

Public Consultation on the BBNJ Bill 2026

The Ministry of Earth Sciences proposes to enact a legislation on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction. The Bill is aimed at establishing measures for India to promote the conservation and sustainable use of, and exercise jurisdiction over activities concerning, marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. The Bill is in pursuance of India's objective to ratify the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), of which it has been a signatory since September 2024.

The proposed legislation will provide a framework for the management of these activities, consistent with India's obligations under UNCLOS and other relevant international instruments, frameworks, and bodies. Given that several aspects regarding the implementation of the Agreement remain under consideration, a framework legislation has been proposed to grant flexibility in regulating activities through secondary legislation, based on evolving circumstances and negotiations concerning activities in areas beyond national jurisdiction under this Agreement and other relevant instruments, frameworks and bodies.

The draft bill is available for reference below. Comments from the public are invited as part of the legislative process. Kindly email the relevant inputs to bbnj-moes@gov.in by 02.06.2026.

BIODIVERSITY BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION ACT, 2026

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

CHAPTER I PRELIMINARY

SECTIONS

1. Short title, extent, application, and commencement
2. Definitions

CHAPTER II MARINE GENETIC RESOURCES

3. Access to marine genetic resources
4. Utilisation of marine genetic resources
5. Traditional knowledge
6. Intellectual property rights

CHAPTER III AREA-BASED MANAGEMENT TOOLS

7. Advancing proposals for area-based management tools
8. Reviewing proposals for area-based management tools
9. Designated area
10. Emergency measures

CHAPTER IV ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

11. Planned activity in areas beyond national jurisdiction
12. Planned activity in areas within national jurisdiction

CHAPTER V INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

13. Establishing the Authority
14. Composition of the Authority
15. Functions of the Authority
16. Powers of the Authority
17. Delegation of powers
18. Composition of committees
19. The Registry

CHAPTER VI MISCELLANEOUS

20. Power to make rules
21. The Fund
22. Expenses of the Authority
23. Annual report
24. Grievance redressal
25. Offenses
26. Penalty for contravention
27. Liability for environmental harm
28. Offenses by companies
29. Cognizance of offence
30. Actions taken in good faith
31. General saving clause
32. Provisions of this Act to override other laws

BIODIVERSITY BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION, 2026

ACT NO... OF 2026

An Act to provide for matters relating to conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdictions, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

WHEREAS it was decided by the Intergovernmental Conference under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), in which India participated, to take steps necessary for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in the high seas;

AND WHEREAS it is considered necessary further to implement the decisions aforesaid insofar as they relate to India's obligations under the Convention, through the provision of national measures for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of marine genetic resources, including marine genetic resources, regulation of activities with potential impacts in such areas, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, guided by the Principles enshrined in the Agreement;

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Seventy-Seventh Year of the Republic of India as follows:

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

1. Short title, extent, application, and commencement

(1) This Act may be called the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Act, 2026.

(2) It extends to—

(a) all activities in areas beyond national jurisdiction carried out by:

(i) any person who is a citizen of India or domiciled in India;

(ii) any vessel, aircraft or other conveyance registered in India; and

(iii) any legal entity registered or incorporated in India; and

(b) any act or omission in areas beyond national jurisdiction that results in a direct and substantial effect on national jurisdiction of India.

(3) Nothing in this Act shall apply to—

(a) Warships, military aircraft, or naval auxiliaries;

(b) Vessel or aircraft owned or operated by the Government of India used exclusively on government non-commercial service, except to the extent provided under Chapter VI of this Act;

(c) Any fishing or fishing-related activities regulated under relevant laws of India or international instruments to which India is a Party; and

(d) Any marine living resources known to have been taken in fishing and fishing-related activities;

Provided that where such fish or other marine living resources are subsequently used for biotechnology or genetic research, the provisions of this Act shall apply to such use.

(e) Any other matter as may be notified by the Central Government.

(4) It shall enter into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

Provided that different dates may be appointed for different provisions of this Act and any reference in any such provision to the commencement of this Act shall be construed as a reference to the coming into force of that provision.

2. Definitions

(1) In this Act, unless otherwise stated, words will have the same meaning as in relevant national laws and other international instruments to which India is a Party.

