

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:493

ANSWERED ON:25.11.2005

COLLABORATION IN AGRICULTURAL BIO- TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH

Patil Shri Balasaheb Vikhe

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

- (a) whether India and the US agreed in June, 2004 to expand collaboration in agricultural bio-technology research and development to improve crop varieties resistant to disease, drought and pests;
- (b) whether Minister for Science and Technology agreed to constitute a Joint Steering Committee to formulate a plan to cooperate in Science and Technology;
- (c) whether a statement of intent to support joint R&D projects was signed by Israel's Vice Prime Minister and India's Minister for Science and Technology;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the progress made so far in this regard with the present status?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL)

- (a) Yes, Sir, A letter of intent has been signed in the month of June 2004 between the Government of India and the United States of America to expand cooperation in agricultural biotechnology research and development. The programme will encourage the creation of partnership to bring together Indian and US institutions to pursue agricultural biotechnology research projects of mutual interest. The objective of these projects is to increase the range of safe and environmentally sound technological options for producing improved crop varieties with pest and disease resistance and drought tolerance.
- (b) An Indo-US Joint Working Group has been constituted to implement the programme. The first meeting of the JWG was held on December 8-9, 2004 at New Delhi. The JWG identified development of biotic and abiotic stress tolerance and nutritional enhancement in crops as important areas of collaboration. Recently, a collaborative project on development of drought and salinity tolerance in rice has been initiated.
- (c) Yes, Sir, A Statement of Intent on India-Israel Industrial R&D Cooperation Initiative was signed on 8th Dec., 2004 in New Delhi by Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology and Ocean Development, Govt. of India and the Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Industry, Trade and Labour on behalf of Government of Israel.
- (d) The Statement of Intent envisaged to establish an India-Israel Industrial R&D Cooperation Initiative (IIRDCI) with the main objective of providing support for approved joint industrial R&D projects between entities of India and Israel involving at least one industrial partner from each side, aimed at the development of products or processes to be commercialized in the global market. It was also envisaged that a Memorandum of Understanding on IIRDCI was to be signed soon.
- (e) As a follow up of the Statement of Intent, a Memorandum of Understanding on Industrial R&D Cooperation Initiative was signed on 30th May, 2005 at Jerusalem by Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology and Ocean Development on behalf of Government of India and the Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Industry, Trade and Labour on behalf of Government of Israel. To begin with five areas have been identified through mutual consultations namely - Biotechnology, Nanotechnology, Water Management, Space and Aeronautical Science & Technology and Non-Conventional Energy Resources particularly solar energy.