

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**LOK SABHA**  
**STARRED QUESTION NO. 61**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 14.12.2018

**Eco Sensitive Area**

\*61. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI:

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

- (a) whether the process for earmarking Eco Sensitive Zone (ESZ) started in the year 2011 and the Union Government issued the first draft notification in 2014 for earmarking Eco Sensitive Area of the Western Ghats, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether since then the Government has issued fresh notifications in this regard and issued the fourth one recently to bring the concerned States on board;
- (c) if so, the details thereof along with the main demand of the individual States; and
- (d) whether even a high level working group had failed to bring a unanimous decision in this regard and if so, the further steps taken/being taken by the Government in this regard?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

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**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARAS (A) to (D) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 61 DUE FOR REPLY ON 14.12.2018 REGARDING “ECO SENSITIVE AREA” BY SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI:**

(a) An intensive process for conservation and protection of unique biodiversity of Western Ghats was started in the year 2010 with the setting up of Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) followed by the constitution of High Level Working Group (HLWG) in the year 2012. The Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC) had, in principle, accepted the High Level Working Group report in November, 2013. Accordingly, Ministry issued first draft notification *vide* S.O. 733 (E) dated 10.02.2014, with an Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) of 56,825 square kilometres, in the States of Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

(b) &(c) The draft Notification S.O. 733 (E) dated 10.02.2014 was subsequently republished thrice, i.e. *vide* S.O. 2435 (E) dated 04.09.2015; S.O. 667 (E) dated 27.02.2017 and S.O. 5135 (E) dated 03.10.2018. After republishing the draft Notification, this Ministry had issued letters seeking views /comments of the state Governments of Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra and Goa. Over the years, the concerned State Governments have undertaken physical verification and proposed to alter the ESA of their States, from the original recommendations of High Level Working Group. In order to follow a coherent and consistent approach in notifying the Western Ghats ESA, Ministry had interactions with all the States of Western Ghats region at various levels on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2016; 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> February 2016; 11<sup>th</sup> August,2016 and 11<sup>th</sup> April 2018. The main demand of the States is to reduce the ESA area, which is a deviation from the recommendations of HLWG. As a result, the draft Notifications were not finalised, and to continue the process, Ministry had republished the fresh draft Notification fourth time on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2018.

(d) The recommendations of HLWG are for maintaining balance in development and environment protection in the Ecologically Sensitive Areas of Western Ghats region. The HLWG also recommended that the activities which have maximum interventionist and destructive impacts on natural ecosystems should not be permitted in the Ecologically Sensitive Areas of the Western Ghats, namely (i) Mining, quarrying and sand mining (ii) Thermal Power Plants (iii) Building and construction projects of 20,000 sq. m. area and above (iv) Township and area development projects with an area of 50 ha and above and/or with built up area of 1,50,000 sq. m. and above (v) Red category of industries. Accordingly, MoEFCC had issued directions under Section 5 of Environment(Protection) Act, 1986 for conservation and protection of ESA of Western Ghats. The recommendations have emphasised urgent need for conservation of the biologically rich biodiversity and the natural landscape of the Western Ghats. Ministry is willing to finalise the ESA notification in consultation with all the States of the Western Ghats region.

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