FEDERATION OF CSIR EMPLOYEES' & WORKERS' UNIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Central Fuel Research Institute : P.O. FRI, Dhanbad-828108

Ref. No. CSIR/FED/WC/92

July 7, 1992.

To

The General Secretaries of the
affiliated/associated units of
the Federation; and
the Office-bearers/WCMs of the
Federation.

Comrade,

The Working Committee of the Federation in its meeting held on 30-31/5/92 at Maharani Bag Guest House, New Delhi, has adopted a decision to organise a long-term programme of movement in protest of Govt. of India's New Economic and Industrial policies vis-a-vis restructuring the Strategic plan of CSIR. In the first phase of movement, the enclosed Memorandum/Demand Charter, jointly drafted by the Federation and CSIR SWA, should be discussed elaborately at the unit levels by all the members/activists of the affiliated/associated units of the Federation. If any suggestions are considered to be incorporated in these documents, should be sent to the Federation along with a detailed report of the contents of the discussion. The final documents will be prepared jointly by the leadership of CSIR-SWA and Federation leadership after receiving valuable comments from the units within a specific period.

After finalisation of the documents, the programme of sustained campaign movement will be circulated to the affiliated/associated units of the Federation. In order to assist the Federation to adopt the appropriate programme of campaign movement, it will be highly appreciated if the suggestions of the units are forwarded to the undersigned by the 31st July 1992, after conducting elaborate discussions on the enclosed documents amongst all members/activists of your unit.

Considering the gravity of the issue, it is hoped that you will take a prompt action in the matter.

With fraternal greetings,

Comradely yours,

(Abhijit Majumdar)
GENERAL SECRETARY

Enclo : as above.

DEMANDS TO THE GOVERNMENT :

* Restore back the original budgetary support level for CSIR on the basis of priority for the development of local capabilities.

* Enter into a ten year long memorandum of understanding based on the corporate plan prepared by CSIR to ensure bette accountability of the CSIR system to Indian Parliament. Accord CSIR the status of a statutory body responsible for the autonomous public funded R & D with due autonomy to fram its policies, rules and byelaws.

* Fulfill the commitment made in the Abid Hussain Committee on the mandatory funding of sponsored research with the CSIR laboratories by industry.

* Associate the CSIR system of laboratories with the process of adaptation and diffusion of imported technologies by designating them as the government consultants for the approval of plans for the absorption of foreign technologies.

* Fulfill the commitment made in the Abid Hussain Committee regarding the establishment of a separate technology development fund of Rs.200 crores to encourage collaborative R & D required to transfer and develop technologies for large missions and to ensure much required joint R & D between CSIR and industry for the absorption, adaptation and diffusion of foreign technology.

* Implement the commitment made in the Abid Hussain Committee regarding the provision of a special fund for the modernisation of CSIR infrastructure by providing a sum of Rs.200 crores.

* Take immediate steps to ensure that there is no reduction in the S&T component of plan allocations for the central government departments. Ensure steady funds for the S&T components of plan allocation for the central government departments during the eighth five year plan.

* Ensure programme based recruitment of fresh blood wherever needed by committing separate funds.

* Take back the proposed of 10% cut in existing posts at the senior level and a substantial cut at the junior level for the CSIR system of laboratories.

* Make necessary changes in the industrial policy to ensure that technology imports and foreign investments are allowed only in selective, publicly deliberated cases in conformity with strategic plans.

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DEMANDS TO THE CSIR MANAGEMENT :

* Treat the CSIR as a system of publicly funded autonomous research laboratories with the role of (a) capability development in nationally relevant generic technologies; (b) cultivation of experties required for the conduct of notionally relevant public obligations like the resource mapping, utilization and protection of natural resources, atmosphere, ocean, geosphere and biosphere, maintenance of environment, health and safety; (c) supply of S & T support for standards,

testing and calibration; (d) cultivation of expertise for the advancement of science; (e) promotion of university-industry-public R & D collaboration; (f) development of R & D capabilities for the supply of know-how designed to benefit the weaker sections requirements; (g) user funded contract R & D and consultancy and (h) scientific advice for government use.

* The DGSIR should undertake an immediate internal peer review of the projects and plans to bring the CSIR R & D work in conformity with the proposed role for CSIR.

