

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
**MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES**  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**QUESTION NO 19.11.2009**  
**ANSWERED ON**  
**NATIONAL WATER POLICY .**

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Dr. T. Subbarami Reddy

Will the Minister of COAL AND MINES be pleased to state :-

- (a) whether National Water Policy allocated first priority to drinking water in planning and operation of water resources system;
- (b) if so, whether per capita availability of water was about 1700 cubic metres but growing populations, coupled with industrialization and urbanization, presented enormous challenges in the form of reduced per capita availability of water, deterioration in the quality of water and overexploitation of ground water; and
- (c) if so, the concrete steps and measures Government has now taken to meet the shortage of water in the country and to what extent Government is confident of reaching water to all by 2012?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES

(SHRI VINCENT H. PALA)

(a) Yes Sir, as per National Water Policy, drinking water is the first water allocation priority in the planning and operation of systems.

(b) The average annual water availability for the country as a whole has been assessed as 1869 billion cubic meter (BCM). The increase in population results in decline in per capita water availability. In 1951, the per capita water availability was 5177 cubic meter. On the basis of population in 2001 census, the per capita water availability works out to be 1820 cubic meter. The report on assessment of ground water resources indicates that out of 5723 blocks, 839 blocks are over exploited. The over-exploitation of ground water resources has also led to decline in ground water table in some areas and also deterioration in water quality.

(c) Several schemes have been undertaken by the State Governments for conservation of water which inter-alia includes conservation of water through reservoirs, rainwater harvesting and ground water recharge. The Government of India has also drawn up National Perspective Plan for optimal utilization of the water resources particularly through diversion of surplus flood water to water deficient areas. A centrally sponsored scheme "National Rural Drinking Water Programme" is being implemented by Department of Drinking Water Supply, Ministry of Rural Development to meet the emerging challenges in rural drinking water supply relating to availability, sustainability and quality of drinking water. Government of India plans to cover all habitations with safe drinking water by 2012.