

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4336
TO BE ANSWERED ON 19.07.2019

Genetically Modified Organisms

4336. SHRI RAVNEET SINGH BITTU:

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

- (a) the present policy regarding Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs);
- (b) whether the Government plans to join 17 of the 20 most developed countries in the world by not growing GMOs at all, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) the number of field trials conducted till now in a closed environment for GMOs;
- (d) whether the Government plans to make the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) free of bureaucrats and full of Non-Government experts to avoid conflict of interest and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) whether GM mustard has been approved by the GEAC and if so, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO)

- (a) and
- (b) In India, there is a well-established regulatory framework for approval of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) as per “Rules for the Manufacture / Use / Import/ Export and Storage of Hazardous Microorganisms, Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells”, 1989 (Rules 1989) established under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. Evaluation of each application of GMO is done on a case-to-case basis after a thorough examination of health, environment, food and feed safety assessment studies undertaken in a systematic and scientific manner as per prescribed guidelines, manuals and standard operating procedures stipulated by various regulatory agencies from time to time. The data generated by the applicants is reviewed at every step in the development process of Genetically Modified (GM) crops by various statutory committees, such as Institutional Biosafety Committee, Review Committee on Genetic Manipulation and Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC).

Similarly, each of the nearly 70 countries which either grow or import and consume GMOs, have specific polices/ regulations to govern these activities. Several developed countries which do not grow GMOs, allow their import and consumption.

- (c) GEAC has approved over one hundred confined field trials of GM crops.
- (d) The composition of GEAC has been defined in Section 4 of Rules 1989. The GEAC is chaired by Additional Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and co-chaired by a nominee of the Department of Biotechnology. The Co-chair has always been a renowned scientist. The members of GEAC include ex-officio experts, as well as many independent experts.
- (e) The application related to environmental release of transgenic Mustard was recommended by Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) in its 133rd meeting held on May 11, 2017. However, pursuant to receipt of various representations from different stakeholders, further studies regarding impact on environment have been proposed.
