



Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich

Department of Architecture
The Dean

ETH Zurich
Prof. Annette Spiro
Stefano-Franscini-Platz 5
8093 Zürich
Switzerland

The Honourable Nirmala Sitharaman
Minister of State for Commerce and Industry
Ministry of Commerce and Industry
Government of India
Udyog Bhawan
New Delhi 110107

dean@arch.ethz.ch
www.arch.ethz.ch

Zurich, February 6, 2017

Dear Madam Minister,

It was with astonishment and concern that we learned about the plans to demolish the Hall of Nations, the Halls of Industries and the Nehru Pavilion at Pragati Maidan in order to give way for contemporary exhibition facilities.

These landmarks were designed to commemorate and celebrate 25 years of India's independence in 1972 and are important witnesses of what was technically possible at the time of their creation. They hold a substantial place not only in the collective memory of the nation but also in the history of engineering and architecture in an international context.

DARCH

The Hall of Nations, a unique example of a space-frame built in in-situ-concrete spanning 80 meters are proof of great competence, courage and a strong faith in the future. It has been realized with simplest technical means and an extreme economy of materials, combining an enormous amount of manual labour with outstanding engineering skills. Till date it stands as a proud witness of its time: It could hardly have been conceived anywhere else in the world nor could it be rebuilt today in its unique hand-crafted form. The Hall of Nations complex is a milestone of Indian and international engineering and clearly deserves its place as a monument of indian cultural heritage.

While we see the necessity to modernise the exhibition grounds at Pragati Maidan in order to comply with today's needs for state-of-the art exhibition facilities, we strongly suggest to desist from the demolition of the Hall of Nations, the Halls of Industries and the Nehru Pavilion and to rework the renovation plans of in order to integrate these proud structures in a future new ensemble.

ETH Zurich, the eminent school for architecture and engineering in Switzerland, has a long-standing interest in India's modernist architecture and it maintains an active student exchange with the Architecture department at CEPT Ahmedabad since more than 40 years. The Hall of Nations holds a solid position in the teachings at ETH as an architectural masterpiece.

Sincerely yours,

Prof. Annette Spiro
Dean, Department of Architecture