* Take immediate steps to create ethos in favour of the implementation of inter-laboratory programmes to increase their share to the extent of fifty percent by the year 2000. Organize much delayed workshops in the fields of programmes indicated as major co-ordinated R & D projects in the eighth plan document to evolve proper R & D programmes with clear targets and inter-connected tasks.

* Ask all the CSIR laboratories to formulate their ten year long strategic plans by the end of 1994. Complete SWOT analysis as an intermediate step by the middle of 1993 so as they can indicate the direction in which the laboratory has to move now.

* Recast the remaining eighth five year plan in the forthcoming peer review as per the following criteria :

  a) 80% of the R & D efforts for the goals linked to the requirements of the country in the next five to seven years.

  b) 20% of the R & D efforts for basic research pursued for the sake of advancing the frontiers of scientific knowledge.

* Allocate the 80% efforts linked to the requirements of the country as per the following criteria :

  a) 30% for 'short-term' projects/programme that can give return in 3 years.

  b) 30% for 'medium-term' projects of five year long duration.

  c) 20% for 'long-term' projects/programmes of 7 years long duration.

* Formulate the short-term projects in a manner that the external cash flow to the extent of 40% of CSIR budget for the year 1997 is duly achieved by the laboratories.

* Prepare laboratory-wise plans for the redeployment of the S & T personnel wherever needed. The proposals should contain suitable steps for their retraining and fresh placement to bring them in conformity with the priorities laid down in the strategic plans.

* Establish a system of rewards for the encouragement of team efforts. Incorporate all the functions (R & D, Technology transfer, PME, Library, Information, Workshop, Instrumentation, Administration, Finance and so on) in the new team based reward system. The reward system should include a balanced set of incentives like prizes, monetary benefit and facilities.

* Undertake special scanning of the technologies lying on shelf which can be commercialised with some effort by the CSIR personnel who can be provided risk support, cheap loans and grants available from the financial institutions. Create a separate foundation for the said purpose with the power to take financial risk if needed.

The new system of planning, monitoring and evaluation of R & D programmes should ensure (a) pre and post-hoc assessment of R & D projects, (b) triennial evaluation of the laboratory direction and (c) information on the outcomes and results for the benefit of parliament, planning commission and other public bodies.

* Ensure a strict implementation of the rule of six year tenure for the laboratory directors. Provide the laboratory directors with the job security, facilities and manpower in order to retain them with the CSIR system after the tenure. Subject all directors to triennial peer evaluation for their performance.

* Make the Management Council (MC) responsible for the preparation and implementation of R & D plans. Give the MC clear responsibility to formulate agenda for the research council (RC) and to initiate concrete steps for the implementation of advice and decisions given by the RC.

* Leave the laboratory financial management to the MC. Give the MC the functions such as the constitution of expert committees for the assessment of GR I and II.

* Reorganize the RC by including the programme coordinators and elected areawise representatives as members to ensure their participation in the RC proceedings.

* Restructure the functions of RC. Give them only the responsibility to plan, monitor and evaluate the laboratory programme and to provide regular expert judgement to the HQrs. on the direction and focus of the laboratory.

* Choose relevant members by consensus from among the programme coordinators and elected areawise representatives for the participation in technology advisory boards (TABs). Restructure TABs in terms of the board generic technological development areas. Define the scope of TABs in clearmost terms.

* Strengthen the mechanism for R&D scanning to develop linkages with engineering and design organisations and users for the collaborative effort by assigning this function specifically to the TABs.

* Strengthen the CSIR HQrs for its technical role of strategic planning by giving it the functions of (i) preparation and management of ten year strategic plan, (b) formulation of triennial directions for the improvement of direction and focus, (c) planning and marketing of R&D results obtained from the inter-laboratory programmes (d) formulation of human resource development policies, and (e) appellate body in employer-employee disputes.

* Reject the proposals for retrenchment and exit of CSIR staff. Introduce a system of upgrading the autonomy of capabilities which have shown excellent results and maturity over the period and deserve extra-push.

ROLE & OBJECTIVE :

CSIR should develop itself as a corporate body of autonomous public research Laboratories having the following objectives: (a) development of nationally relevent and globally competitive technologies, (b) mapping, resource quality evaluation, protection of atmosphere, ocean, biosphere and geosphere, standardisation, testing and calibration and development of wide ranging specilised S&T information base for utilization by various national development agencies including industry : (c) extra mural research and man power development (d) development of excellence in certain areas of basic scientific research : (e) development and utilization of R&D capabilities for societal missions and for the benefit of weaker section of society : (f) closer association with the industry for absorption, upgradation of imported technologies.

