

 Early exploitation of SHPS need of today- Muttemwar

**MNRE SET FOR SPEEDY PROMOTION AND FACILITATION FOR THE SMALL HYDRO POWER SECTOR**

Sh. Vilas Muttemwar, Minister of State for New and Renewable Energy, stressed the need of early exploitation of all identified Small Hydro Power Sites (HPSs) in the country. Addressing a group of independent power producers of small hydro power sector from all over the country today, the Minister reminded them recent appeal of the Prime Minister to tap more renewable sources, which are natural and pollution free, to produce more power to meet the deficit of power in the country. This will also help to save foreign exchange at very high prevailing cost which is spent for petroleum products besides saving us from problems of global warming and climate change caused due to burning of fossil fuels, he added. Sh. Vilas Muttemwar said that more than 5400 sites have been identified so far. They have potential for generation of 15,000 MW power. He regretted many sites have been allotted to private developers but the progress for installation is not up to the desired level for various reasons. Sh Muttemwar assured that the ministry is interested to know these factors and give momentum to promote and facilitate small players of this sector.

Sh Muttemwar explained that the meeting has been convened to have first hand information to know the difficulties and problems facing this sector which results in non-commissioning or slow progress of the projects. Sh Muttemwar informed that the Small Hydro Power Plants are generally up to a capacity of 25 MW which do not require any construction of dam, resettlement of people and large felling of trees. Hence it makes it viable option for generation of power feeding the electricity grid as well as meeting the requirement of power for domestic, small scale and commercial sector in rural and remote areas.

Referring to the ministry's limited mandate, Sh Muttemwar reaffirmed that efforts to promote and facilitation to this sector will be maximized. He said Model Agreements, Drafts, Regulatory tariffs and other modalities will be prepared in the ministry and negotiations will be taken up with individual state governments. Sh Muttemwar also promised to bring some uniformity and few more benefits at par with big hydro power projects.

The developers explained their problems in details which include sudden change of policies at the centre as well as state levels, different rules with different state governments, difficulty in acquisition of land at many levels, escalating prices of steel and cement, bank facilities, planning of new grid lines, royalty free period during selling of electricity to other states etc.

Denying any help in acquisition of land for the site at reasonable prices, Sh Deepak Gupta, Secretary, MNRE reminded them to put forward only reasonable requests. Sh Gupta strongly advised the developers to take people along with them by paying good price at the proposed site. About 30 developers participated in the meeting.