

## **Press Statement**

**Mumbai, India: 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2014:**

### **Technology accelerates innovation for progressive rural communities**

**Mr. Anil Agarwal, Chairman, Vedanta Group, tweeted, “Water ATMs give safe drinking water daily to 22000 in Rajasthan. India can use tech innovation benefit to bring a revolution @CairnIndia”**

Technology coupled with out of box thinking brings in innovation. One such benefit can be witnessed today in Rajasthan, one of the driest states of the country, with 10.4 per cent of the country's geographical area, 5.5 per cent of the population and 18.70 per cent of the livestock. The water ATMs are kiosks with reverse osmosis (RO) plants, now installed in the state, and this technology has brought in a revolution in which many arid villages in Rajasthan have 24X7 access to water at the swipe of a card. The idea can be adopted in various geographies of rural India who are not able to access water.

In Rajasthan, Sesa Sterlite’s subsidiary and Indian energy major, Cairn India’s initiative to install water ATMs benefits 22,000 people by providing them with safe drinking water.

The project has been named, ‘Jeevan Amrit’ and the residents of villages, Bhakharpur, Kawas, Guda, Jogasar, Aakdada and Baytu in Rajasthan have 24X7 access to water at the swipe of a card - at 20 litres for Rs.5. The cards come with an initial value of Rs.150 and can be recharged for a similar amount. Plans are afoot to also provide Rs.20 recharges. The revenue earned is used by the village's water committee to meet the running expenses of the RO plant, such as salary of the operator, electricity and maintenance. The surplus money is used to undertake developmental work in the village, making the project self-sustainable.

The number of water-borne diseases, such as diarrhoea in children, have reduced. And cases of joint pain caused by high fluoride content in drinking water have also decreased in the areas of the water ATMs, bringing smiles to the residents.

The project is a good example of a PPP model, where Cairn India has partnered with the Rajasthan government's Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), Tata Projects and the respective village panchayats to provide potable drinking water at the doorsteps of the local community.

At present, 22 RO plants (17 with the swipe facility) catering to drinking water needs of 22,000 villagers on a daily basis are up and running. The project is expected to scale up in the coming years in terms of number of plants and locations.

And to maximize its reach, water from the RO plants is transported to the surrounding dhanis (hamlets) through vehicles at nominal charges (Rs.1-2 extra, as decided by the water committee). The dispensers are getting increasingly popular among the locals with more and more people purchasing the smart cards.

"Once it was difficult to get water, forget about clean water to drink. Now things have changed. I can, at any time, get clean water for my family," said Ram Pyari, a resident of Kawas village. Such sentiments are echoed by other users, including Ratna Ram, sarpanch of Sawai Padam Singh village, who became a role model after he inspired more than 100 households in his village to utilize safe drinking water and four other village sarpanchs to initiate the "Jeevan Amrit" project in their gram panchyats.

Cairn India funds the cost of the RO plants, which are delivered and installed by Tata Projects, PHED provides the premises and the source water connection and a 15-member village water committee, formed under the panchayat, is responsible for operation and maintenance of the kiosks. Dhara, the local NGO partner for this project, spreads awareness about safe drinking water among locals and hand-holds the water committee for better success.

Apart from providing an innovative solution to a grave problem, these water kiosks have also proved to be a model of good self-governance. The water committees have created an identity for themselves and are looked upon as an effective social group in the villages. Along with efficiently running the RO plants, the committees are also undertaking many developmental projects.

Cairn India, a subsidiary of Sesa Sterlite Limited is one of the largest independent oil and gas exploration and production companies in India with a market capitalisation of \$10 billion. It was rated the fastest-growing energy company in the world in the 2012 and 2013 Platts Top 250 Global Energy Company Rankings.

Cairn India generates 30 per cent of India's domestic crude oil production. Through its affiliates, Cairn India has been operating for close to 20 years playing an active role in developing India's oil and gas resources. To date, Cairn India has opened four frontier basins with over 40 discoveries, 31 in Rajasthan alone.

**About Sesa Sterlite Limited (Formerly known as Sesa Goa Limited)**

Sesa Sterlite Limited (SSLT) is one of the world's largest diversified natural resources company, whose business primarily involves exploring and processing minerals and oil & gas. SSLT produces oil & gas, zinc, lead, silver, copper, iron ore, aluminium and commercial power and has a presence across India, South Africa, Namibia, Ireland, Australia, Liberia and Sri Lanka. Sustainability is at the core of SSLT's strategy, with a strong focus on health, safety and environment and on enhancing the lives of local communities.

SSLT is a subsidiary of Vedanta Resources Plc, a London-listed company. SSLT is listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange and the National Stock Exchange in India and has ADRs listed on the New York Stock Exchange.

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