

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1015
TO BE ANSWERED ON 15.12.2022

Ecological balance in Western Ghat

1015. SHRI ANIL DESAI:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has received the Expert Committee report on Western Ghat under the chairmanship of Shri Madhavrao Gadgil in 2010;
- (b) if so, the details of the recommendations of the committee to save the ecological balance of the Western Ghat area spread over six States; and
- (c) the status of implementations of the same?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

- (a) to (c) The report of the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) constituted by this Ministry under the chairmanship by Prof. Madhav Gadgil was received by the Ministry in August, 2011. The WGEEP have recommended that the whole Western Ghats covering approximately about 1,29,000 sq. km should be declared as “Ecologically Sensitive Area”. The Panel further recommended that the ESA shall be categorized into three zones of varied ecological sensitivity viz. ESZ 1, ESZ 2 and ESZ 3, with prescribed regulated development as per sectoral guidelines. The WGEEP has provided broad sectoral guidelines for regulation of development activities such as: (i) agriculture, (ii) Land use, (iii) mining, (iv) industry, (v) tourism, (vi) water resources, (vii) power, (viii) roads (ix) railways, and (x) SEZ.

Pursuant to the report of the WGEEP, the Ministry constituted a High Level Working Group (HLWG) on 17th August, 2012, under the Chairmanship of Dr. K. Kasturirangan to *inter-alia* examine the report submitted by the WGEEP, in a holistic and multidisciplinary fashion. Thereafter, on the basis of recommendations made by this HLWG, draft notification for declaration of Western Ghats Eco-sensitive Area has been issued by the Central Government for the fifth time on 06.07.2022. The validity of this draft notification is till 30th June, 2024.

A committee has also been constituted on 18.04.2022, whose tenure is till June, 2023 to examine the issues/suggestions of the State Governments.
