

**NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF PEOPLE'S MOVEMENTS**  
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Press Release

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- Government of Maharashtra kneels down before Corporate-Builder-World Bank nexus.
- People-Public-Partnership not Private-Public-Partnership.
- We oppose profit-oriented policy, to struggle and work for a rights enabling policy.

Finally, the Government of Maharashtra has tabled the State Housing Policy on 23rd July. The tabling of the Policy, contrary to the claims of the Chief Minister and Secretary Housing, is without any consultation and regard to the suggestions submitted. This is proved beyond doubt by reading the draft Policy along with the final Policy, as there are no major differences between the two. The authorities have been claiming of the consultation that were held at All India Institute of Local Self Governance. NAPM was invited for the series that was left midway and never completed. No consensus was arrived at those meetings hence it is wrong on the part of the State to claim for having carried out consultation. While NAPM and various other organizations, institutions and individuals had carried out consultations and submitted number of suggestions and objections to the Draft Policy but it is very clear that those have neither been acknowledged nor considered while finalizing the Policy. Hence

The much awaited Draft Housing Policy, released yesterday, is a step to boost growth in the Real Estate market and the aim of Affordable Housing has been kept elusive and a distant dream. With its 42 percent of population living in slums, which for the country is 27%, the State of Maharashtra has 26 percent of the country's total slum dwellers population amounting to 22 lakh families. The draft Policy should have been a sincere exercise to correct these distortions, but it has not been so. The Draft is clearly geared towards not only facilitating but also orienting and supporting the profiteering motives of the private sector. It widens the scope for the nexus of builders-corporates-lending agencies to interfere in the constitutional-pro people-democratic decision making processes. The proposed Reforms are not social or pro-people rather would further shrink the available space for the poor in the cities. With the conspicuous absence of any Civil Society representative on the board, on contrary having builders in the draft formulation process, was bound to bring these imbalances.

The concept 'cities without slums' sounds hollow without a people centric framework of decision-making and implementation. No city anywhere can be slum less if the drafts of the housing policy are drafted with having builders on board, whose only motive is

profiteering. Now calling for public debate is, but a half-heartedly exercise, carried to complete the 'formality' of people's participation. Urban Renewal in such a scenario is nothing but a manifestation of urban untouchability as all over, the poor, the working class, in the name of renewal are facing removal from the central locations of the cities and being thrown out/rehabilitated on the periphery of the cities.

The self-acclaimed progressiveness and pro-activeness of the State government is bulldozed by the fact that it has the largest concentration of the slum dwellers in the country that are forced to exist in in-human, conditions, but amidst vulgar prosperity of the few, which is being facilitated and supported by various State players. Though the Government, in the Draft has claimed for the 'successful' implementation of the existing housing schemes, like Valmiki Ambedkar Awas Yojana, but the facts point towards the opposite. The Latest Audit report by the CAG lambasted the government for irregularities, under and non-utilization of allotted funds, breach of guidelines, and excessive payments to implementing agencies in the schemes/programs meant for the slum dwellers

- The reported Cabinet's approval to the repeal the Urban land Ceiling Act(ULCRA) exposes the moral bankruptcy of the government, which kneeling down, in front of the World Bank and Builders lobby has take this decision. Implementation of ULCRA can solve, once for all, the issue of land availability.
- With violations of Development Plan and relaxations of the land use reservations, abound, any proposal of development through Public Private Partnership of the PH/HD plots is highly objectionable.
- The proposal for doing away the responsibility of Collector for granting permission for any non-agricultural purpose dilutes the existing checks and balance mechanisms.
- Rather than introducing Private Public Partnership model in Housing of migrant laborers, the provisions of the Inter State Migrant Welfare Act should be strictly implemented, which fixes the responsibility to the employer.
- Liberalizing Development Control Rules is clearly a case of interference of Capital in the legislative domain. What sort of amendments will be made in the Rent Control Act have not been spelled out, thus raise suspicion.
- In the current scenario the very concept of 'public projects' becomes contestable. Can any elitist, pro-rich-unsustainable and anti poor project be defined as a public project? Thus the clause of resettlement of slums located on infrastructure land and public projects is objectionable.
- In-situ redevelopment of slums through mandatory role of residents by granting rights to Basti Sabhas should have been clearly spelled out in the Draft.
- Introduction of Competitive Bidding mechanism is an assault on the people's participation in decision-making processes.
- Audit of the Slum Rehabilitation/Redevelopment Scheme should be the exclusive domain of the slum dwellers/residents themselves, not any third party.

- Construction of five lakh Low Income Group Houses in next three years is too little as Mumbai alone has 12 lakh families residing in slums.

The fact that the State Government has not bothered for the Report of the High Powered Committee formed under the Chairmanship of Chief Secretary, Maharashtra after the directions of Mumbai High Court in a case filed by NAPM, which was to work for an Affordable Housing Policy proves beyond doubt the intentions and real goals/objectives of the government and this draft policy. People along with the Organizations will take forward the issue of Affordable Housing Policy, a draft of which has been earlier also submitted to the concerned. Till the goal of Affordable Housing, which is in congruence with livelihoods, is achieved, the struggle for the same will continue.

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