(2) Unless the context otherwise requires —

(a) “Area-based management tool” means a tool, including a marine protected area, for a geographically defined area through which one or several sectors or activities are managed with the aim of achieving particular conservation and sustainable use objectives in accordance with this Act or Rules thereunder.

(b) “Areas beyond national jurisdiction” means the high seas and the Area.

(c) “Biotechnology” means any technological application that uses biological systems, living organisms, or derivatives thereof, to make or modify products or processes for specific use.

(d) “Entity” means a project proponent, including a company or firm whether incorporated or not and such other juridical persons.

(e) “Environmental impact assessment” means a process prescribed under this Act or Rules made thereunder to identify and evaluate the potential environmental impacts of a proposed activity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

(f) “Marine genetic resources” means any material of marine plant, animal, microbial or other origin containing functional units of heredity of actual or potential value.

(g) “Marine protected area” means a geographically defined marine area that is designated and managed to achieve specific long-term biological diversity conservation objectives and may allow, where appropriate, sustainable use provided it is consistent with the conservation objectives.

(h) “Sustainable use” means the use of components of biological diversity in a way and at a rate that does not lead to a long-term decline of biological diversity, thereby maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations.

(i) “Utilisation of marine genetic resource” means to conduct research and development, on the genetic and/or biochemical composition of marine genetic resources, including through the application of biotechnology.

CHAPTER II

MARINE GENETIC RESOURCES

3. Access to marine genetic resources

- (1) No person or entity shall conduct any bioprospecting activity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, including—
 - (a) survey or assessment of marine genetic resources;
 - (b) collection, extraction or sampling of marine genetic resources; or
 - (c) exploitation or any other activity undertaken to access marine genetic resources, whether for the purposes of scientific research, commercial utilisation, bio-survey, or bio-utilisation,unless prior approval of the Authority established under Section 13 has been obtained in accordance with the rules and procedures established by the Central Government.
- (2) Any person aggrieved by the grant of a clearance certificate, or an applicant aggrieved by the refusal thereof, may prefer an appeal to the grievance redressal mechanism specified under section [24], within such period as may be prescribed.

4. Utilisation of marine genetic resource

- (1) No person or entity shall utilise any marine genetic resource of areas beyond national jurisdiction, or its digital sequence information, associated data, or a derivative product, unless prior approval of the Authority has been obtained in accordance with the rules and procedures established by the Central Government.
- (2) Any person aggrieved by the grant of a clearance certificate, or an applicant aggrieved by the refusal thereof, may prefer an appeal to the grievance redressal mechanism specified under section [24], within such period as may be prescribed.

5. Traditional knowledge

No person shall access or utilize traditional knowledge associated with marine genetic resources of areas beyond national jurisdiction held by local communities, except:

- (a) with their free, prior, and informed consent and involvement; and
- (b) upon prior notification to the Authority in such manner as may be prescribed.

6. Intellectual property rights

- (1) Any person may apply for intellectual property rights in respect of an invention developed through the utilisation of marine genetic resource of areas beyond national jurisdiction or its digital sequence information, in accordance with the rules and procedures established by the Central Government.
- (2) No such application shall be considered for grant of intellectual property rights, unless it complies with the provisions of this Act and the rules made thereunder, including the provisions relating to access and benefit-sharing.

CHAPTER III
AREA-BASED MANAGEMENT TOOLS

7. Advancing proposals for area-based management tools

- (1) The Central Government may, as it deems necessary or expedient for the purpose of conservation and sustainable use of any area beyond national jurisdiction requiring protection, prepare proposals for area-based management tools, including marine protected areas.
- (2) The Central Government may submit a proposal prepared under sub-section (1) to one or more global, regional, subregional or sectoral bodies, for the purpose of establishing the area-based management tool concerned.
- (3) Nothing in this Section shall be construed as limiting the sovereignty and sovereign rights of India in determining its position at any international forum, body or negotiation.

8. Reviewing proposals for area-based management tools

- (1) The Central Government shall review for decision any proposal prepared by a State or global, regional, subregional or sectoral body for the purpose of establishing an area-based management tool, including a marine protected area.
- (2) A decision taken under this section shall not preclude the Central Government from revising its position in light of new scientific information, changed circumstances, or the outcomes of negotiations or consultations at the relevant body.
- (3) Nothing in this Section shall be construed as limiting the sovereignty and sovereign rights of India in determining its position at any international forum, body or negotiation.

