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## Consultative Committee meet for Underground Coal Gasification

*Saturday, 21 Nov, 2009*

The reconstituted Consultative Committee of the Members of Parliament for Coal met for the first time under the chairmanship of Mr Sriprakash Jaiswal minister of state for coal (Independent Charge). The agenda of the meeting was Underground Coal Gasification.

Underground Coal Gasification or In situ Coal Gasification is a method of covering un worked coal/in situ coal into a combustible gas which can be used for industrial heating, power generation or the manufacture of hydrogen, syngas or diesel fuel.

Emphasizing the need for UCG, Mr Jaiswal said that his Ministry is prepared to explore every technology to meet the increasing demand for domestic coal. Terming the UCG as one of the identified clean coal technologies having good potential for development in India. The environmental effects of the technology are perceived to be fairly low. It is also beneficial from the health and safety point of view besides having potentially lower capital and operating costs. The capital expenditure required for UCG will be relatively lesser compared to physical mining of coal and land requirement and degradation of land is comparatively less. Unlike conventional mining, there is no need for creating access ways and UCG obviates deployment of persons underground.

The Minister observed that the feasibility of UCG has been examined in many countries and some have undertaken few trials. A detailed presentation by the Ministry of Coal emphasized the following:

1. Since it is a high technology area we need to depend on technology providers from outside the country.
2. Capacity creation, technology development and R&D are critical for development of the subject.
3. A few entrepreneurs have approached the Ministry seeking allotment of coal blocks on nomination basis for UCG as they wish to bring in technology and make investments on their own.
4. Potential entrepreneurs should also consider establishing end use facilities for use of syngas simultaneously.
5. It is important for the public sector coal companies to have the technology issues studied in detail by undertaking visits to already operating projects outside India for adoption of technology in Indian conditions.
6. Government needs to consider deploying UCG technology under various geological conditions in at least 3 to 4 sites by taking up pilot plants either through private sector or through public sector for establishing the technology.
7. Government's support for R&D in UCG is important.

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