

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1893
TO BE ANSWERED ON 29.12.2017

Western Ghats

1893. SHRI ANTO ANTONY:

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

- (a) whether the Government has issued final notification regarding implementation of recommendations of Dr. Kasturirangan Report on Western Ghats;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether the Government has noticed that the pathetic condition of the people of this area is due to the delayed notification in this regard; and
- (e) if so, the steps taken by the Government to protect the interest of the people in this area?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(DR. MAHESH SHARMA)

(a) to (e) The High Level Working Group (HLWG) under Dr. Kasturirangan has delineated the Western Ghats with an area of 164280 Square kms extending over 1500 kms in 188 talukas spread over six states (i) Kerala (ii) Tamil Nadu (iii) Goa (iv) Karnataka (v) Maharashtra and (vi) Gujarat. HLWG has demarcated approximately 37% of the total Geographical area of the Western Ghats as Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA). The demarcation unit of ESA is village and the ESA represents the contiguous band of vegetation including Protected Areas and World Heritage sites across six (6) states of Western Ghats region which is inhabited by about 50 million people.

To facilitate sustainable development in the region, HLWG recommended the Central Government to notify the ESA demarcated by HLWG in public interest. Accordingly, this Ministry had issued a Draft Notification on 10.03.2014 for declaring an area of 56,825 square kilometres spread over the six states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat in the Western Ghats region as Ecologically Sensitive. Thereafter, addressing the concerns and apprehensions of the people living in the ESA of the Western Ghats region, subsequent Draft Notifications dated 04.09.2015 and 27.02.2017 were published for seeking stakeholder comments, including those of State Governments.

Further, HWLWG recommended prohibitory and regulatory measures in ESA for the activities that may adversely impact the ecosystem. Inline with the HLWG recommendation, this

Ministry has issued Statutory directions vide Order dated 13.11.2013 to respective State Governments of the Western Ghats regions to prohibit five categories of new and/or expansion projects/activities in the ESA, namely (i) Mining, quarrying and sand mining (ii) Thermal Power Plants (iii) Building and construction projects of 20,000 square meters area and above (iv) Township and area development projects with an area of 50 hectares and above and /or with built up area of 1,50,000 square meters and above and (v) Red category of industries.
