

Present: Shri. R. N. Ravi, Chairman, Auroville Foundation, Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan, Shri. Aravindan Neelakandan, Prof. Goutam Ghosal, Prof. R. S. Sarraju, Members, Governing Board and Dr Jayanti S. Ravi, Secretary, AF.

Dr Nirima Oza, Smt. Darshana M. Dabral, Joint Secretary & Financial Advisor and Smt. Neeta Prasad, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education, Government of India attended online. Prof. N.G. Basappa could not attend.

Dr Nirima Oza could not participate in the online meeting effectively due to connectivity issues.

Secretary, Auroville Foundation (AF) welcomed the Hon'ble Chairman and Governing Board members and gave a presentation, which includes a work plan outline for the period 2021-2022 to 2025-2026 focusing on the growth of Auroville as per the vision of the Mother.

Secretary informed the Board that she had prepared the presentation after studying and compiling decisions already taken in previous Governing Board meetings and her interactions with various Auroville working groups and residents.

Chairman and members of the Board appreciated the detailed and comprehensive analysis of the various issues, challenges and proposed ways forward for the integral development of Auroville. The Board took decisions and made observations as detailed below.

1. Governance

The Board noted the following in relation to the present status of governance and organisation in Auroville:

- 1.1. There is a proliferation of groups and discussion forums.
- 1.2. There seems to be decision paralysis or the inability to put decisions into practice.
- 1.3. The Residents Assembly is seen by many as a decision-making body for even operational issues that are under the responsibility of working groups.
- 1.4. The absence of work plans or governance and organisation that ensures implementation of work plans.
- 1.5. Culture of “stakeholders” seems to have replaced the culture of “voluntary contributors” / “willing servitors”.

- 1.6. Working group member selection processes include conventional canvassing and voting.

The Board is of the view that the following action needs to be taken in relation to Auroville governance and organization:

- 1.1. Decision-taking in Auroville needs to be driven by the ideals given by the Mother.
- 1.2. There is a need for the preparation of work plans for each work area of Auroville by the respective working groups. These work plans must relate to the realization of the ideals of Auroville including township development, governance, economy, education and research.
- 1.3. Selection of human resources for working groups must be done with reference to the skill sets, experience, commitment and engagement needed for the implementation of the ideals of Auroville in general and work plans of working groups in particular.
- 1.4. There is a need to promote a culture of engagement, transparency, commitment, accountability and integrity.
- 1.5. The initiative to have contact persons / coordinators for residential communities to engage with residents for cultural, academic and other activities that strengthen the spirit of goodwill and harmony may be continued through periodical interactions with the contact persons / coordinators.
- 1.6. The Working Committee must assist the Governing Board with the implementation of decisions taken by the Board within a time frame.

2. Township Development

The Board noted the following in relation to the present status of Auroville Township development:

- 2.1. Presently Auroville has a population of about 3,500 persons scattered over a large land area (also outside the Auroville Master Plan area).
- 2.2. There is scattered, sporadic and ad-hoc development resulting in high-cost infrastructure and lack of a cohesive social fabric.
- 2.3. Master Plan right-of-ways (the Crown, radials, outer ring and international zone loop, etc.) have not been cleared, resulting in haphazard infrastructure development at high installation and maintenance costs.

- 2.4. There is a lack of focus on the development of the township amongst the various working groups and Auroville residents.
- 2.5. The low population dispersed over a vast land area, results in scattered habitation and land protection issues.
- 2.6. Housing and other facilities to be developed to welcome more people with commitment to the ideals of Auroville.

The Board is of the view that the following action needs to be taken to accelerate the development of the Auroville Township:

