Report of the Site Selection Committee constituted by the Govt. of India vide MHRD F.No.42-24/2009-Desk (U) dated 17th May, 2013.

Constitution & Composition of the Committee:

1. Following the identification of additional land measuring 120 Hectare in contiguity of the previously identified 62.54.26 Hectare land by the Government of Himachal Pradesh, for the Dharamshala campus of the Central University of Himachal Pradesh, the Government of India vide MHRD F.No.42-24/2009-Desk (U) dated 17th May, 2013 constituted the Site Selection Committee. The composition of the Committee is as under:
   a. Prof. Abdul Wahid, Vice Chancellor, Central University of Kashmir
   b. Prof. Furqan Qamar, Vice Chancellor, Central University of Himachal Pradesh
   c. Shri Sanjay K. Murthy, Secretary (Higher Education), Govt. of Himachal Pradesh
   d. Dr. Akhilesh Gupta, Secretary, University Grants Commission
   e. Shri T.C. Nautiyal, AIG, Ministry of Environment & Forest, Govt. of India
   f. Shri Nand Lal Chauhan, Superintendent Engineer, CPWD, Chandigarh
   g. Shri Anant K. Singh, Joint Secretary, MHRD, (DoHE), GOI – **Convenor**

2. Visit of the Committee to the sites was undertaken on 12-13th June 2013 as fixed vide MHRD F.No.42-24/2009-Desk (U) dated 24th May, 2013. Prof. Abdul Wahid and Dr. Akhilesh Gupta could not make it convenient to undertake the visit due to some unavoidable reasons. In addition to the five members of the Committee, the officials from District Administration i.e. Deputy Commissioner, Additional District Magistrate, Sub Divisional Magistrate (Dehra), officials from the Departments of Revenue, Forests, PWD and IPH also accompanied the Committee to the Sites. Besides the Vice-Chancellor of Central University of Himachal Pradesh, who is the member of the Committee, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar of the University were also associated.

Background Details:

3. The Central Government vide MHRD letter No. F.42-24/2009-Desk(U) dated 23rd April 2010 approved the establishment of the Central University of Himachal Pradesh with its headquarters and temporary campus at Dharamshala and two distinct campuses on the sites offered by the Government of Himachal Pradesh in Dehra and Dharamshala in Kangra District. As per the approval, while the main campus of the University is to be located at Dehra, the other campus at Dharamshala is to have such of the school/Departments which do not require massive infrastructure. Further, the State Government was to ensure immediate handing over of the lands, free from all encumbrances for the two campuses simultaneously after obtaining due approvals/clearances from environmental angle **(Copy of the letter enclosed as Annexure 1).**

Recommendation of the first Site Selection Committee:

4. The reasons for and circumstances in which the decision to establish split/twin campuses of the Central University was taken are explained in detail in the reports of the Central Site Selection Committee constituted by the MHRD for the establishment of the Central University of Himachal Pradesh. During its visit on 15th-17th October 2008, the Central Site Selection Committee did not only visit the site offered by the State Government at Dehra but also explored all other possibilities and alternative sites that were indicated to them in the Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh. While State Government had proposed over 700 acres of land at Dehra, the Committee felt uncomfortable about the site on account of remoteness and lack of adequate supporting infrastructure. The possible sites indicated at Shahpur was found to be no more than 40 Acres whereas 200 Acres of land meant for HP Housing Board that was indicated as a possible site for the University at Dharamshala turned out to be private land requiring state government to invest a few hundred Crores of Rupees towards the cost of acquisition. The possibility of getting 500-600 Acres of Land out of the 1300 Acres in possession of the HP Agricultural University at Palampur was

also ruled out. **(Copy of the Minutes of the Central Site Selection Committee is enclosed as Annexure 2).**

Recommendation of the second Site Selection Committee:

