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Government of India
Ministry of Human Resource Development
Department of Higher Education
Technical Education Bureau

New Delhi, dated 25th November, 2009

Subject : Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the Council of National Institutes of Technology held at 11.00 am on 21st October, 2009 at India Habitat World, Lodhi Road, New Delhi.

Please find enclosed herewith a copy of the Minutes of the meeting referred in the subject mentioned above for your information and comments, if any.



(N.K. Sinha)
Joint Secretary, MHRD
&
Member Secretary, NIT Council

Encl.: as above.

To

All Members of the Council.

MINUTES OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF TECHNOLOGY HELD AT 11:00 AM ON 21ST OCTOBER, 2009 AT INDIA HABITAT WORLD, LODHI ROAD, NEW DELHI

The first meeting of the Council of National Institutes of Technology (NITs), after the enactment of the National Institutes of Technology Act, 2007 (29 of 2007), was held under the Chairmanship of Shri Kapil Sibal, Hon'ble Minister for Human Resource Development. The list of participants is enclosed as Annexure.

2. At the beginning, Secretary, Department of Higher Education, who is also the Vice-Chairmen of the Council, welcomed the Hon'ble Minister and all the distinguished members present in the meeting. Thereafter, Hon'ble Minister requested the Secretary (HE) to initiate the proceedings of the meeting.

3. Initiating the proceedings, Secretary (HE) mentioned that the occasion is historical as the meeting is first such meeting of the NIT Council and it is always unique about anything happening for the first time. Dwelling on the historical background of the NITs, Secretary (HE) informed that the first Regional Engineering College was established in October, 1959, almost more than 50 years back at Warangal and that in 2003, Government of India took over the then 17 Regional Engineering Colleges and converted them into NITs. Three Engineering Colleges located in Bihar, Raipur and Agartala were later on converted as NITs in 2004, 2005 and 2006, respectively. Through the National Institutes of Technology Act, 2007, NITs have been declared as 'Institutions of national importance'. Since 2003, most of the NITs have considerably improved their performance, though much more could have been done to get NITs at the level close to that of IITs, if not as good as IITs. But outside, general perception of public about NITs is still that they are far below IITs, though some of the NITs especially those located in the south have done the nation proud by doing extremely well and also that some of the NITs in the north are also doing well. NITs are expected to contribute to a great extent to the nation building and it would certainly improve the quality manpower-pool to be developed by 2020 as per Government's plan.

4. Secretary (HE) mentioned about the huge number of vacancies that are still lying vacant even after 7 rounds of counselling and one round of special counselling. However, it was viewed that no purpose

will be served to admit the students at this late stage as all NITs are already in the middle of the semester.

5. Secretary (HE) also informed that the Government is going to set up 10 new NITs out of which six would be in the North-eastern region. The Directors of NITs were advised to mentor these new NITs while bringing forth further suggestions towards development of these NITs in a proper manner. Secretary (HE) also mentioned about one programme of IIT named NPTEL. Some of the NITs are having this programme. Secretary (HE) advised the Directors to make use of this programme so as to meet the scarcity of faculty. Though it is not possible to meet the shortfall of the faculty members fully through it, this programme may solve the problem of scarcity of faculty members to a considerable extent. Secretary (HE) insisted that NITs should fill up the vacant positions by talented and innovative people only. He also mentioned that some of the NITs are still carrying the baggage of additional man-power from the REC regime. This additional manpower does not meet the requirements of the present-day scientific institutes. He advised the Directors to upgrade the skills and knowledge of their staff members so as to make them fit for the modern day needs.

6. Secretary (HE) also complimented the Directors of NITs for their achievements in respect of programmes through Summer Schools. He desired to enhance the capacity of this programme so as to meet the social needs as are expected from NITs. Secretary (HE) also requested the Directors to upgrade the technological infrastructure available in the States where the NITs are located and also to improve the technological environment prevailing therein. They were also advised to interact in a proper manner with the Industry to meet an all round technological need thereof. As regards the funding position, it was mentioned by Secretary (HE) that the total plan allocation for the year 2003-04 was Rs.80 crores which has been increased to Rs. 863 crores in 2009-10. From 2008-09 onwards, the admission process in NITs has been changed so as to ensure quality of talented students entering NITs. Secretary (HE) also mentioned that house-keeping jobs have been not upto the mark and in fact, some of the construction works of the NITs have not yet been completed. Secretary (HE) also mentioned about the need to submit their Annual Reports and Audit Report to the Ministry well in time so as to enable this Ministry lay these on the Table of both the Houses of Parliament by the December end.

