

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 860
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 7th FEBRUARY, 2023

LOSS OF SOIL FERTILITY

860. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण मंत्री be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that due to top layer of soil degradation the loss of soil fertility has gone up to 40 per cent;
- (b) if so, whether it is also true that under the UN convention one billion hectares of degraded soil is to be restored by 2030;
- (c) if so, the plans being implemented by the Government to restore degraded land up to that year; and
- (d) the steps taken or being taken by the Government for upgradation of land so far?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण मंत्री (SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR)

(a) & (b): As per Global land outlook second edition report of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the global extent of land degradation is estimated at between 20-40% of the total land area, directly affecting nearly half of the working population and spanning the world's croplands, drylands, wetlands, forest and grasslands. 15th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the UNCCD held during 9-20 May, 2022 agreed to restore one billion hectares of degraded land by 2030 through improved data collection, monitoring and reporting.

(c) & (d) The Government has launched several schemes/ programmes which include inter-alia National Afforestation Program, Green India Mission, Watershed Development Component of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) which contribute to the target of restoration of 26 million hectares of degraded land and achievement of land degradation neutrality with focus on sustainable and optimum utilization of land resources.

The Watershed Development Component (WDC) of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana was launched in 2015. It contributes towards restoration of land through its various interventions which include inter-alia building of water harvesting structures, area brought under protection irrigation, area brought under plantation (afforestation/ horticulture etc.).

Space Application Centre (SAC), Ahmedabad released the latest version of the 'Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas of India' on 17 June 2021. The Government has undertaken a number of measures to combat land degradation and desertification in the country. These are as follows:

- i. A Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas has been prepared by SAC. It provides state-wise area of degradation land. It would help 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 Centre (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.

India has committed to achieve land degradation neutrality status by 2030. National Afforestation & Eco Development Board (NAEB), Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme "National Afforestation Programme (NAP)" for regeneration of degraded forests and adjoining areas through people's participation. The scheme implemented through a decentralized mechanism of State Forest Development Agency (SFDA) at State Level, Forest Development agency (FDA) at Forest Division level and Joint Forest Management Committee (JFMCs) at Village level. The scheme is demand driven and afforestation area is sanctioned on the basis of past performance, potential degraded forest land available for eco-restoration and availability of budget. National Mission for Green India (GIM) aims at protecting, restoring and enhancing India's forest cover by means of plantation activities in forest and non-forest areas. GIM activities were started in the FY 2015-16. Demand driven action oriented research work is carried out through projects under National Mission on Himalayan Studies (NMHS). Certain projects include the development of models for land reclamation, soil conservation and watershed management, etc.
