

Mail

December 11, 2009

Dr Montek Singh Ahluwalia  
Deputy Chairman  
Planning Commission  
Yojana Bhawan  
Parliament Street  
New Delhi 110001

Dear Dr. Ahluwalia,

You will recall you had written to the Prime Minister regarding your discussions at the Indo-US CEO Forum with Dow Chemical Company executives on the legacy issues of the Bhopal gas disaster. In these letters you had raised the issue of remediation of the contaminated site and the withdrawal of the affidavit against Dow filed in the MP High Court by the Union Ministry of Chemicals.

It is in this connection and given your interest, we are attaching a copy of *Down to Earth* which details on a recent laboratory study we have done on the waste at the Union Carbide plant in Bhopal. The analysis was done on samples of sludge and water collected in the presence of CPCB officials. My colleagues also collected samples of groundwater from around the plant. Shockingly our study has found very high levels of pesticides and chemicals in the sludge and water and worse we have been detected the same pesticides and chemicals in drinking water some 3 km away from the factory. Our research also shows that chemicals are the same, which were manufactured at the plant.

It is clear that we must undertake serious remediation of the site urgently. The factory is a source of slow poison, which is spreading through groundwater. While the High Court is monitoring the clean up of the site, the issue of liability remains.

Given the extent of contamination, the cost of remediation could be anywhere in the range of Rs 1000 crore and above. Therefore, the question is who will pay? You probably know that Dow Chemicals has taken on the US\$ 2.1 billion liability of the UCC in the case of asbestos victims in the US. Clearly, the matter of the waste dumped on the factory site also needs to be similarly addressed.

We hope that you will go through the enclosed material carefully. The laboratory report as well as more detailed factsheet on the case are available on our website: [www.cseindia.org](http://www.cseindia.org).

We are writing to you because we hope also that you will take up the matter with the executives of Dow Chemical Company. We do believe in this way, the Indo-US CEO Forum will play a useful purpose for us in India as well.

We look forward to hearing from you on this matter.

With my very best wishes,

Yours cordially,

Sunita Narain