

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

RAJYA SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 997

TO BE ANSWERED ON 28/07/2023

STATUS OF BLACK SOIL

997. SHRI K.R. SURESH REDDY:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has taken cognizance of the 'Global status of black soils' Report, released by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), which states that black soils, that feed the global population, are under threat and losing at least half of their soil organic carbon (SOC) stocks; and
- (b) if so, the remedial steps that are proposed to be taken by Government to sustain the properties of black soil in the country?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

(SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR)

- (a) The black soil indicated in the FAO report is generally perceived as analogous to the black cotton soil in India. The report indicated loss of carbon by mismanagement and land conversion from forest and grassland to agriculture land which is not true in the context of black cotton soil.
- (b) Several steps have already been taken to improve soil health and ecosystem up-gradation along with improving soil fertility status in the country including black cotton soils. Under National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) to improve the soil health across the country, Soil Health Card (SHC) / Soil Health Management (SHM) scheme is operational through the State Governments under National Project on Management of Soil Health & Fertility. Now, this scheme has been merged as Soil Health Component of Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) from the year 2022-23. The main objective of the scheme is to assist states in promoting Integrated Nutrient Management (INM) through judicious use of chemical fertilizers including secondary and micro nutrients in conjunction with organic manures & bio-

fertilizers for improving soil health and its productivity. Soil Health Card provides information to farmers on soil nutrient status of their soil and recommendation on appropriate dosage of nutrients to be applied for improving soil health and its fertility. So far 22.71 crore grid based soil health cards have been distributed to farmers under the scheme. Also, Organic and Natural Farming are being promoted through Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojna (PKVY) in the country which aims to exclude all synthetic chemical inputs and use of on-farm biomass with major stress on biomass mulching and in turn build up of Soil Organic Carbon (SOC) stock. NMSA also includes the program of Rainfed Area Development (RAD) which promotes integrated farming systems and On Farm Water Management (OFWM) that promotes micro irrigation systems for efficient use of water for irrigation. The program on Agroforestry also aims to increase tree cover in non-forest areas for higher carbon sequestration.