CSIR as a whole including SWA and FEDERATION should strive to convince the Government about the above roles and bring clarity regarding the expectation of the country from a system of public research laboratories like CSIR.

Consistent with the above objectives following tasks have to be immediately under taken : (a) Internal review of all the ongoing process and product developoment projects for the purpose of selecting a few in each lab. for developing into turnkey know-how package with the participation of the identified industry and or other design and engineering consultants and culling those projects or which participation/interest from the industry is not forthcoming and not expected within a foreseeable future: (b) development of corporate culture and consistent mechanism of planning, monitoring and evaluation through various in-house agencies (eg. RC, TAB etc.) and for giving sharper focus and direction to lab. activities, prevention of wasteful duplication, development of linkage mechanism for taking up large projects by co-ordinating and pulling expertise of different labs. and realising the synergy of the system. Project which are not consistent with the role and objectives of CSIR are to be weeded out through a rational and transparent mechanism; priorities of areas of research in different labs. are to be fixed through workshops/broad-based debates in each lab. The strategic R&D plan of CSIR should be formulated after reviewing the ten year plans of individual labs.

ORGANISATION STRUCTURE OF CSIR :

Instead of the present registered Society status CSIR should be accorded the status of a Statutory Body. There should be MOU between CSIR and the Government defining the role and obligation of CSIR and also the Government's role on restructuring of programme of CSIR to the extent of 20% as and when required and rest should be left to the G.B. and Advisory Board to steer with well defined terms of accountability to the Nation. The Parliament should have the right to periodically review the role and functioning of CSIR. CSIR should be given every autonony to frame its administrative/financial/personnel policies and also rules and by-laws.

The autonomy of the labs has to be re-defined. CSIR can lay down the target/output expected from each lab during the triennial direction/ programme formulation stage through peer review. Once such targets are fixed, laboratories should be given fullest autonomy for deploying at least 50% of the resource through MC and RC and no question asked on the budget heads etc. on which such resource is being spent. Directors should be subjected to triennial peer evaluation for their individual and institute's performance against the targeted output.

Involvement of working scientists (Project team) in R&D planning has to be ensured through well defined mechanism in order to (i) leadership at every level and involved participation of every individual for realising the strategic objective of the labs., (ii) to secure timely response to the rapidly changing opportunities and threats from the scientific community as a whole. MC has to be revitalised and made responsible for formulation or R&D plans, budget allocation and prepare agenda items for RC and initiate steps for implementation of the programmes as per the advice of the RC. For this the composition of the MC has to be changed as a representative body of the entire laboratory and to be formed through elected representatives of different areas and programme coordinators as its members.

RC in its present form is over-externalized. It should be represented on rotational basis by the programme coordinators and elected area-wise representatives of the MC. The responsiblity of the RC should be plan monitor and evaluate the lab programmes and provide expert opinion to CSIR HQR. on the direction and focus of the lab. It should made free from those routine tasks, eg. constitution of assessment committees for Gr.I & II etc. The financial aspect of the project management should also be left to the MC.

In case of TAB the present practice of clubbing the labs discipline-wise should be done away with. Instead, TABS should be utilised for planning, monitoring and evaluation of interlab programmes/projects of national importance requiring multidisciplinary inputs. TABS should also be represented by internal members.

CSIR HQ should be strengthened for performing its technical role of (i) Strategic R&D planning, (ii) formulation of triennial direction; (iii) planning of inter-lab programmes and marketing of the R&D results obtained therefrom; (iv) development of centralised HRM (training etc). schemes and their implementation; (v) extra-mural programme planning and man-power development.

The idea of closure and merger of CSIR labs on the basis of existing ECF should be totally rejected. Emphasis should be to help labs to realised its targeted output in terms of accepted parameters like ECF, publications, patents, service to nationally important areas of work like mapping, resource quality evaluation, standardisation etc. which only a public lab. can undertake. Similarly emphasis should be on recruitment of fresh talent and retraining and redeployment of existing manpower wherever necessary and not retrenchment. CSIR should develop a machanism for involving the Governing Body and other in helping the labs to build up closer ties

with industry/Govt. Depts for augmenting the utilisation of knowledge-base and generating higher ECF.

