

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
RAJYA SABHA
QUESTION NO 21.12.2009
ANSWERED ON
STATE OF ENVIRONMENT REPORT .

3410

Shri Nand Kumar Sai

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

- (a) whether about 45 percent land of the country has been found degraded, air pollution is on the rise in all cities and rare flora and fauna is diminishing at a rapid rate as reported in the State of Environment Report India 2009;
- (b) if so, the details of the recommendation and observations made in the said report; and
- (c) the details of the action, so far, taken by the Central Government on each of the recommendations/observations?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS

(SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH)

(a)&(b) According to State of Environment Report India, 2009, out of India's total geographical area of 328.73 Mha, 146.82 Mha is degraded land (based on the information of National Bureau of Soil Survey and Land Use Planning, 2005). Some cities in India have witnessed decline in air pollution levels and many of the rare flora and fauna are on the verge of extinction. In this regard, some of the strategies identified to change land degradation inter alia include internalizing suitable policies in decision making, change in classification of land use statistics, use of advance technology like remote sensing, integrated pest management, land conserving crop rotations and integrated crop management. As regards reducing air pollution, main measures inter alia include integrated approach towards energy conservation, strengthening, monitoring and enforcement of emission standards. To protect the India's rich biodiversity wealth the report suggests to formulate conservation and prudent use strategies with the relevant stakeholders and local participation for conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

(c) Most of the recommendations/strategies suggested in the report are already enshrined in existing schemes/programmes of the government. Some of the important schemes/ programmes are as follows: The Department of Land Resources has been implementing a modified scheme known as Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) comprising three area development programmes namely Drought-Prone Areas Programme (DPAP), Desert Development Programme (DDP) and Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP) on watershed.

Some of the measures for control of Air Pollution in metro cities are: Bharat Stage (BS) III emission norms for passenger cars and BS II norms for two wheelers in ten metro cities apart from National Capital Region are implemented since 01.04.2005; BS IV norms for passenger cars and BS III for two wheelers in ten metro cities apart from National Capital Region have been notified with effect from 01.04.2010; the emission standards for industries have been notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and use of beneficiated coal in thermal power plants is in vogue. Action-plans for 24 Critically Polluted Areas are under implementation, etc.

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) is monitoring ambient air quality at 363 manual stations covering 139 cities, towns and industrial areas in the country which include 84 stations in 35 metro cities. Three major parameters, namely, Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and Particulate Matter of fine dust (PM₁₀) are monitored under National Air Monitoring Programme (NAMP) at all locations.

The Government seeks to conserve and manage flora and fauna of the country by regulatory and promotional measures. Under the promotional measures, there are 99 national park, 515 wildlife sanctuaries, 43 conservation reserves, 4 community reserves, 15 biosphere reserves, project tiger, elephant reserves etc. Under regulatory measures, there are Forest Conservation Act, Wildlife Protection Act, National Biodiversity Action Plan etc.