5. Following the assumption of charge by the first Vice Chancellor of the Central University of Himachal Pradesh, he was also Co-opted as a member of the Site Selection Committee vide MHRD F.No.42-24/2009-Desk (U) dated 9.2.2010. The visit of the Site Selection Committee was organised once again on 19th-20th February 2010. This time the Government of Himachal Pradesh proposed two alternative sites, one at Dharamshala and another at Dehra. During its visit the Committee physically visited both the sites, perused land records and held detailed deliberations with the district officials. Having assessed both the sites, and taking an objective view, the committee felt that the topography that Himachal Pradesh had, it was well nigh impossible to find a single contiguous tract of land free from forest and vegetation for developing a campus at one single location and that it had no option but to consider recommending a split/twin campus facility for the Central University of Himachal Pradesh. The reasons for its recommendation are documented in details.

6. Even though the Committee had recommended for the twin/split campuses, it had clearly indicated Dharamshala to be better suited for the University when it observed that "The concerns for local development does make a case for setting up prestigious projects like this central university in relatively under-developed location so that the same could be developed in due course of time on the strength of the new development project. In case of higher educational projects, the foremost casualty of this approach would be excellence. It is important to understand that the need of the hour is not to set up just any institution of higher education. But the requirement is to set up institutions with the vision of achieving excellence in shortest possible period of time. Obviously, this could be achieved only if the university is located at a place that is developed enough to be able to attract talented and accomplished faculty and

the best students. Dharamshala has the added advantage of being not only the district head quarters but also in its accessibility to Gaggal Airport, thereby making it easier for visiting faculty, which would be needed in large numbers in the initial years of the university, to reach and return. In addition, Dharamshala is on the international tourist map, and therefore the university would start with an obvious advantage of not having to struggle to make its location known to scholars and faculty from anywhere. This would create a stronger academic and research profile for the university" **(A copy of the Report of the Central Site Selection Committee is enclosed as Annexure 3).**

Progress with regard to the transfer of land to the University:

7. After the decision of the Government of India dated 23.4.2010 to establish two campuses of the Central University, the State Government of Himachal Pradesh issued necessary directions to the District Administration to transfer 317.97.97 Hectares of land for the South/Beas Campus at Dehra and 62.54.26 Hectares for the North/Dhauladhar Campus at Dharamshala, for the establishment of Central University of Himachal Pradesh. Since the land identified and earmarked for both the campuses of the Central University of Himachal Pradesh was the forest land requiring clearance under Forest Conservation Act (FAC) 1980, the University took steps and prepared the cases in close collaboration with concerned Departments of State Govt. for getting FCA clearance.

8. The proposals for diversion of land of both the campuses of the Central University were sent by the Chief Conservator of Forests (FCA), O/O the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Himachal Pradesh to the Ministry of Environment & Forests, (FC Division), Government of India vide letter No. Ft.48-2089/2010(FCA) dated 26.11.2011.

9. The MoEF, Govt. of India vide their letter F. No. 8-120/2011 -FC dated 01.05. 2012 informed the Principal Secretary (Forest), Government of Himachal Pradesh as under:

> "the proposal appear to be non-site specific and requirement of forest land is very large and many non-essential items have been included in the requirements of forest land like provision for future expansion of many facilities and science, technology park. The Committee (Forest Advisory Committee) desired that the State Government may rationalise and minimise the forest land requirement and submit a detailed plan of land use for diversion may be provided. In view of the above, the State Government is requested to take appropriate action as per the observation of the FAC and submit a revised proposal" **(Copy of the letter enclosed at Annexure 4).**

10. The Chief Secretary, Government of Himachal Pradesh, in response to the above observations, wrote a Do letter No. D.O.No. EDN-A-Gha(8) 16/2006 dated 20th June 2012 explaining the reasons and justification for the proposal and urged the MoE&F) to reconsider the proposal and convey necessary approval. He further suggested that if required the MoE&F, Government of India may convene a meeting wherein the Chief Secretary and the Secretary, MHRD could attend to expedite the matter **(Copy of the letter enclosed at Annexure 5).** The matter was further followed up by a DO letter from the Chief Secretary on 10th December 2012. **(Copy of the letter enclosed at Annexure 6).**