The age-old concept of administrative functioning, personnel management and various rules and procedures governing such functions, retrogressive as they are in today's perspective have to be totally discarded and a new administrative and financial management culture and practice developed through debates, training and reorient ation campaign. Professionalization of activities and modernisation of infrastructure should be the key approach for such reorientation with adequate emphasis on devolution of autonomy at every level. The career development scope for the administrative management staff should be at par with that of S&T staff both in concept and in actual terms.

R&D PROGRAMMES

The failure of CSIR to see itself as a corporate body has resulted in the lack of coherent programmes. In the CSIR laboratories, the ethos of both CSIR management and workers favour adhoc changes have been made regularly without due consideration of the role, capacities, experties and resource requirements. Being an autonomous system of public R&D laboratories, CSIR cannot pursue the role of a vertically integrated, supplier of know-how packages and has to follow the strategy of horizontal networking with the interested producers and suppliers of goods and services. Ignoring this reality has already coasted the CSIR system quite a lot. The resulting research waste is leading to erosion of public confidence in the technology-delivering capacity of CSIR scientists and technologists. It is the responsibility of the management as well as the staff that the CSIR system of laboratories is on the road to develop the capability to handle large projects, missions and tasks, the wasteful duplication is avoided, disparate pockets of competence are weided to work on specific missions and the structure of CSIR capabilities gradually developed to take up work for the extension of scientific and technological frontiers.

It is therefore necessary that the laboratory take immediate steps to formulate their ten year long strategic plans to bring their R&D plans in line with the proposed role for CSIR. While formulating the plan, it is proposed that 80% of the R&D efforts are for the goals lined to the needs of the country requiring fulfillment in the next five to seven years and remaining 20% of the R&D efforts and directed towards basic research pursued for the sake of advancing scientific frontiers. The 80% efforts linked to the requirements of the country are allocated as follows - 30% for short-term project/programme that can give return in 3 years long duration and 20% for long term project of 7-10 years long duration aimed at extending the frontiers of generic technological knowledge.

In line with the proposed role for CSIR, the CSIR scientists will have to prepare for the ninth five year plan of CSIR by creating ethos in favour of the implementation of inter-laboratory programmes to increase their share to the extent of fifty percent by the year 2000. The CSIR management should organize much postponed workshops in the field of programmes indicated as major coordinated R&D projects in the eight plan document to prepare the CSIR scientists for the inter laboratory R&D missions for incorporation in the ninth plan.

In the environment characterized by the liberalised policies for technology import and foreign direct investment and the drastic budgetary cuts for the government department and agencies, the prospects of raising a higher lavel of external cash flow from the govt. depts. for the CSIR laboratories are becoming rather bleak. With the reduced support govt. depts. the extra-mural funding available to CSIR for strategic R&D programmes or capability development is begining to suffer. Quite a large amount of the strategic R&D effort of CSIR laboratories is dependent on the external funds. The CSIR laboratories should use their component of extra-mural funding for strengthening the strategic R&D programmes by encouraging university-CSIR collaboration.

The efforts of built horizonal with the industry and other users require a fresh appraisal. The involvement of CSIR laboratories in the development of technologies for the raw materials, intermediates and components used in the foreign technologies can be arranged by designating the laboratories as the consultant designate for approving the plans to be submitted to the govt. for the technology absorption effort. The government should induce collaborative R&D between CSIR and industry by stipulating a fixed amount of mandatory funding for the purpose of contract R&D to be spent by industry on CSIR.

The CSIR should take steps to forge partnership within and outside the laboratories with the consultants/research laboratories/equipment suppliers to plunge into the markets consulting work for the large projects involving competence for structural engineering, safety studies, toxicological work, environmental impact assesment, product evaluation and so on. The potential market can easily compensate the loss of extra-mural funding for the strategic R&D efforts from the government departments. The CSIR scientists should help to strengthen and upgrade the facilities required for the discharge of statutory regulatory requirements.

