

To:

Mme. Audrey Azoulay  
Director-General of UNESCO  
7 Place de Fontenoy,  
75007 Paris, France

Cc:

Mr. Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Education Minister of India  
Mr. G. Kishan Reddy, Hon'ble Culture Minister of India  
Mr. Vishal V. Sharma, Permanent Representative of India to UNESCO  
Mr. Eric Falt, Director and UNESCO Representative for the UNESCO New Delhi Cluster Office  
Mr. Shigeru Aoyagi, Director and UNESCO Representative for the UNESCO Bangkok (formerly in New Delhi)  
Ms. Neeta Prasad, Joint Secretary(IIC), Ministry of Education, Government of India  
Working Committee of the Residents' Assembly of the Auroville Foundation

Re: Sri Aurobindo's 150th Anniversary Event in UNESCO on 30th September 2022

Respected Mme. Audrey Azoulay,

Firstly, as members of the Residents' Assembly of the Auroville Foundation, well wishers and long-standing friends of Auroville, we would like to express our profound gratitude for UNESCO's support of Auroville since its inauguration in 1968. UNESCO has passed five resolutions in support of the Universal Township in-the-making in South India since 1966 – support which has been of great significance to Auroville. We are also profoundly grateful to India, the host country of this unique experiment for material and spiritual research on the evolution of human consciousness.

Over the last fifty-four years, Auroville has become globally renowned for its many significant achievements in the fields of afforestation, sustainable architecture, renewable technologies, innovative farming methods, participatory democratic governance, integral education, integral healthcare, arts and culture, collective economic organisation, gender equality, collaborative rural development, conflict resolution, social enterprise, recycling and waste management, and sustainable water harvesting. Our efforts in these fields are a means, as per the teaching of Sri Aurobindo, to work towards and achieve one of the primary goals stated in the Auroville Charter: Human Unity in Diversity. [Appendix 1]

However today, we residents of Auroville appeal to you, as many of these long-standing endeavours and achievements are in great danger. Since the

appointment of the present Secretary of the Auroville Foundation, Dr Jayanti Ravi, in July 2021 by the Ministry of Education, and the subsequent appointment of a new Governing Board of the Auroville Foundation, the residents of Auroville have been confronted with repeated intimidation, violence and constant provocations that undermine harmony in the community. This intense authoritarian pressure threatens Auroville's core values, collective practice of Sri Aurobindo's teachings and philosophy, and contradicts our goals and ideals.

The situation has escalated dramatically over the last ten months, commencing on 5th of December, the anniversary of Sri Aurobindo's passing, with the unannounced, unauthorised midnight bulldozing of the Auroville forests. In the following weeks several buildings in the Auroville Youth Centre were demolished, together with about 900 trees that included endangered and rare species. A comprehensive takeover of the community's participatory institutions of governance and its internal communications has followed, severely limiting the freedom of speech of Auroville residents and violating our human rights. Moreover, Dr Jayanti Ravi and her followers have persistently refused to recognise the long-standing democratic decision-making processes of the community.

Recent orders from the Madras High Court and National Green Tribunal recognise the importance of Auroville's environmental work and uphold the authority of the Residents' Assembly – an authority which is enshrined in an Act passed by the Parliament of India in 1988. However, these court orders have been appealed by the Auroville Foundation represented by its Secretary. Physical destruction of community buildings and infrastructure, forest removal and the takeover of crucial collective governance structures still continues. In the most recent Residents' Assembly decision-making process, 97% of voters voted to severely condemn the takeover perpetrated recently by the Auroville Foundation's Secretary and her followers [Please refer to Appendix 2].

Therefore we, the undersigned residents and well-wishers of Auroville, would like to express our profound concern regarding the Sri Aurobindo's 150th Birth Anniversary event in UNESCO on 30th September 2022, as the speakers representing Auroville at the above event have been unilaterally selected by the Secretary of the Auroville Foundation, without consultation of the Residents' Assembly of Auroville, which is one of the three governing bodies of the Auroville Foundation.

