

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2660
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17.03.2025

Schemes to Change Desert into Green Areas

2660. SMT. MAHIMA KUMARI MEWAR:

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

- (a) whether the policy based efforts are being made by the Government to transform the deserts into green areas in the country;
- (b) if so, the detail of the efforts made to improve desert areas in the country including Rajasthan, State-wise;
- (c) whether the Government has taken steps to get the support of local institutions/individuals/group of individuals for the developments of desert area; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

- (a) to (d) The Government has undertaken a number of policy based measures to combat land degradation and desertification, promote afforestation, improve soil health, conserve water, and ensuring the overall sustainability of desert regions, such as ;
- (i) Publication of Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas of India, by Space Applications Centre (SAC) Indian Space Research Organisation, Ahmedabad, which provides the state-wise extent of land degradation and desertification in India. The Atlas by providing important data and technical inputs, serves as an important tool in planning and implementation of schemes aimed at restoration of land. An online portal has also been developed with the help of Space Application Centre (SAC), Ahmedabad for correlation of degraded area of land with the processes causing degradation.
 - (ii) Setting up of a Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Land Management (CoE-SLM) set up at the Indian Council for Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) Dehradun to engage and enable parties at international, national and local levels in addressing land degradation related issues with the ultimate goal of achieving land degradation neutrality (LDN). It also aims at enhanced South-South Cooperation, knowledge sharing, promotion of best practices, sharing of India's experiences with cost-

effective and sustainable land management strategies and developing ideas for transformative projects and programs and capacity building.

- (iii) Research by ICFRE – Arid Forest Research Institute (ICFRE-AFRI), Jodhpur, in forestry to develop technologies aimed at increasing vegetative cover and conserving biodiversity in the hot arid and semi-arid regions of India.
- (iv) At the United Nations Framework Convention to Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Paris (COP), 2015 in Paris, India joined the voluntary Bonn Challenge and now it has pledged to restore 26 million hectares of degraded forest land by 2030..
- (v) Implementation of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) which contributes to desertification control by improving water availability in arid and semi-arid regions, by encouraging water conservation practices and efficient irrigation with focus on providing irrigation solutions, especially in arid and semi-arid regions like Rajasthan, to improve agricultural productivity and support afforestation efforts.

In addition to these, several initiatives for increasing and improving green cover and thereby combating desertification are being taken up through various afforestation related schemes implemented by the Government of India. The Ministry also supports the States/UTs for various afforestation activities through Centrally Sponsored Scheme for conservation, development and promotion of forests under its major schemes namely, National Mission for a Green India (GIM) and Forest Fire Protection & Management Scheme (FFPM). Further the Compensatory Afforestation fund under the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) contributes to afforestation and consequently combatting desertification. In addition to these, State Governments also implement various schemes for tree plantation/afforestation to address land degradation. These programmes and schemes are implemented through the line departments, local bodies, Joint Forest management Committees etc., thus ensuring support of local institutions/individuals/ group of individuals in this endeavour. Combatting desertification and land degradation is a dynamic process as the interplay between environmental conditions, human activities, and the impacts of land degradation are fluid and hence require regular monitoring and evaluation of relevant adaptation, mitigation strategies and the support of all stakeholders
