

**Dr. Justice Ferdino Rebello**

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7<sup>th</sup> April 2026

To

Dr. Pramod Sawant  
Chief Minister of Goa

Sub: Stay of change in conversion of zones under Section 39-A of the Town & Country Planning Act.

Dear Chief Minister,

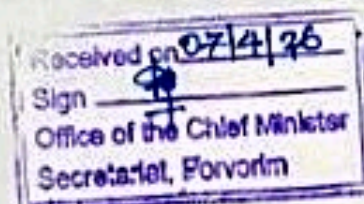
On 8<sup>th</sup> January 2026, a Charter was presented to you on behalf of the 'Enough is Enough' movement, pursuant to the 10-point charter being adopted at a gathering of citizens on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2026 where they ratified the 10-point charter. The said Charter thereafter has been ratified by people of Goa at meetings held at Mapusa, Margao, Chandor, Canacona, Pernem and various other villages and towns in Goa.

Subsequent to that on behalf of the movement, a draft legislation styled as 'The Goa Protection of Agricultural Lands Act, 2026' was submitted to Presidents of all political parties, as also the Leaders of the legislative wings of the political parties, including your good self as the leader of the House in the Legislative Assembly of Goa.

Various Opposition Parties tabled the Bill in the Legislative Assembly of Goa. The people of Goa expected that the Bill would be discussed and passed as it was meant to protect the heritage of Goa, including its agricultural lands, hills, lakes and rivers. For reasons beyond our comprehension, the Assembly was prorogued on the ground that there was a by-election. There are by-elections in various other states where the assemblies continue to function. The feeling amongst the people is that this was done to avoid discussion on the Bill. If that Bill had been approved by the House, this letter would not have been required.

This letter however is addressed to you, as you as the Chief Minister have taken decisions to stay change of zoning in three cases.

(a) Harmal;



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(b) Siridao; and

(c) Sankeli

This has been done by the Government in exercise of its powers under sub-Rules 4 and 5 of Rule 4 of the "Goa Town & Country Planning (Change of Zone of Land in the Regional Plan or the Outline Development Plan) Rules, 2024.

If a stay has been granted in these specific cases, we fail to understand why the same yardstick or standard is not applied to all applications which are pending under Section 39-A until the Legislative Assembly of Goa discusses the Bill and passes it unanimously. Failure to stay would amount to an arbitrary exercise of power by the Government.

The reasons for stay are justifiable for the following reasons:

(a) Pursuant to directions of the High Court in the matter of payment of Stamp Duty, an enquiry was conducted and in the course of the enquiry it was found that in the few sample cases which were considered, permission for conversion under Section 17(2) could not have been granted as procedure had not been followed. The report is self explanatory and is by the Vigilance Department. Citizens have written to you to initiate criminal proceedings against the concerned officers. This will show total non-application of mind on behalf of the Town & Country Planning Board and its officials.

(b) Section 39-A is only a power for change of zone, it is not a power to proceed to develop the land. The attention of the Chief Town Planner (Planning) and Town & Country Planning Board has been invited by my letter dated 6<sup>th</sup> February 2026. In spite of that, the Town & Country Planning Board has been notifying applications for consideration for change of zone.

(c) Under Section 2 of Goa Land Use (Regulation) Act, 1991, notwithstanding anything contained in the Goa, Daman & Diu Town & Country Planning Act, 1974 or any plan or scheme made thereunder or in the Goa Land

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Revenue Code, no land which is vested in a tenant under the provisions of the Goa, Daman and Diu Agricultural Tenancy Act, 1964 shall be used or allowed to be used for any purpose other than agriculture. Agriculture includes paddy fields, orchards, etc. as defined in the Tenancy Act. The Town and Country Planning Board inspite of this provision is allowing change of zoning and the Government has been approving the same which is totally illegal and can only be said to be for extraneous reasons.

- (d) There are 223 Comunidades in Goa. Under Section 31-A of the Code of Comunidades, which came in to force in 2025, no Comunidade land given for one purpose can be used for any other purpose, and if converted or used, reverts back to the Comunidade. The Town & Country Planning Board is not examining the applications by calling on the applicants to show the original title to the land. This failure is again a clear case of quid pro quo.
- (e) Under Section 17-A of the Town & Country Planning Act, it is only the Chief Town Planner (Land Use) who can grant permission for lands below 25% gradient. The Chief Town Planner in an Explanatory Memorandum of 2010 had ordered that what must be followed are the Contour Plans of the Geological Survey of India. In spite of that in 2023, the Town & Country Planning Board which has no authority has issued guidelines whereby the Contour Plans of the Surveyor General are being bypassed. This again is a clear case of quid pro quo.
- (f) It may also be brought to your attention that the Goa Restriction on Transfer of Agricultural Lands Act, 2023 is a legislative fraud on the people of Goa, as the subject is already covered by the Goa Land Use (Regulation) Act, 1991. By that Act, for the first time paddy fields are sought to be zoned for development. The object of the 2023 Act again appears to be to help land sharks, who are seeking to destroy our agricultural lands, demography and topography of Goa as evidenced by the sale prices.

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(g) Also there can be no conversion of agricultural lands under the provisions of the Goa Agricultural Tenancy Act, which legislation was passed during the tenure of the late Dayanand Bandodkar as the Chief Minister of Goa, to give rights to the tillers and also at the same time to prevent conversion of agricultural lands for non-agricultural purposes.

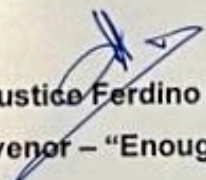
It is therefore clear that the Government, in exercise of its powers under sub-rules 4 and 5 of Rule 4 of the Rules as referred to earlier, must exercise its powers to prevent further destruction of our heritage, including our agricultural lands, hills forests, etc. and immediately stay the grant of any further permissions.

It is therefore the peoples demand that the Government must immediately act and stop granting any further permissions under Section 39-A until such time the draft Bill submitted and presented to the Legislative Assembly of Goa is discussed and passed by the Assembly, hopefully unanimously.

The people can't be silent spectators to the destruction of our natural ecosystems, agricultural lands, hills and forests by largescale change of zone, unprecedented in the history of Goa which has taken place in the last three years. We demand that they are rolled back and an enquiry conducted into each of the permissions granted under Section 39-A from the date it came into force.

With warm regards.

Yours sincerely,

  
**Dr. Justice Ferdino Rebello (Retd.)**  
Convenor – "Enough is Enough"