We sincerely appeal to the Ministry of Education & Ministry of Culture of the Government of India to kindly consider restructuring the event and its programme, in order to include speakers who are able to represent the views of the Residents' Assembly of Auroville. We also humbly request UNESCO to kindly consider that hosting this event in its currently-proposed programme is against the democratic values firmly upheld by your organisation.

Sincerely,

27.09.2022

- Members of the Residents Assembly of the Auroville Foundation
- Wellwishers of Auroville and long-standing friends of Auroville

[SIGNATURES]

Total Number of Signatory: 1408 (Period: Six Days / 21st - 26th Sept 2022)  
Auroville Residents: 544 / Auroville Youth: 11 / Newcomer: 20 / Auroville International  
Members: 39 / Friends of Auroville - 8 / Other Well-Wishers: 786  
(Please refer to the attached PDF)

For information: [build.auroville.together@gmail.com](mailto:build.auroville.together@gmail.com)

Reference:

Websites:

<https://auroville.media/summary-of-the-current-crisis>

<https://standforaurovilleunity.com>

An online petition on change.org signed by 57,000+ people:

<https://www.change.org/sosauroville>

## Appendix 1

### The Auroville Charter

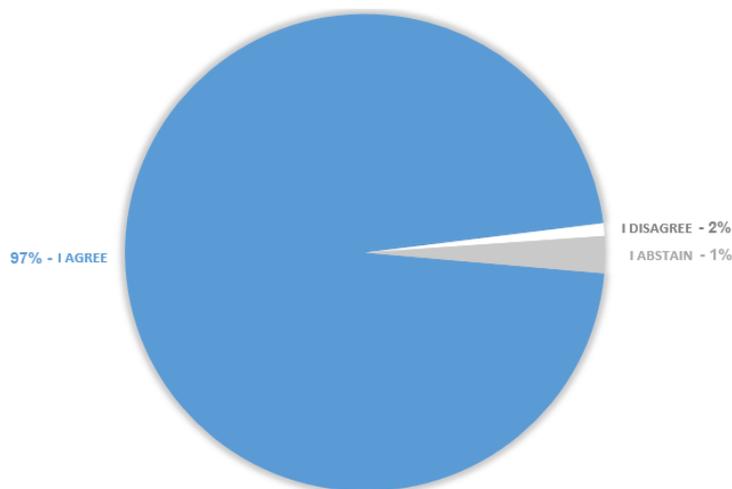
1. Auroville belongs to nobody in particular. Auroville belongs to humanity as a whole. But, to live in Auroville, one must be a willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness.
2. Auroville will be the place of an unending education, of constant progress, and a youth that never ages.
3. Auroville wants to be the bridge between the past and the future. Taking advantage of all discoveries from without and from within, Auroville will boldly spring towards future realisations.
4. Auroville will be a site of material and spiritual researches for a living embodiment of an actual human unity.

## Appendix 2

RESIDENTS' ASSEMBLY DECISION-MAKING (RAD) RESULT  
18.8.2022 - 22.8.2022

Here are the results of the Emergency RAD (voting), called by the Working Committee of the Residents' Assembly (RA), on the following Resolution. The summary of the topic of this Resolution is as follows:

"We, members of the Residents' Assembly of the Auroville Foundation, agree to pass a resolution that states that we, as one of the authorities of the Auroville Foundation as affirmed by the honourable Madras High Court, confirm that orders (Office Orders, Standing Orders and any other form of orders) from the Office of the Secretary and her appointees are not the result of a collaborative work with the RA, and have been issued without consultation with or approval by the Residents' Assembly, and affirm our support for the groups and appointees by the RA".



**97% (1122) participants voted in favour of the above Resolution.**

**1% (10) participants rejected it.**

**2% (29) participants abstained.**

A total of **1161 valid votes** have been submitted online and in-person. The number of participants exceeded the 10 per cent quorum required to validate the decision (239 votes)\*.

[Refer to: [Resolution of the Residents' Assembly No. RAD/04/2022](#)]