7. Secretary (HE) also informed that the NIT Act (Amendment) Bill has been approved by the Cabinet which will bring IISERs under the

ambit of the NIT Act, 2007. The Amendment Bill would be placed in Parliament shortly. Cabinet has also approved setting up of 10 new NITs. Secretary (HE) also mentioned to make the campus green and to provide facilities essential for physically challenged students in the campus. Similarly, this Ministry has a National Mission on Education, where more than 1 billion US \$ is being invested to provide connectivity to all the Educational Institutions. He also encouraged the NITs to make use of its various provisions for upgrading e-learning contents under the programme. The Institutes were also advised to enhance their Internal Revenue Generation so as to make them self sufficient so far as funds are concerned. Secretary (HE) also emphasized the need of judging the popularity and requirements of various branches of engineering so as to ensure that none of the branches remain partially filled. He also mentioned that creation of faculty posts has been cleared for some of the NITs; but for others, it is yet to be done. Secretary (HE) has assured that the creation of posts will certainly be done as per the approved faculty-student ratio of 1:12. So far as the non-faculty staff is concerned, he mentioned that some of the NITs are having a huge number of non-faculty posts over and above their entitlement and therefore it may perhaps not be possible to create non-faculty positions to such NITs.

8. Secretary (HE) thereafter requested Hon'ble HRM to provide his valuable thoughts and views for improving the NIT system. Hon'ble HRM welcomed all the members present in the meeting. Hon'ble HRM emphasized that the meeting of the Council of NITs should be held at an interval of every six months. He added that the NITs had come into existence after conversion of REC and, therefore, he mentioned that the NITs have a scope and chance to learn from the mistakes of others and the mould up the necessary infrastructure and to meet the present-day technological needs of our Country. He advised all the Directors to chalk out their respective Vision Statements and keep them ready, which Hon'ble HRM desired to discuss in a day-long session alongwith a thorough discussion on all the matters relating to NITs. The Hon'ble HRM also emphasized that NITs should gear themselves to meet the educational needs of the growing population of our country. Ministry's programmes like "Sarva Sikhsha Abhiyaan" and "Right to Education" and its emphasis on middle level school education will put significant pressure on higher and technical education as more and more students after completing school education will be moving towards education in engineering. So NITs need to have a vision which will allow expansion without compromising on quality.

9. Hon'ble Minister also pointed out the need of having more emphasis on research in technical areas and producing more doctorates as real wealth is got to be created through research fellows, doctorates and post-doctorates. Hon'ble HRM expected that NITs should have vision for achieving the same. This is a great opportunity for NITs, and they must look at their system not in the context of an individual Institution but in the context of an institution having national commitment for a national cause. Achieving the national vision is the real challenge and for that, funding should not be a problem because if the nation continues to grow at higher growth rate, we should be able to provide the finances; but certainly quality is the main issue. Hon'ble HRM expected that NITs will be able to realize the national goals because now NITs are 'Institutions of National Importance'. He expected that in the course of discussions in the meeting on the agenda items, some discourses on some of the issues would be taken up. Hon'ble HRM also wanted that the NITs should have the complete academic freedom. However, some norms will have to be followed in the matter.

10. After the thoughts expressed by Hon'ble HRM, Secretary (HE) took up the agenda items one by one. He mentioned that the Item No.1.1 & 1.2 have already been discussed in a way during the initial part of discussions.

11. Agenda Items : The agenda items were taken for discussion :

1.3 Autonomy of NITs - financial, functional and managerial

Hon'ble HRM informed that NITs will have full functional autonomy but there would be restrictions in certain areas as the NITs are still financially dependent on the Government. One such area is the recruitment of the non-teaching staff as many of the NITs are overstaffed and as such the situation cannot be left to the Institutes. Few members pointed out to the need of introducing funding to NITs based on their good record in research work and minimum infrastructure. There was also need to accord performance based autonomy to NITs. Few members raised the issue of introduction of pension scheme to the NITs at Kurukshetra, Jalandhar and Silchar. In this regard Hon'ble HRM informed that the matter has already been turned down by the Ministry of Finance and therefore there is no point in taking up the issue again with Finance Ministry. Hon'ble HRM desired that the NITs should ensure capacity to efficient financial management and same should be included in their Vision document. On a request made for

mechanism for awarding better performers, Hon'ble HRM informed that there is a Performance Related Incentive Scheme (PRIS) system which should take care of such needs.

1.4 Areas of collaborations between the institutes inter se and modalities of networking

The collaboration between NITs inter se and networking among technical institutions already exists in some way or the other. However, a lot needs to be done in this regard. It was pointed out by the DG (CSIR) that CSIR can help the NITs in developing such interaction with CSIR labs on the same lines as collaboration which already exists with NITs at Durgapur, Bhopal, Jamshedpur and Nagpur. The importance of specialized and inter-active branches was discussed with reference to the problems of brilliant students preferring to go abroad, faculty problem and problem of infrastructure available with institutes. It was also emphasized to have close collaboration with industry and other technical institutions of national importance, like IITs, IISc, Bangalore, and IISERs. Hon'ble HRM desired that NITs should develop their own level of comfort while seeking collaboration. NITs should take initiative and convince the Industry that the NIT-system is of immense value to them. At the same time, there are economic reasons that industry should come forward on their own.