- 2.1. On the occasion of Sri Aurobindo's 150th birth anniversary, a fresh impetus must be given to realise the Auroville Township in accordance with the Auroville Universal Township Master Plan within a time frame.
- 2.2. The Governing Board noted and endorsed the decisions already taken by the previous Governing Board on Auroville Township Development including planning and development as per the Auroville Master Plan and engagement with the Tamil Nadu Government to obtain statutory land use regulation (New Town Development Authority) for the Auroville Master Plan area to ensure land use as envisaged in the Auroville Master Plan.
- 2.3. The ATDC (Auroville Town Development Council) needs to have a work plan, with clearly defined deliverables, time lines, a human resources plan and annual budget.
- 2.4. ATDC membership selection / nomination to be done with a focus on competence, skills, work experience, and a commitment to plan and develop the Auroville Township in accordance with the Auroville Master Plan.
- 2.5. The ATDC needs to complete the work of preparation of Detailed Development Plans (DDPs) based on the Auroville Master Plan.
- 2.6. Build the township infrastructure backbone (water, electricity, communication, sewerage, etc.) along the fully cleared RoWs to enable planned urban development.
- 2.7. A tree plantation drive may be initiated with immediate effect only in the green belt and the green corridors / network inside the city area as provided for in the Auroville Master Plan.
- 2.8. All Master Plan deviations on the land earmarked for the Crown have to be cleared so that the circular Crown Road and related infrastructure can

be built without further delay. A similar exercise shall be implemented for the twelve radials and the outer ring road, where land ownership permits.

- 2.9. The work on the completion of the Matrimandir gardens and the lake may be accelerated.
- 2.10. Housing development to accommodate (young) Aurovilians must be undertaken.
- 2.11. New education facilities may be built, while ensuring utmost utilization of the existing ones.
- 2.12. Development of the Industrial Zone is essential to make Auroville the self-supporting township as envisaged by the Mother.
- 2.13. The Board endorses Office Order 491 dated 15th July 2021 (read with corrigendum dated 25th October 2021) issued by the Under Secretary AF with the approval of Secretary AF for the nomination of members of the Auroville Town Development Council (ATDC), including a nominee by the Secretary, Auroville Foundation (AF) on behalf of the Governing Board. Secretary AF is authorized to nominate the Governing Board's nominee on the ATDC as and when required for smooth and efficient functioning of the ATDC.
- 2.14. A budget outlay of Rs. 1,000 Crores is approved by the Board for Auroville Township development for the period 2021-22 to 2025-26 on the basis of the budget prepared by the ATDC. Detailed budget estimates may be prepared by the ATDC and scrutinized by the Secretary, AF for submission to the Ministry of Education. Expenditure to be incurred with an effective and transparent monitoring and reporting system.

3. Land

The Board noted the following in relation to the present status of Auroville lands:

- 3.1. There are private developments (residential and commercial) both in the city area and in the greenbelt.
- 3.2. There is slow progress in city land consolidation.
- 3.3. Some lands of the Auroville Foundation have been encroached upon.
- 3.4. Some lands of the Auroville Foundation are not utilised, underutilised, or not utilised in accordance with land use as envisaged in the Auroville Master Plan.

The Board is of the view that the following action needs to be taken in relation to Auroville Foundation land:

- 3.1. The land acquisition proposal for the remaining private lands in the City Area according to the Auroville Master Plan is ratified by the Board.
- 3.2. The Board also endorses the proposal to engage with the Tamil Nadu Government for the establishment of a New Town Development Authority (NTDA) for the Auroville Master Plan area.
- 3.3. The Board advises that stewardships of Auroville lands are changed periodically.
- 3.4. Appointment of experts (on contract basis) for land consolidation.
- 3.5. Prepare a land and building assets database with details of present and potential utilisation.
- 3.6. Optimise the utilisation of all land and building assets.

4. Economy

The Board noted the following in relation to the present status of the economy of Auroville:

- 4.1. The Mother had envisaged Auroville as a self-supporting township. Auroville is not yet self-supporting and is unable to meet the basic needs of all residents of Auroville.
- 4.2. It is not clear how many adult Aurovilians are contributing through work towards the realisation of the aims and objectives of Auroville.
- 4.3. Auroville's cost of living seems to be high.
- 4.4. Auroville is still a monetary transactional society.
- 4.5. There is no pan-Auroville annual budget.
- 4.6. There is no medium and long-term economy plan.
- 4.7. Human resources are not evaluated for their contribution to Auroville after the completion of the newcomer period.
- 4.8. There is a large number of trusts and units with multiple GST registrations and accounting systems.

