

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3899**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.04.2023

**Combating desertification**

3899. SHRI AYODHYA RAMI REDDY ALLA:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that India became a signatory to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in 1994 and pledged to restore 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the steps that are being taken to combat desertification and the quantum of the target that has been achieved so far; and
- (c) the measures being taken by Government to reverse land degradation and deforestation?

**ANSWER**

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

- (a) to (c) India became a signatory to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) on 14th October 1994 which came into effect on 17th March 1997. At the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP), 2015 in Paris, India joined the voluntary Bonn Challenge pledge to bring into restoration 13 million hectares (mha) of degraded and deforested land by the year 2020, and additional 8 mha by 2030. This pledge to restore of 21 mha by 2030 has been increased to 26 mha, during the COP14 to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in 2019. In consonance with National Forest Policy (NFP), 1988 that envisages the national goal to have a minimum of one-third of the total land area under forest or tree cover, the Ministry has been taking several initiatives through various afforestation related schemes implemented by the Central Government which aim at increasing and improving forest and tree cover and thereby combating desertification. The Ministry supports the States/Union Territories for carrying out various afforestation activities through Centrally Sponsored Scheme for conservation, development and promotion of forests under its major schemes namely, National Mission for a Green India (GIM) and Forest Fire Protection & Management Scheme (FFPM). Compensatory afforestation under CAMPA has also been used to increase forest cover across the country. State Governments also implement various schemes

for tree plantation/afforestation. The area of land covered through afforestation is reported under the Twenty Point Programme, which is approximately 18.94 million hectares during the period 2011-12 to 2021-22. This includes the afforestation achievements under concerted efforts of the State Governments through various central and state specific schemes.

The Government has undertaken a number of measures to combat land degradation and desertification in the country. These are as follows:

- (i) Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas of India published by Space Applications Centre (SAC) Indian Space Research Organisation, Ahmedabad, which provides the extent of land degradation and desertification in India states that the land degradation and desertification in the country has been estimated to be 97.84 million hectares in 2018-19. It provides state-wise area of degraded land which is helpful in planning and implementation of schemes aimed at restoration of land by providing important data and technical inputs.
- (ii) An online portal has been developed with the help of Space Application Center (SAC), Ahmedabad for visualization of degraded area of land with the processes causing degradation.
- (iii) A Centre of Excellence has been envisaged at the Indian Council for Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) Dehradun for enhanced South-South Cooperation. It aims at knowledge sharing, promotion of best practices, sharing of India's experiences with cost-effective and sustainable land management strategies, developing ideas for transformative projects and programs and capacity building.

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