9. Designated area

- (1) The Central Government shall, upon the establishment of an area-based management tool, designate, by notification in the Official Gazette, the area within which the tool concerned is to be operative.
- (2) Every person, entity, or vessel subject to the jurisdiction and control of India that operates within a designated area shall comply with such rules, regulations, and procedures as may be prescribed by the Central Government.

10. Emergency measures

- (1) Where a natural event or human activity causes or is likely to cause serious or irreversible harm to marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, and such harm cannot be addressed in a timely manner through the relevant international legal instrument, framework, or global, regional, subregional, or sectoral body, the Central Government may propose emergency measures.
- (2) Any emergency measures adopted by the Central Government to address serious or irreversible harm to marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction shall remain in force for such period as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, determine.

CHAPTER IV

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

11. Planned activity in areas beyond national jurisdiction

- (1) Any person or entity intending to carry out a planned activity in areas beyond national jurisdiction shall submit an application for environmental clearance to the Authority, in such form and manner as may be prescribed.
- (2) Upon receipt of an application under sub-section (1), the Authority shall determine, in such manner and within such period of time as may be prescribed, whether an environmental impact assessment is required in respect of the planned activity, and shall make its determination publicly available in such manner as may be prescribed.
- (3) Where the Authority determines that an environmental impact assessment is not required, it shall grant a clearance certificate to the applicant within such period and subject to such conditions as may be prescribed.
- (4) Where the Authority determines that an environmental impact assessment is required, the applicant shall carry out such assessment in accordance with the rules and procedures established by the Central Government and submit the assessment report to the Authority within such period as may be prescribed.
- (5) Upon receipt of the assessment report under sub-section (4), the Authority shall cause the report to be examined, and may conduct such public consultation as may be prescribed, before deciding on the application.
- (6) After consideration of the assessment report and the outcome of any public consultation, the Authority shall, within such period as may be prescribed, grant or refuse the clearance certificate and communicate its decision, along with reasons therefor, to the applicant in writing.
- (7) Any person aggrieved by the grant of a clearance certificate, or an applicant aggrieved by the refusal thereof, may prefer an appeal to the grievance redressal mechanism specified under section [24], within such period as may be prescribed.

12. Planned activity in areas within national jurisdiction

- (1) Any person or entity intending to carry out a planned activity in areas within national jurisdiction, which is likely to cause substantial pollution or significant and harmful changes to the marine environment in areas beyond national jurisdiction, as determined by the Authority in such manner as may be prescribed, shall submit an application for environmental clearance to the Authority, in such form and manner as may be prescribed.
- (2) The provisions of sub-section (2) to sub-section (7) of section 11 shall *mutatis mutandis* apply to an application submitted under sub-section (1).

CHAPTER V

INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

13. Establishment of the Authority

- (1) With effect from such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint, there shall be established, for the purposes of this Act, an Authority to be called the "Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Authority."

- (2) The Authority shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal. It shall have the power to acquire, hold and dispose of property, both movable and immovable, enter into contracts, and sue or be sued in its own name.
- (3) The head office of the Authority shall be at such place as the Central Government may, by notification, decide from time to time.
- (4) The Authority may, with the prior approval of the Central Government, establish regional or branch offices at other places in India, as may be necessary for the effective discharge of its functions under this Act.
- (5) The term of office and conditions of service of the Chairperson and the other members other than ex officio members of the Authority shall be such as may be prescribed.

14. Composition of the Authority

- (1) The Authority shall consist of:
 - (a) a Chairperson; and
 - (b) four other technical Membersto be appointed by the Central Government.
- (2) The Chairperson and other Members shall be whole-time Members, whose qualifications may be as prescribed.
- (3) The Central Government may remove from the Authority, any member who, in its opinion, has—
 - (a) been adjudged as insolvent; or
 - (b) been convicted of an offence which involves moral turpitude; or
 - (c) become physically or mentally incapable of acting as a member; or
 - (d) has abused his position as to render his continuance in office detrimental to the public interest; or
 - (e) acquired such financial or other interest as is likely to affect prejudicially his functions as a member.
- (4) The Authority may appoint such officers and other employees as it considers necessary for the efficient discharge of its functions under this Act. Such members and officers shall be treated as public servants for the purposes of this Act.
- (5) The terms and conditions of service of such officers and other employees of the Authority shall be such as may be prescribed.

