

THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL ACT, 2010

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

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THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL ACT, 2010

ACT NO. 19 OF 2010

[2nd June, 2010.]

An Act to provide for the establishment of a National Green Tribunal for the effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources including enforcement of any legal right relating to environment and giving relief and compensation for damages to persons and property and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

AND WHEREAS India is a party to the decisions taken at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held at Stockholm in June, 1972, in which India participated, calling upon the States to take appropriate steps for the protection and improvement of the human environment;

AND WHEREAS decisions were taken at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held at *Rio de Janeiro* in June, 1992, in which India participated, calling upon the States to provide effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy and to develop national laws regarding liability and compensation for the victims of pollution and other environmental damage;

AND WHEREAS in the judicial pronouncement in India, the right to healthy environment has been construed as a part of the right to life under article 21 of the Constitution;

AND WHEREAS it is considered expedient to implement the decisions taken at the aforesaid conferences and to have a National Green Tribunal in view of the involvement of multi-disciplinary issues relating to the environment.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Sixty-first Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

1. Short title and commencement.—(1) This Act may be called the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010.

(2) It shall come into force on such date¹ as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

2. Definitions.—(1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,—

(a) "accident" means an accident involving a fortuitous or sudden or unintended occurrence while handling any hazardous substance or equipment, or plant, or vehicle resulting in continuous or intermittent or repeated exposure to death, of, or, injury to, any person or damage to any property or environment but does not include an accident by reason only of war or civil disturbance;

(b) "Chairperson" means the Chairperson of the National Green Tribunal;

(c) "environment" includes water, air and land and the inter-relationship, which exists among and between water, air and land and human beings, other living creatures, plants, micro-organism and property;

(d) "Expert Member" means a member of the Tribunal who, is appointed as such, and holds qualifications specified in sub-section (2) of section 5, and, is not a Judicial Member;

(e) "handling", in relation to any hazardous substance, means the manufacture, processing, treatment, package, storage, transportation, use, collection, destruction, conversion, offering for sale, transfer or the like of such hazardous substance;

1. 18th October, 2010, *vide* notification No. S.O 2569(E), dated 18th October, 2010, *see* Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, sec. 3(ii).

(f) "hazardous substance" means any substance or preparation which is defined as hazardous substance in the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (29 of 1986), and exceeding such quantity as specified or may be specified by the Central Government under the Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991 (6 of 1991);

(g) "injury" includes permanent, partial or total disablement or sickness resulting out of an accident;

(h) "Judicial Member" means a member of the Tribunal who is qualified to be appointed as such under sub-section (1) of section 5 and includes the Chairperson;

(i) "notification" means a notification published in the Official Gazette;

(j) "person" includes—

(i) an individual,

(ii) a Hindu undivided family,

(iii) a company,

(iv) a firm,

(v) an association of persons or a body of individuals, whether incorporated or not,

(vi) trustee of a trust,

(vii) a local authority, and

(viii) every artificial juridical person, not falling within any of the preceding sub-clauses;

(k) "prescribed" means prescribed by rules made under this Act;

(l) "Schedule" means Schedules I, II and III appended to this Act;

(m) "substantial question relating to environment" shall include an instance where,—

(i) there is a direct violation of a specific statutory environmental obligation by a person by which,—

(A) the community at large other than an individual or group of individuals is affected or likely to be affected by the environmental consequences; or

(B) the gravity of damage to the environment or property is substantial; or

(C) the damage to public health is broadly measurable;

(ii) the environmental consequences relate to a specific activity or a point source of pollution;

(n) "Tribunal" means the National Green Tribunal established under section 3;

(o) "workman" has the meaning assigned to it in the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923 (8 of 1923).

(2) The words and expressions used in this Act but not defined herein and defined in the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 (6 of 1974), the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess Act, 1977 (36 of 1977), the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 (69 of 1980), the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 (14 of 1981), the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (29 of 1986), the Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991 (6 of 1991) and the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 (18 of 2003) and other Acts relating to environment shall have the meaning, respectively, assigned to them in those Acts.

CHAPTER II

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TRIBUNAL

3. Establishment of Tribunal.—The Central Government shall, by notification, establish, with effect from such date¹ as may be specified therein, a Tribunal to be known as the National Green Tribunal to exercise the jurisdiction, powers and authority conferred on such Tribunal by or under this Act.

1. 18th October, 2010, *vide* notification No. S.O 2570(E), dated 18th October, 2010, *see* Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, sec. 3(ii).

4. Composition of Tribunal.—(1) The Tribunal shall consist of—

(a) a full time Chairperson;

(b) not less than ten but subject to maximum of twenty full time Judicial Members as the Central Government may, from time to time, notify;

(c) not less than ten but subject to maximum of twenty full time Expert Members, as the Central Government may, from time to time, notify.

(2) The Chairperson of the Tribunal may, if considered necessary, invite any one or more person having specialised knowledge and experience in a particular case before the Tribunal to assist the Tribunal in that case.

(3) The Central Government may, by notification, specify the ordinary place or places of sitting of the Tribunal, and the territorial jurisdiction falling under each such place of sitting.

(4) The Central Government may, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Tribunal, make rules regulating generally the practices and procedure of the Tribunal including—

(a) the rules as to the persons who shall be entitled to appear before the Tribunal;

(b) the rules as to the procedure for hearing applications and appeals and other matters [including the circuit procedure for hearing at a place other than the ordinary place of its sitting falling within the jurisdiction referred to in sub-section (3)], pertaining to the applications and appeals;

(c) the minimum number of Members who shall hear the applications and appeals in respect of any class or classes of applications and appeals:

Provided that the number of Expert Members shall, in hearing an application or appeal, be equal to the number of Judicial Members hearing such application or appeal;

(d) rules relating to transfer of cases by the Chairperson from one place of sitting (including the ordinary place of sitting) to other place of sitting.

5. Qualifications for appointment of Chairperson, Judicial Member and Expert Member.—(1)

A person shall not be qualified for appointment as the Chairperson or Judicial Member of the Tribunal unless he is, or has been, a Judge of the Supreme Court of India or Chief Justice of a High Court:

Provided that a person who is or has been a Judge of the High Court shall also be qualified to be appointed as a Judicial Member.

(2) A person shall not be qualified for appointment as an Expert Member, unless he,—

(a) has a degree in Master of Science (in physical sciences or life sciences) with a Doctorate degree or Master of Engineering or Master of Technology and has an experience of fifteen years in the relevant field including five years practical experience in the field of environment and forests (including pollution control, hazardous substance management, environment impact assessment, climate change management, biological diversity management and forest conservation) in a reputed National level institution; or

(b) has administrative experience of fifteen years including experience of five years in dealing with environmental matters in the Central or a State Government or in a reputed National or State level institution.

(3) The Chairperson, Judicial Member and Expert Member of the Tribunal shall not hold any other office during their tenure as such.

(4) The Chairperson and other Judicial and Expert Members shall not, for a period of two years from the date on which they cease to hold office, accept any employment in, or connected with the management or administration of, any person who has been a party to a proceeding before the Tribunal under this Act:

Provided that nothing contained in this section shall apply to any employment under the Central Government or a State Government or local authority or in any statutory authority or any corporation