, 2006, on any one of the themes or related topics indicated in the attached list ([Annexure-I](#)). The contributors of the selected papers would be invited to participate in the convention and their names would be notified by September 10, 2006.

The proceedings of the Convention would be published and widely disseminated for the benefit of users.

All are invited to participate and contribute to the challenging task of setting out the Information Regime as envisaged by the RTI Act, 2005.

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National Convention on Right To Information

Major Themes for Discussion (Tentative)

S. No.	Topics /Themes	Speaker/s
I. Overview		
1.	Strategies for Strengthening Information Regime	
2.	RTI and Good Governance: Promotion of Open Government	
3.	Impact of RTI on Reduction of Corruption and Improvement in Accountability: Case Studies	
II. Approaches to Maximum Disclosure and Promotion of Open Govt.		
4.	Obligations of Public Authorities for Ensuring Access to Information	
5.	A Review of the Scope of Exemptions	
6.	Capacity Building through Education & Training	
7.	Cost Effectiveness Aspects of Furnishing Information	
8.	Record Keeping and Information Management	
III. Citizens²-Govt. Interface under RTI Framework		
9.	Promotion of Information Literacy: Mass Media and Awareness Generation	
10.	Government and NGOs Interface in making the RTI Work	

11.	<p>Best Practices in Implementation of RTI</p> <p>a) Citizens perspective b) Media Perspective c) Public Authority Perspective</p>	
12.	<p>Critical Assessment of Commission's Decisions by Major Categories:</p> <p>a) Sovereignty and security of the country b) Commercial Confidence c) Investigations and prosecution of offenders d) Confidential Information e) Personal and third Party information</p>	
IV.	Challenge Before Information Commissions	
13.	Monitoring of Implementation of RTI	
14.	Coordination Mechanisms between Central and State Information Commissions	
15.	Areas and forms of Reforms in Implementation of RTI Act	
16.	Relationship between Information Commissions and Judiciary	
17.	Challenges before the Information Commissions	

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Composition of the Steering Committee

1.	Prof. M.M. Ansari, Information Commissioner Central Information Commission Block IV, 5 th Floor, Old JNU Campus, New Delhi-110067. Telefax:26717356 Email: mm.ansari@nic.in	Chairman
2.	Shri P.K. Mohanty, Director General & Executive Director, Centre for Good Governance, Hyderabad. Ph. 040-23541952; Fax.040-23541953 Mob.09849228363; Email.nia@cgg.gov.in	Member
3.	Shri Biswajit Bhattacharya, Advocate, Supreme Court & Vice President, United Lawyers' Association Ph.26276783(R); Fax.23782595 Mob.9810010643; Email: bbhatta@gmail.com	Member
4.	Shri C.B. Paliwal, Joint Secretary (RTI), DOP&T, North Block New Delhi Telefax.23092158; Mob.9868228865 E.mail.jsrti_doapt@nic.in	Member
5.	Dr. N. Bhaskar Rao, Centre for Media Studies, Research House, Community Centre, Saket, New Delhi-110017 Ph. 26864020; Fax.26968282 Mob.9811159588; Email.nbraocms@vsnl.com	Member
6.	Shri Parth Shah, President Centre for Civil Society, K-36, Hauz Khas Enclave New Delhi-110016. Telefax No. 26512347; Mob. 9811145667 E-mail. parthin@ccsindia.org	Member
7.	Shri Rajan Kashyap, Chief Information Commissioner Govt. of Punjab, 131, Sector-10, Chandigarh-160011 Telefax.0172-4630050/52; Mob.09815010131 Email.kashyap_rajana@rediffmail.com	Member

8.	Shri Prakash Kumar, Ex-Nodal Officer RTI, Delhi Govt., Joint Secretary, Ministry of Ocean Development, Block No.12, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110003. Ph.24362101(O); Fax. 24369283 Mob.9868877070; Email.prakash.kumar@nic.in	Member
9.	Shri Shailesh Gandhi, National Campaign for People's Right to Information Ph.022-32903776; Mob.09820027305 Email.shailesh2@vsnl.com	Member
10.	Ms. Maja Daruwala, Director Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative New Delhi. Ph. 26850523; 26864678 Mob.9810199745; Email:majadhun@vsnl.com	Member
11.	Shri Shekhar Singh, C-17 A, Munirka, New Delhi-110067 PhoneNo.26178048; Telefax:26168759 Email:shekarsingh@vsnl.com	Member
12.	Shri Prakash Kardaley, Indrayani Patrakar Nagar, Behind Passport Office, Senapati Bapat Road, Pune-411016. Phone:020-25657238; Mob.09422014901 Fax No.020-26131547; Email:pmk1504@gmail.com	Member
13.	Ms. Rita Sinha, Secretary Central Information Commission Block IV, 5 th Floor, Old JNU Campus, New Delhi-110067. Telefax:26167932	Convenor