

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
RAJYA SABHA
QUESTION NO 21.12.2009
ANSWERED ON
IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE .

3442

Smt. Viplove Thakur

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

(a) whether a conference on “Forestry Solutions: Strategies for Mitigation and Adaptation of the Impact of Climate Change in Western Himalayan Mountain States” has recently been held in the country;

(b) if so the details thereof;

(c) whether a 16-point agenda has been introduced by experts in the field of forestry and environment, as its solution to combat the adverse impact of climate change, which are far more severe due to power projects, cement industry and other projects, in the fragile Himalayan ecology; and

(d) if so, the details thereof along with Government's views thereon?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS

(SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH)

(a)&(b)Yes, Sir. A National conference on “Forestry Solutions: Strategies for Mitigation and Adaptation of the Impact of Climate Change in Western Himalayan mountain states” was held at Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, from 19-21 November 2009.

(c)&(d)The Conference recommended the following agenda to guide the states of Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Uttarakhand in the formulation and implementation of policies and strategies for the forestry sector:-

i)There is a need to formulate a separate and distinct forest policy for western Himalayan states in view of their high vulnerability to climate change; critical role as watershed states for the northern Indian plains; and unique ecosystems and forested landscapes rich in biodiversity.

ii)There is an urgent need to establish long-term monitoring plots across representative eco-zones, to gather scientific data on climatic and biological parameters, especially in Riverine, Alpine and Shivalik ecosystems.

iii)Mapping climate change driven adaptations in natural resource use and livelihood patterns across eco-zones.

iv)Development of a database on Carbon sequestration potential of forest flora in these states.

v)Periodic assessment of carbon stock including soil carbon under different ecosystems.

vi)Effective deployment of new and advanced technologies, such as GIS, remote sensing, climate modeling in natural resource management.

vii)Urgent need to incentivise community involvement in some mainstream forest department activities including forest protection, afforestation and fire fighting.

viii)Integrating and extending the concept and practice of Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) within the states to compensate for foregone land-use and occupation options adversely impacting the environment.

ix)Conservation of biological diversity should guide afforestation programmes and not carbon sequestration potential alone.

x)Re-orienting afforestation programmes to focus on species that help mitigate man-animal conflict.

xi)Revisiting forestry operations to realize full water conservation potential of forests leading to development of water sanctuaries.

xii)Gender specific policies are required to help cope with the loss of control over natural resources, technologies and credit to deal with seasonal and episodic weather and natural disasters.

xiii) Impress upon Government of India to move beyond Green Bonus to adequately compensate these states for ecosystem services flows.

xiv) Re-orient developmental interventions adopting watershed as the unit for planning and fund flows.

xv) Re-design the existing tourism policy to produce alternative mountain-specific tourism models focusing on environmental sustainability.

xvi) Forest departments should be more proactive in influencing policies of other sectors such as Road Construction, Transportation, Power and Industries which impinge on conservation issues.

Guidelines and best practices for the governance for sustaining Himalayan Eco-system have been developed and shared with all State Governments in the Himalayan Region.