11. Concerned about the delay in transfer of land to the Central University of Himachal Pradesh, Honourable Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, vide his letter No. EFE-B-F(2)-53/2009 dated 28-1-2013 requested the Honourable Union Minister of Environment & Forest to expedite necessary clearance so that the land could be transferred to the Central University at the earliest. Matter was followed up by the Nodal Officer-cum APCCF vide letter No. Ft:48-

2089/2010(FCA) dated 6th February 2013. **(Copy of the letter enclosed as Annexure 7).**

12. Honourable Union Minister of Human Resource Development too urged the Minister of Environment & Forest, Govt. of India vide letter D.O. No 42-24/2009 dated 5th March 2013 to facilitate an early decision in the matter so that the students of the State are not further deprived of the quality higher education for want of a permanent campus. **(Copy of the letter at Annexure 8).**

13. Honourable Minister of Environment & Forest wrote back to the Honourable Chief Minister vide her letter D.O. No...12/2011-FC dated 14th March 2013 reiterating the observations of the FAC and suggested, as earlier, that revised proposal be submitted after rationalising and minimising the requirement of forest land along with detailed plan of land use. She further informed in her letter that the Ministry of HRD has also been requested to constitute a joint committee to formulate guidelines for use of forest land for setting up of educational institutions with a focus to minimise loss of forest. **(Copy of the letter enclosed as Annexure 9).**

14. In the mean time, the State Government vide letter No. EDN-A-Gha(8)-16/2006 dated 26-02-2013 informed the University that the District Administration of Kangra has identified 120 hectare of additional government land contiguous to the earlier proposed land of 62 hectare in Dharamshala and required the University to confirm the suitability of the additional land to enable the Government to initiate the process for allotting the same to the Central University. **(Copy of the letter enclosed as Annexure 10).**

15. Accordingly the University approached the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) vide letter F.No. 2-1/CUHP/GA/2010-Vol II/1182 dated 8th March 2013 for constituted the Central Site Selection Committee to assess the suitability of additional land for the establishment of the Central University.

The Site Selection Committee was constituted by the MHRD vide letter F.NO. 42-24/2009-Desk (U) dated 17th May 2013 and visit of the Committee was fixed to be held on 12-13th June 2013 vide MHRD letter F. No. 42-24/2009-Desk (U) dated 24th may 2013.

Recommendations of the Site Selection Committee:

16. The Committee perused the reports of the Site Selection Committees of 2008 and 2010 along with the decision of the Government of India to familiarise itself with the concerns, constraints and issues involved in the identification of land for the establishment of permanent campuses of the Central University of Himachal Pradesh. It also considered the observations and insistence of the Ministry of Environment & Forest, Government of India to rationalise and minimise the requirement of land.

17. The Committee also perused the background papers presented by the University relating to the establishment of its campuses as approved by the Government of India including the reports of the geotechnical investigation, contour survey and the Master Plan that the University has got prepared for the construction and development of its permanent campuses, which was necessary to prepare and submit proposal for the FCA clearance. In the process the University spent Rs. 81.59 Lakhs on contour survey, geotechnical investigation, demarcation of boundary, preparation of the Master Plan, enumeration of trees and other associated work relating to the preparation of the FCA clearance proposal.

18. The Committee also considered the background papers placed by the University giving records of meetings that were held with the Chief Secretary, Government of Himachal Pradesh and also District Administration and noted that the issues of private land on the Dehra sites and contiguity of Dharamshala site still remain unsolved.

19. In order to take a holistic view on the matter, the Committee visited both the Dehra and Dharamshala sites including the additional land now identified by the State Govt. at Dharamshala. During the visits, the Committee also interacted and heard the local people who had gathered at Dehra and Dharamshala to get their view point. The Committee noted that there has hardly been any change in the views and passion of people about the location of the University as compared to the observation recorded in detail by the 2008 and 2010 Committee.

