# PRESS RELEASE

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**Auroville Working Committee meets with Governor Shri R.N. Ravi**

On Wednesday, 19th October, 2022, the Working Committee of the Auroville Residents’ Assembly, the official representatives of the Auroville residents, met with Shri R.N. Ravi, Chairman of the Auroville Foundation and Governor of Tamil Nadu, for a two-hour long meeting. This was the first meeting between the Chairman and the new Working Committee constituted by the residents in June 2022.

The Working Committee shared some of Auroville's many efforts over the past decade towards developing the city, showing how much has already been done with the high level of expertise present within the Auroville community. The presentation showcased works done by Auroville experts, such as a recent study to identify the key development priorities in building Auroville. In the past year these efforts have been ignored. Instead, the Office of the Secretary of the Auroville Foundation signed a contract with the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) without involvement from the committees of the Residents’ Assembly responsible to carry forward the development of Auroville. According to the values and regulations of Auroville, it is imperative that the residents are involved and consulted in planning processes and decision-making.

Expertise within the Residents’ Assembly has given rise to several innovative processes, such as the Dreamweaving Initiative, to develop the city in a conscious and ecological manner. This Initiative has been celebrated by international experts and world leaders in development including the Vastu Shilpa Foundation. The Dreamweaving is a participatory process that takes into account the ground realities of Auroville, the immediate needs of residents such as affordable housing, appropriate water management, new patterns of mobility, and areas for educational and economic growth. Unfortunately, the work of the Dreamweaving Initiative was completely disregarded by the Office of the Secretary in order to steamroll a narrow and authoritarian view of development.

The Working Committee also referred to the current situation in Auroville, and the unprecedented levels of fear, violence and authoritarianism. This climate of coercion is not conducive to the positive development and growth of Auroville. 

The Working Committee appealed to the Chairman to help restore a sense of safety and security for the residents of Auroville by stopping the culture of intimidation from the Office of the Secretary. In order to begin to restore a sense of normalcy, it is vital for the Office of the Secretary to collaborate with the committees appointed by the Residents’ Assembly.

The Working Committee also appealed to the Chairman to safeguard the lands of Auroville, purchased with the goodwill of donors worldwide, and to take strong actions against recent encroachments. They insisted on the need to secure the resources of Auroville and its residents.

Since the end of September 2022, the situation has continued to escalate with twenty Aurovilians working full time for Auroville having their monthly stipends stripped by the Office of the Secretary, in order to dismiss them from their work. These twenty residents have, at different times, expressed their difference of opinion regarding the administrative functioning of the Office of the Secretary. Firing people from their jobs overnight without any given reason is against the practice of natural justice and far removed from the conscious way of working in Auroville. Stopping their stipends is clearly an attempt to punish them and create a sense of fear and submission in the residents. These actions were undertaken without respect for the internal procedures of the Residents’ Assembly and are completely contrary to the spirit of unity in diversity and collaboration of this international township.

The honourable Chairman also shared his views and suggestions, emphasising the importance of the collective yoga to be done in Auroville. He shared that Auroville’s core aim of spiritual progress needs to be the compass for a way forward, aligned with the teachings and works of Sri Aurobindo, and that Auroville is a continuation of the spiritual heritage of India and cannot afford to fail. The Working Committee listened deeply to Shri R.N. Ravi’s sharings, and both parties agreed to continue the conversation sometime soon.

This meeting with the Chairman was seen as an important first stepping stone in restoring communication with the Auroville Governing Board. The residents of Auroville are in hope that Sri R.N. Ravi will intervene to rectify the oppressive actions against the residents and restore the collaborative functioning of Auroville.