15. Functions of the Authority

The Authority shall perform all or any of the following functions, namely:—

- (a) serve as a centralized platform to enable any person or entity to access, provide and disseminate information with respect to activities taking place pursuant to the provisions of this Act, including information relating to marine genetic resources of areas beyond national jurisdiction, establishment and implementation of area-based management tools, and environmental impact assessments;
- (b) receive, examine and decide upon applications for prior approval in respect of access to, and utilisation of, marine genetic resources of areas beyond national jurisdiction, including their digital sequence information, associated data, and derivative products;

- (c) receive, examine and decide upon applications for environmental clearance in respect of planned activities in areas beyond national jurisdiction, or activities within national jurisdiction likely to cause substantial harm to the marine environment beyond national jurisdiction;
- (d) conduct inspections and monitor ongoing activities in areas beyond national jurisdiction, in the manner as may be prescribed, to ensure compliance with the Provisions of the Act and the Rules thereunder;
- (e) administer the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Registry, in accordance with the provisions of this Act and Rules thereunder;
- (f) administer the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Fund in accordance with the provisions of this Act and Rules thereunder;
- (g) interact, liaise and coordinate with relevant international legal instruments, framework, or global, regional, subregional, or sectoral bodies;
- (h) advise the Central Government on matters relating to conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, including proposals for area-based management tools, emergency measures, and India's position at relevant international forums; and
- (i) perform such other functions as may be necessary, as directed by the Central Government, from time to time, for the purposes of giving effect to the provisions of this Act.

16. Powers of the Authority

- (1) The Authority is empowered to issue any directions and take such measures as necessary or expedient for the fulfilment of its functions.
- (2) In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the provisions of sub-section (1), the Authority may -
 - (a) constitute such number of committees as it deems fit for the efficient discharge of its duties and performance of its functions under this Act;
 - (b) issue summons to any person or entity to appear before it;
 - (c) subject to such conditions and limitations as may be prescribed, order the admission of documents and facts;
 - (d) conduct scientific, technical, or expert investigations;
 - (e) coordinate actions by other Parties of international agreements governing activities in areas beyond national jurisdiction;
 - (f) restrict areas, or establish conditions under which operations or activities may be carried out;
 - (g) conduct and sponsor investigations and research relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction;
 - (h) collect and disseminate information concerning conservation and sustainable use biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction;
 - (i) conduct inspections in exercise of its powers of inspection under the Act;
 - (j) designate any officer, having such qualifications and experience as may be prescribed, for performing the duties and exercising the powers assigned to the Authority under this Act; and

- (k) issue such other measures as the Authority may deem necessary or expedient for the purpose of securing the effective implementation of the provisions of the Act.

Provided that in matters concerning activities conducted within jurisdictional waters, which are likely to transfer, directly or indirectly, damage or hazards from one area to another, or transform one type of pollution into another, in a manner that is likely to result in significant and harmful changes in areas beyond national jurisdiction, the Authority shall refer such matter to the Central Government, and to the National Biodiversity Authority, if impacts to biodiversity are likely.

- (3) Notwithstanding anything contained in any other laws but subject to the provisions of this Act, the Central Government may, in the exercise of its powers and performance of its functions under this Act, issue directions in writing to any person, officer performing functions as members or officers of the Authority or any committee created thereunder, or exercising powers delegated by the Authority, and such person, officer, authority, or committee shall be bound to comply with such directions.

17. Delegation of Powers

The Authority may, by general or special order in writing, delegate to any member, officer of the Authority or any other person subject to such conditions, if any, as may be prescribed, such of the powers and functions assigned to it under this Act as it may deem necessary.

18. Constitution of Committees

- (1) The Authority may constitute such number of committees as it deems fit for the efficient discharge of its duties and performance of its functions under this Act. The members and officers of such committees shall be treated as public servants for the purposes of this Act.
- (2) The persons appointed as members of the committee under sub-section (1) shall be entitled to receive such allowances or fees for attending the meetings of the committee as may be prescribed.