The Board is of the view that the following action needs to be taken in relation to the economy of Auroville:

- 4.1. Preparation of an annual Auroville budget that includes all resources and all needs.
- 4.2. Preparation of a medium and long-term economy plan including financial plans of the income-generating units of Auroville.
- 4.3. Make capital available for the growth of existing income-generating units and start-up capital for new income-generating units.
- 4.4. Establish an innovation and incubation centre for the youth to be actively engaged.
- 4.5. Strengthen and support the knowledge economy.
- 4.6. All Auroville lands, buildings and other assets must be utilized to generate collective resources for Auroville as whole.
- 4.7. Use some of the outlying lands of Auroville for income generation through joint ventures or ventures in which Auroville has a passive stake.
- 4.8. Elimination of internal money exchange.
- 4.9. Ensure that all basic needs of all residents are met and that all residents contribute to the realisation of Auroville.
- 4.10. Enhance Auroville food production to meet the needs of Auroville.
- 4.11. Simplify the governance and organisation structures (trusts, units, activities and committees).
- 4.12. Integrated common accounting systems to be implemented for more effective and transparent financial management.
- 4.13. Contributions by income-generating units to be reviewed (rationale of the 33% contribution; utilisation of surpluses).
- 4.14. Reduce construction costs with innovative construction practices and effective and transparent price discovery mechanisms
- 4.15. The Mother envisaged Auroville as a self-supporting township. All Auroville residents are expected to contribute to achieving this goal and work for the collective welfare of Auroville.

5. Education and Research

The Board noted the following in relation to the present status of education and research in Auroville:

- 5.1. There is a mix of conventional education systems with the envisioned ideal of integral education with a dedicated team of teachers.
- 5.2. There seem to be under-utilised facilities.

The Board is of the view that the following action needs to be taken in relation to education and research in Auroville:

- 5.1. Establishment of various Centres of Excellence in Auroville.
- 5.2. Auroville to become a hub for integral education and research.
- 5.3. The Board noted that the establishment of the Sri Aurobindo International Multiversity as an affiliating network for integral education, research, teaching, training and extension is a good and appropriate initiative to be launched during the 150th birth anniversary of Sri Aurobindo.
- 5.4. The Centre for International Research on Human Unity (CIRHU) may be established as planned.
- 5.5. Auroville may engage with other institutions and organisations and conduct exchange programs, thereby sharing the experience and skills of Auroville with the world at large
- 5.6. Youth hubs and innovation labs may be established in the township.
- 5.7. The students of Auroville schools may be given a broader exposure to the philosophy, teachings and vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

6. Entry Process

The Board is of the view that the following action needs to be taken in relation to the entry of new residents into Auroville:

- 6.1. The entry process of Auroville should be more welcoming and the Auroville population should grow to 50,000 as envisaged while ensuring that newcomers understand, and subscribe to, the ideals of Auroville. A population of 15,000 by 2025 may be achieved.
- 6.2. There could be active engagement with Auroville International Centres and Sri Aurobindo Centres to facilitate the joining of volunteers and interns

while maintaining international diversity and commitment to the ideals of Auroville

- 6.3. The Board noted that the Mother had envisaged Auroville as an ideal town, and that when Auroville residents live by the ideals given by the Mother, Auroville will become a magnet that attracts people from all over the world, who also wish to contribute to the realization of the Auroville ideals.

7. Sri Aurobindo's 150th birth anniversary

- 7.1. The Board advised the Secretary AF, to pursue the proposals for events, programs and projects with Government of India and approved an initial budget for the programs, events and projects of Rs. 50 Crores.
- 7.2. The Board expresses a strong aspiration that the 150th birth anniversary of Sri Aurobindo may be the beginning of a new phase of accelerated development of the Auroville Township as the City for the Future, the Ideal Town and a Laboratory of Evolution as envisaged by the Mother.

8. Meetings of the Governing Board:

- 8.1. The Board decided to meet at least once in every quarter.
- 8.2. During these meetings the Board will review progress made with reference to work plans of the various Auroville working groups and the overall progress of Auroville's development.

9. Conclusive remarks

- 9.1. Chairman and the Board appreciated the presentations made by the Working Committee, FAMC, ATDC and SAIER.
- 9.2. The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chairman of the Board.
