

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:812
ANSWERED ON:31.07.2006
TASK FORCE ON AGRICULTURE .
Deora Shri Milind Murlu

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether a new Task Force on Agriculture and Animal Husbandry has been formed recently;
- (b) If so, the composition and its terms of reference;
- (c) Whether any meeting of the Task Force has since been held;
- (d) If so, the details thereof;
- (e) Whether deliberations on formulating the first ever National Policy for farmers have been initiated; and
- (f) If so, the details thereof? ANSWER

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA)

(a) & (b): No new `Task Force on Agriculture and Animal Husbandry` as such has been recently constituted. However, the Government had set up in February, 2004 `National Commission on Farmers` to examine various issues confronting Indian farmers and to suggest appropriate interventions for improving the economic viability and sustainability of diversified agriculture including horticulture, livestock, dairying and fisheries for doubling of farmers income. The Commission was reconstituted in November 2004 under the Chairmanship of Prof. M. S. Swaminathan. The composition and the Terms of Reference assigned to it are given in the attached statement.

(c) to (f): The Commission has had several meetings since its establishment to deliberate on different issues confronting Indian agriculture and allied sectors. The Commission has so far submitted four Reports to the Government, the last of which contains Draft National Policy for Farmers. The Commission is in the process of wider consultations and the views emerging on the Draft Policy will be incorporated in the Fifth and final Report of the Commission.

Government of India Ministry of Agriculture Department of Agriculture and Cooperation. New Delhi, dated the 18th November, 2004

RESOLUTION

In partial modification of this Ministry's Resolution No. 8-2/2003-Policy (ES) dated 10th February, 2004 setting up of National Commission on Farmers, the Government of India have decided to reconstitute the Commission with the following Terms of Reference and composition.

? Work out a comprehensive medium-term strategy for food and nutrition security in the country in order to move towards the goal of universal food security, over time.

? Propose methods of enhancing the productivity, profitability, stability and sustainability of the major farming systems of the country, based on an agro-ecological and agro-climatic approach and the harnessing of frontier technologies.

? Bring about synergy between technology and public policy and recommend measures for enhancing income and employment potential in rural areas through diversification, application of appropriate technology including IT for information on market, weather, credit facilities and e-commerce, training and market reforms.

? Suggest measures to attract and retain educated youth in farming and recommend for this purpose methods of technological upgrading of crop husbandry, horticulture, animal husbandry, fisheries (inland and marine), agro-forestry and agro-processing and associated marketing infrastructure.

? Suggest comprehensive policy reforms designed to enhance investment in agri-research, substantially increase flow of rural credit to farmers including small and marginal, triggering agricultural growth led economic progress, which can lead to opportunities for a healthy and productive life to rural families;

? Formulate special programmes for dryland farming for farmers in the arid and semi-arid regions, as well as for farmers in hilly and coastal areas in order to link the livelihood security of the farming communities living in such areas with the ecological security of such regions. Review in this context all ongoing Technology Missions like those relating to pulses, oilseeds, maize, cotton, watershed etc. and recommend methods of promoting horizontal integration of vertically structured programmes. Also, suggest credit-linked insurance schemes, which can protect resource poor farm families from unbearable risks. Further, suggest methods of strengthening and streamlining the National Horticulture Development Board.

? Suggest measures for enhancing the quality and cost competitiveness of farm commodities, so as to make them globally competitive through providing necessary facilities and application of frontier sciences and promote quality literacy for codex alimentarius standard, sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures among farmers through reorienting and retooling extension machinery. Also, suggest methods of providing adequate protection to farmers from imports, when international prices fall sharply.

? Recommend measures for the credit, knowledge, skill, technological and marketing empowerment of women, taking into consideration the increasing feminization of agriculture and the proposed conferment of right to land ownership.

? Suggest methods of empowering male and female members of elected local bodies to discharge effectively their role in conserving and improving the ecological foundations for sustainable agriculture, like land, water, agro-biodiversity and the atmosphere, with priority attention to irrigation water.

? Consider any other issue, which is relevant to the above, or is specially referred to the Commission by Government.

COMPOSITION

2. The composition of the Reconstituted Commission will be as under: -

Chairman

Prof. M.S. Swaminathan (In the rank of Union Cabinet Minister)

Full-time Members

Dr. Ram Badan Singh } In the rank of Secretary to the Govt. of India
Shri Y.C. Nanda) In the rank of Secretary to the Govt. of India

Part-time Members

Dr. R.L. Pitale
Shri Jagdish Pradhan, Naupada
Ms. Chanda Nimbkar
Shri Atul Kumar Anjan

(These Members would be in an honorary capacity and would not draw any salary).

Member Secretary

Shri Atul Sinha, In the rank of Secretary to Govt. of India
IAS (Retd)

3. Prof. Swaminathan would work entirely in an honorary capacity and without any financial compensation. He would remain in Chennai but would visit Delhi (NCF Headquarters) for a week to ten days at a time to complete the work on hand and shall be reimbursed for his travel and accommodation expenses as per his entitlement.

4. The Commission will submit a medium term policy for food and nutrition security in the country in order to move towards the goal of universal food security overtime within the next three months and will submit its recommendations on other terms of reference as soon as practicable and in any case on or before 13-10-2006. The Commission may submit interim report (s) on any of the terms of reference it may deem fit or expected of it.

5. Other terms and conditions notified in the Resolution dated 10-2-2004 would remain unaltered.

6. The Government of India trust that the State Governments/administrations of Union Territories will extend to the Commission their fullest cooperation and assistance.

(K.D. Sinha)
Joint Secretary to the Government of India