19. The Registry

- (1) The Central Government shall, by notification in the Official Gazette, establish a Registry to be called the "Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Registry," which shall function under and be administered by the Authority for the purposes of this Act.
- (2) The Registry shall consist of the following components, namely:—
 - (a) the Marine Genetic Resources Depository, which shall physically store and preserve samples of marine genetic resources of areas beyond national jurisdiction;
 - (b) the Marine Genetic Resources Database, which shall digitally store and maintain the digital sequence information of marine genetic resources of areas beyond national jurisdiction, including their associated data, and relevant traditional knowledge; and
 - (c) any other components as may be notified by the Central Government.
- (3) Every person or entity that has obtained prior approval under section 3 or section 4 shall, within such period and in such manner as may be prescribed, deposit a sample

of the marine genetic resource of areas beyond national jurisdiction with the Marine Genetic Resources Depository; and submit its digital sequence information to the Marine Genetic Resources Database.

CHAPTER V MISCELLANEOUS

20. Power to make rules

- (1) The Central Government may, by notification, make rules to carry out the provisions of this Act.
- (2) In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such rules may provide for all or any of the following matters, namely:—
 - (a) the rules and procedures for obtaining prior approval for access to, and utilisation of, marine genetic resources of areas beyond national jurisdiction, including the form and manner of application, the period within which such approval shall be granted or refused, and the fees payable therefor, under sections 3 and 4;
 - (b) the manner in which prior notification to the Authority shall be made in respect of access to or utilisation of traditional knowledge associated with marine genetic resources, under section 5;
 - (c) the rules and procedures for applying for intellectual property rights in respect of inventions developed through the utilisation of marine genetic resources, under section 6;
 - (d) the form and manner in which an application for environmental clearance shall be submitted to the Authority, the period within which the Authority shall make its determination, and the conditions subject to which a clearance certificate may be granted, under sections 11 and 12;
 - (e) the manner in which public consultation shall be conducted in respect of environmental impact assessment reports, and the period within which the Authority shall grant or refuse a clearance certificate, under section 11;
 - (f) the period within which and the manner in which every person or entity shall deposit a sample of the marine genetic resource with the Marine Genetic Resources Depository and submit its digital sequence information to the Marine Genetic Resources Database, under section 16;
 - (g) the purposes for which the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Fund shall be administered and utilised, under section 17;
 - (h) the period within which the Authority shall submit its annual report to the Central Government, under section 18;
 - (i) the period within which an appeal may be preferred to the National Green Tribunal, under section 19; or
 - (j) any matter incidental to any of the matters specified in clauses (a) to (i), or as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.
- (3) Every rule made under this Act shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of Parliament, while it is in session, for a total period of thirty days which may be comprised in one session or in two or more successive sessions, and if, before the expiry of the session immediately following the session or the successive sessions aforesaid, both Houses agree to making any modification to the rule or both Houses

agree that the rule should not be made, the rule shall thereafter have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect, as the case may be; so, however, that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done under that rule.

21. The Fund

- (1) The Central Government shall, by notification in the Official Gazette, establish a Fund to be called the "Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Fund," which shall be administered by the Authority for the purposes of this Act.
- (2) The Fund shall consist of:—
 - (a) all sums received by the Authority under or in pursuance of this Act, from any source whatsoever, including fees, charges, benefit-sharing receipts, compensation, and grants or loans from any person, entity, organisation, or institution; and
 - (b) all sums credited to the Fund by the Central Government for the purposes of this Act.
- (3) The Fund shall expend such sums as it thinks fit for performing its functions under this Act and such sums shall be treated as expenditure payable out of the Fund.
- (4) The accounts of the fund shall be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India at such intervals as may be prescribed.

22. Expenses of the Authority

The salaries and allowances payable to the members and the administrative expenses of the Authority including salaries, allowances and pension payable to, or in respect of, the officers and other employees of the Authority shall be defrayed out of the Consolidated Fund of India.

23. Annual Report

The Authority shall submit its annual report to the Central Government within such period as may be prescribed, and the Central Government shall cause the annual report, together with the auditor's report, to be laid before each House of Parliament as soon as may be after it is received.