1.5 Repercussions of Foreign Education Providers Bill on NITs.

It was felt by many NITs that as and when Foreign Universities set up their campuses in the country, staff from the NITs will shift to these foreign universities. Also that student may prefer to have education from these foreign universities as they will be assured of a foreign degree. Hon'ble HRM informed about his views that foreign universities may not be making much investment in areas of technical education at initial stage. Their emphasis will be more on areas like Hotel Management or other hospitality industry where they may like to produce manpower which will be of use in their host countries and therefore competition is not going to develop overnight.

1.6 Making a centralized system of registering complaints/ suggestions etc. from faculty/ students/ public.

After discussion on the agenda item, it was decided that there should be a dedicated web-site for this purpose. The web-site should also take care so as to address the grievances of the staff and faculty. Moreover, the institute should continue its existing system to tackle the problems in an efficient manner.

1.7 Examination reforms in NITs for admissions as well as assessment.

Secretary (HE) informed the members that the procedure for admissions in NITs was modified in 2008. As per earlier system, apart from 50% seats reserved for eligible students of the States where NITs are located, rest 50% of the seats used to be filled by allocating the same to other States/UTs on certain parameters like population etc. However, this system leads to situations where students with very low merit were getting admissions while students with higher merit were being ignored. Therefore, from 2008, these rest 50% of the seats are being filled on all India merit basis so as to ensure the merit in admissions in NITs. Another initiative taken is for on-line counselling for admissions by Central Counselling Board (CCB) from 2009 admissions. It was felt that in addition to AIEEE being conducted by CBSE, there should be an on-line examination also, as an option to the students who are willing to write on-line examination. It was decided that the same could be initiated from 2010 itself by NITs themselves. On demand made by few of the members, Hon'ble HRM approved to set up a Committee to look after the reforms in the examination system. The Committee will consist of Director NIT-Allahabad, Director NIT - Calicut and Director NIT-Agartala. The Committee will co-opt two other Directors as members. The Committee will give its report by mid-January. Secretary (HE) also raised the issue of seats remaining vacant even after a number of admission rounds and desired that this issue would also be looked after by the Committee for suggesting appropriate course of action to be followed from next year. It was also clarified that the vacant seats for the current year will not be filled up. Institutional level admissions/counselling were also not agreed.

1.8 Sharing of faculty / facilities among institutes

Hon'ble HRM agreed on this point and suggested emphasis on this aspect so as to develop a healthy cooperation among the NITs.

1.9 Affirmative action/reservation for marginal communities/ minorities, etc.

It was noted that the reservations as per Government of India shall be ensured by the NITs. A point of discussion was the less representation of girls in NITs. In this regard it was felt that suitable suggestion be given to the Committee which is to look after admission related issues.

1.10 Nature of curriculum and their updation

A need was felt to upgrade the curriculum being followed in NITs. It was observed that NITs are following straight jacket approach and there is very little stress on interdisciplinary approach. It was decided to form a Committee with Directors of NIT-Surathkal, NIT-Warangal and NIT-Trichy as members for looking into academic reforms. The Committee would submit its report within a time of three months. Hon'ble HRM pointed out very little interaction and involvement of industry in curriculum development, which is essential as most of the students after completing their education are absorbed in industry and as such there is need to look into the needs of industry in curriculum framework.

1.11 Norms for faculty recruitment

Secretary (HE) raised the issue regarding norms for faculty recruitment. He preferred the need of Ph.D at the initial stage of faculty recruitment. Secretary (HE) also felt that NET and GATE qualifications should be a must and non-Ph.D should be taken purely on contract basis. Regarding demand for addressing the anomalies in the pay scales, it was decided that NITs should discuss the issues involved in their Board of Governors, prepare a report and send it to the Ministry for further needful.

1.12 Formation of Committees of Council of NITs

The formation of Standing Committee and five other Committees was agreed. However, it was felt that all the pros and cons are to be discussed and examined, which requires time for deliberation.

The Council authorised Hon'ble HRM and the Secretary (HE) to constitute the Committee(s).

1.13 Setting up secretariat to look after the work of Council of NITs, Standing Committee and Special Committees

The proposal was approved. It was also decided that the Secretariat of the Council may be housed in the NIT Transit House located in New Delhi. Secretariat staff may be hired on contract. In case it is felt that the present Transit House accommodation is not adequate, NIT Surat, which is currently managing the Transit House may hire additional accommodation. The management of the Secretariat will be with NIT Surat. The expenditure will be shared equally by all NITs.

1.14 Ratification of decisions taken by Hon'ble HRM in his capacity as Chairman, NIT Council

All the decisions taken by the Hon'ble HRM in his capacity as the Chairman of the Council were ratified in the meeting.

The meeting ended with the vote of thanks to the Chairman.