

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1293
ANSWERED ON:10.12.2003
UNEP REPORT ON ASIAN BROWN CLOUD
GADDE RAMAMOCHAN;SADASHIVRAO DADOBA MANDLIK

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government are aware of the report of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) about the presence of a three kilometer thick layer of pollutants dubbed 'Asian Brown Cloud' over South Asia as reported in the Hindu dated November 19, 2003;
- (b) if so, the details of the report;
- (c) the response of the government thereto; and
- (d) the action taken/ proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT)

(a)& (b) : Yes sir. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) used the term 'Asian Brown Cloud' first in August, 2002 referring to a layer of atmospheric pollutants noticed over the Indian Ocean during an observational campaign in winter months of 1996-1999. The report attributed that the pollutant layer was being caused by biomass burning over South Asia and had significant climatic impacts.

(c)& (d): To examine the UNEP report, the Government of India constituted an expert committee with Director General, Indian Meteorological Department as its Chairman. The Committee, in its findings, submitted that uncertainties existed in interpretation of observed data and neither the cause nor the impact could be conclusively ascertained. The UNEP itself later called it 'Atmospheric Brown Cloud', admitting that this was not necessarily linked to South Asian region. The India Meteorological Department is setting up a network of stations making observations of aerosols and other pollutant gases so as to identify the amount of pollution that is locally generated and the amount that is transported over long distances across international boundaries and prepare a budget of atmospheric aerosols over the region.