24. Grievance redressal

- (1) Any person aggrieved by an order, decision, or direction made or issued by the Authority under this Act or Rules thereunder may prefer an appeal to the National Green Tribunal constituted under section 3 of the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010, within a period of thirty days from the date on which such order, decision, or direction is communicated to such person.
- (2) The National Green Tribunal shall hear and dispose of every appeal preferred under sub-section (1) in accordance with the provisions of the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010, and the rules thereunder.
- (3) For the purposes of this section, any order, decision, or direction made or issued by the Authority under this Act shall be deemed to be a matter relating to the environment within the meaning of the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010.

25. Offences

Whoever contravenes any provision of this Act or of any Rules or notifications thereunder shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend up to one year, or with fine.

26. Penalty for contravention

If any person contravenes any direction given or order made by the Central Government, the State Government, the Authority or its regional or branch offices for which no punishment has been separately provided under this Act, he shall be punished with a fine which may extend to three lakh rupees and in case of a second or subsequent offence, with fine which may extend to five lakh rupees and in the case of continuous contravention with additional fine which may extend to five lakh rupees every day during which the default continues.

Provided that continuous contravention beyond a duration of 14 days shall render the authorisation for a planned activity, suspended or cancelled, as the Authority may deem fit.

27. Liability for environmental harm

(1) The Authority may, by an order, provide –

(a) relief and compensation to the victims of pollution and other environmental harm arising as a result of an activity that causes substantial pollution or significant environmental harm to the marine environment in areas beyond national jurisdiction (including accidents occurring while handling any hazardous substance);

(b) for restitution of property damage;

(c) for restitution of the marine environment in such areas,

as the Authority may think fit.

(2) The relief, compensation, and restitution referred to in sub-clauses (a), (b), and (c) of sub-section (1) shall be in addition to the relief paid or payable under the Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991.

(3) No person or entity shall be held liable for environmental harm under this section, if it is proved that such harm is caused by—

(a) an act or omission that was necessary to protect human life;

(b) a natural disaster of an extraordinary nature which could not reasonably be foreseen and the person or entity had taken all reasonable measures to reduce the risk and potentially harmful effects of the environmental emergency;

(c) an act of terrorism; and

(d) an act of war.

Provided that the person or entity shall submit an explanation to the Authority of his act or omission within a period of sixty days from the date of such harm, stating the reasons therefor.

28. Offences by companies

(1) Where an offence or contravention under this Act has been committed by a company, every person who at the time the offence or contravention was committed was in charge of, and was responsible to, the company for the conduct of the business of the

company, as well as the company, shall be deemed to be guilty of the offence or contravention and shall be liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly.

Provided that nothing contained in this sub-section shall render any such person liable to any punishment provided in this Act, if he proves that the offence or contravention was committed without his knowledge or that he had exercised all due diligence to prevent the commission of such offence or contravention.

- (2) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-section (1), where an offence or contravention under this Act has been committed by a company and it is proved that the offence or contravention has been committed with the consent or connivance of, or is attributable to, any neglect on the part of any director, manager, secretary or other officer of the company, such director, manager, secretary or other officer shall also be deemed to be guilty of the offence or contravention and shall be liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly.

29. Cognizance of offences

No Court or Tribunal shall take cognizance of any offence under this Act except on a written complaint made by:

(a) the Central Government or any authority or officer authorised in this behalf by that Government; or

(b) any person or entity who has given notice of not less than sixty days in the prescribed manner, of such offence and of his intention to make a complaint, to the Central Government or the authority or officer authorised as aforesaid.

30. Actions taken in good faith

No suit, prosecution or other legal proceedings shall lie against the Central Government or any officer of the Central Government, any member or officer of the Authority or any other committee created under this Act, or any other Government Official involved in the implementation of this Act, for anything which is in good faith done or intended to be done under this Act or the rules or regulations made thereunder.

31. General saving clause

Nothing done in pursuance of the provisions of this Act shall be construed as limiting the sovereignty or sovereign rights of India in determining its position at any international forum, body or negotiation.

32. Provisions of this Act to override other laws

Insofar as they apply to activities in areas beyond national jurisdiction sought to be regulated under this Act, the provisions of this Act shall have effect, notwithstanding anything inconsistent therewith contained in any other law for the time being in force or any instrument having effect by virtue of any such law.