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT :

The value system of a public research organisation like CSIR can not be the same as that of an industrial activity based on a fixed programme nor can it be akin to purely academic institution where outputs are measured in terms of number of publications and teaching standards. Output quality here has to be neasured in terms of achievements of assigned targets on the basis of assured imputs and tasks alloted . CSIR has lacked the culture of periodic internal workshop where the work done by individuals and teams are presented before the peers and colleagues and performance of such work is discussed threadbare. CSIR also does not have renewal of man power system where in at least ten percent of the fresh man power is introduced and equal number of superannuated more over to other departments with in and outside the CSIR. Academic standards and knowledge base should be uprraded of the existing man power every five years through extensive training with in CSIR or by tie up with academic institutions of repute all over the country and outside. CSIR is only one of the few large organisations which does not have separate personnel department at either the Head Quarter or at the Laboratory level though the manpower size of some of the laboratories is as large as 1500 there is an urgent need for creating a personnel department with a view to tackle the probelm of career development. We must introduce participative system of management

by involving associations and workers representatives in joint consultative machinery and elected representatives in Society, Governing body, Research and Management Councils and Departmental Committees. Our feeling is that bureaucratic hierarchical system of the government is the biggest impediment in human resource, development and unleashing of productive forces. The rules in respect of adoption of pay scales, promotional policies, recruitment policies, devolution of financial powers, financial system of accounting and administrative sanctions must be overhauled to expendite procurement and reduce gaps in sanctions and actual implementation. CSIR once alloted a budget should not be subjected to financial overbearance of finance ministries in its affairs. The financial management then should be internal to CSIR with periodic external audit taking place to keep finance on its toes.

CSIR must dispense with the dual system of scientists, and more particularly becoming a sanctuary for continued employment of retired scientists. Director's tenure must be limited to six years and should be asked to work as a scientists in the Director's scale with in the same or sister laboratory. NO exceptions should be made under any circumstance in this regard. Consultancy rules can further be liberalised but it must be seen that consultancy work does not take precedence over regular programme goals and targets.

CSIR should develop a roster of agencies which can be hired on contract for auxiliary work and specific external work rather than hire temporary staff. The grievance redressal system is extremely weak and outdated. The grievance cells in both CSIR and laboratories are only additional charge to otherwise over burdened administrators. Although a grievance redressal machinery with partially elected representatives has been constituted at the level of the institutes yet these grievance committees hardly function. The Central Grievance Committee does not have any elected representatives of representatives of associations. We believe an immediate action is needed to formulate grievance redressal machinery on the basis of CSIR-SWA/Federation suggestions.

CSIR must reject hand shakes and exits and concentrate on improving its efficiency and accountability. We believe that the CSIR laboratories need immediate infusion of new blood. CSIR must not shrink in response to external threats. It has to squarely face these detrimental policy changes by steadfastly holding to its ground of achievements and through aggressive advocacy of its unique manpower and utility for national effort in sphere of science and technology. The managers must firmly reject all manovures for cutting or closing down activities in scientific and technical spheres. CSIR must reject measures like 10% staff cut and reduction in infusion of new blood. CSIR must continue its expansion in new and emerging areas, of science and technology. It must immediately strenghten its efforts in the field of Energy systems and management, Microelectronics, Biotechnology, New materials, renewable energy technologies, communication technologies, and Computer hardware and design.

Prepare redeployment plans to create new avenues for the experienced CSIR staff, like involvement of CSIR scientists in the effort for commercialization of technology. Create a separate foundation for the purpose of commercialization of technologies available on the CSIR shelf give the proposed foundation role of mobilizing finance and marketing and technical support for the projects selected for independent commercialization of CSIR technologies.

The greatest strength of CSIR lies in its scientific and technical manpower base and expertise it has developed in various areas of science and technology during the past half a century. Its fair record in transfer of technology and services to industry despite highly inadequate and meager inputs is commendable. The CSIR laboratories have the capacity to transfer technologies of international standards within a short span and design inputs. Lack of vigorous planning has been the biggest weakness of CSIR. By strengthening planning in CSIR we will be making efforts to develop internal strength to resist external threats. Both CSIR-SWA and Federation are willing to cooperate with the CSIR leadership in every way. We hope that suggestion put up by CSIR-SWA and Federation will be responded to an argued if not accepted in toto. Let the reason informed by public interest guide the destiny of CSIR.

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DRAFT MEMORANDUM PERPARED BY THE CSIR SCIENTIFIC WORKERS' ASSOCIATION AND FEDERATION OF CSIR EMPLOYEES' AND WORKERS' UNIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS TO CAMPAIGN AND POPULARISE THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES : -

SAVE PUBLIC RESEARCH
SHAPE CSIR LABORATORIES
STRENGTHEN SELF-RELIANCE
STRUGGLE FOR SCIENCE