20. The Committee have had detailed deliberation with the local/district administration and perused in detail the record and revenue papers placed before it by the District Administration for both the sites and in particular with regard to the additional land identified at Dharamshala.

21. The Committee required the State Government and District Administration to furnish details of the additional land being proposed at Dharamshala and to get a geotechnical report in respect of the additional land. Based on the details furnished by the District Administration the area of the additional land proposed at Dharamshala worked out to be 97-45-74 Hectare only in addition to the already proposed 62-54-26 hectare. Thus the total land available for the Dharamshala site now worked out to be 160-00-00 Hectare. **(Details of the land enclosed as per Annexure 11).**

22. Geotechnical report of the site was received from the Geotechnical Wing, Directorate of Industries, Government of Himachal Pradesh on 20th June 2013 which mentions that by the surface observation made in the field that the proposed land is stable in most of the stretch. However, it considered certain recommendations absolutely essential for long-term safety of the sloping hill slope and proposed infrastructure **(Copy of the report enclosed as Annexure 12).**

23. After taking into account all relevant information vis-à-vis the observations of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India, for rationalizing and minimizing the requirement of forest land, the Committee makes the following recommendations:

a. Dharmshala being the District Headquarter and having air connectivity is better suited for establishing the Central University. With the additional land identified and proposed to be offered by the State Government at Dharamshala, the total land area becomes 160-00-00 hectare (62-54-26 hectare already proposed + 97-45-74 hectare of additional land). This works out to approximately 400 Acres and could be suitable for building a compact and cohesive main campus of the University. Given the topography and contour of land and considering the buildable portion, this site should be able to accommodate such requirements of the University which do not demand massive and heavy infrastructure.

b. As per MHRD norms about 500-600 Acres land is required for establishing a new Central University with Medical and Engineering Colleges. Availability of land area, its contour and topography may not permit the development of Schools requiring heavy infrastructure like the School of Medical Sciences, School of Health & Allied Sciences, School of Engineering Sciences & Technology and Research Park at the proposed site in Dharmshala. So, they may be developed at Dehra in the 2nd phase for which a contiguous land size of about 200 Acres on the right hand side of the Dharamshala – Hoshiarpur Road after excluding the private land and other land of common use such as the common charagah, shamshan ghat etc. should be sufficient.

c. Accordingly, the total land proposed for the establishment of the Central University of Himachal Pradesh shall come down from 380-52-23

Hectares (62-54-26 Hectares at Dharamshala + 317-97-97 Hectares at Dehra) to **240-00-00 Hectares** only (160-00-00 Hectares at Dharamshala + 80-00-00 Hectares at Dehra) for the Main Campus at Dharmshala and the Satellite Campus at Dehra which is well within the norm of the MHRD.

d. The development of the two campuses should be taken up in phased manner. Out of the total proposed land, 160-00-00 Hectares at Dharmashala is the bare minimum and essential for the immediate development of the main campus of the University while 80-00-00 Hectares at Dehra may be taken up in the second phase subject to availability of funds from the MHRD/UGC. In case Ministry of Environment & Forest still has any reservation about the actual land requirement, it should keep the request for the proposed Dehra Campus in abeyance for detailed examination of the matter and grant clearance for the main campus at Dharmshala immediately as the matter has been delayed too much.

Prof. Furqan Qamar, Vice Chancellor, Central University of Himachal Pradesh	Sanjay K. Murthy, Secretary (Higher Education), Govt. of Himachal Pradesh	T.C. Nautiyal, AIG, Ministry of Environment & Forest, Govt. of India.	Nand Lal Chauhan, Superintendent Engineer, CPWD, Chandigarh

31.7.13

Anant Kumar Singh,
Joint Secretary, MHRD, (DoHE), GOI
Convenor