

**11**

**STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
(2011-2012)**

**FIFTEENTH LOK SABHA**

**MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

[Action Taken on the recommendations contained in the Tenth Report  
(15<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of  
External Affairs for the year 2011-12]

**ELEVENTH REPORT**



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT  
NEW DELHI**

***March, 2012/Chaitra, 1934 (Saka)***

**ELEVENTH REPORT**  
**STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**  
**(2011-2012)**

**(FIFTEENTH LOK SABHA)**

**MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

[Action Taken on the recommendations contained in the Tenth Report  
(15<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of  
External Affairs for the year 2011-12]

***Presented to Lok Sabha on 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2012***

***Laid in Rajya Sabha on 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2012***



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT**  
**NEW DELHI**  
***March, 2012/Chaitra, 1934 (Saka)***

**COEA NO. 92**

***Price : Rs. ....***

© **2012 by Lok Sabha Secretariat**

Published under Rule 382 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct  
of Business in Lok Sabha (Thirteenth Edition) and Printed by

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE 2011-2012.....	(iii)
INTRODUCTION.....	(v)
Chapter I      Report.....	1
Chapter II      Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by the Government.....	24
Chapter III     Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's Replies.....	52
Chapter IV     Recommendations/Observations in respect of which Replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration.....	53
Chapter V      Recommendations/Observations in respect of which Final Replies of the Government are still awaited.....	57

## APPENDICES

I.	Minutes of the sitting of the Committee held on 28.03.2012.....	64
II.	Analysis of Action Taken by Government on the Recommendations/Observations contained in the Tenth Report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs (15 <sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha) .....	66

## COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2011-12)

**Shri Ananth Kumar** - **Chairman**

### **MEMBERS LOK SABHA**

<b>Sl.No.</b>	<b>Name</b>
2.	Shri Anandrao Adsul
3.	Shri S. Alagiri
4.	Shri Anto Antony
5.	Dr. Shafiqur Rahman Barq
6.	Shri Bhudeo Choudhary
7.	Shri T.K.S. Elangovan
8.	Shri P. Karunakaran
9.	Shri Pradeep Majhi
10.	Shri Inder Singh Namdhari
11.	Shri Zafar Ali Naqvi
12.	Shri Rajendrasinh Rana (Raju Rana)
13.	Shri K. Chandrasekhar Rao*
14.	Shri Takam Sanjoy
15.	Smt. Sushila Saroj
16.	Dr. Bhola Singh
17.	Shri Janardhana Swamy
18.	Dr. Shashi Tharoor
19.	Vacant
20.	Vacant
21.	Vacant

## **RAJYA SABHA**

22. Shri Birendra Prasad Baishya
23. Shri A.W. Rabi Bernard
24. Shri Murli Deora
25. Shri H.K. Dua
26. Dr. K.P. Ramalingam
27. Dr. Bharatkumar Raut
28. Dr. Karan Singh §
29. Shri Shivanand Tiwari
30. Shri Tarun Vijay
31. Shri Shreegopal Vyas

## **SECRETARIAT**

1. Shri U.S. Saxena - Joint Secretary
2. Shri K. D. Muley - Director
3. Dr. Ram Raj Rai - Additional Director
4. Shri A. Sivanandam - Under Secretary
5. Ms. Kiran Bhargava - Executive Assistant

---

\* Shri K. Chandrasekhar Rao nominated to the Committee on External Affairs w.e.f. 25.11.2011.

§ Ceased to be the Member of the Committee due to expiry of term of Dr. Karan Singh, Member Rajya Sabha w.e.f. 27.01.12 and re-nominated to the Committee w.e.f. 02.02.2012.

## INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman, Standing Committee on External Affairs (2011-12) having been authorized by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, present this 11<sup>th</sup> Report (15<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha) on Action Taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the 10<sup>th</sup> Report (15<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha) of the Committee on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the year 2011-12.

2. The 10<sup>th</sup> Report was presented on 29<sup>th</sup> August, 2011. The Action Taken Replies of the Government on all the recommendations/observations contained in the Report were received on 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2011.

3. The Committee considered and adopted this Action Taken Report at their sitting held on 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2012. The Minutes of the sitting of the Committee have been given at Appendix-I to the Report.

4. An analysis of the Action Taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the 10<sup>th</sup> Report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs (15<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha) is given in Appendix-II.

**NEW DELHI**  
***28 March, 2012***  
***08 Chaitra, 1934 (Saka)***

**ANANTH KUMAR,**  
***Chairman,***  
***Standing Committee on External Affairs***

## **CHAPTER – I**

### **REPORT**

This Report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs deals with the Action Taken by Government on the observations/recommendations contained in their Tenth Report on Demands for Grants (2011-12) of the Ministry of External Affairs which was presented to Lok Sabha and laid in Rajya Sabha on 29<sup>th</sup> August, 2011.

2. The Action taken notes have been received from the Ministry of External Affairs on all the 24 observations/recommendations contained in the Report. These have been categorized as follows: -

- (i) Recommendations/Observations, which have been accepted by the Government.**

Recommendation Nos.1-3,6-10,12,13,16,18 and 19-24.

**Total-18**

- (ii) Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government replies.**

-Nil-

- (iii) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration.**

Recommendation Nos. 11 and 14.

**Total- 02**

- (iv) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited.**

Recommendation Nos. 4,5,15 and 17.

**Total-04**

**3. The Committee desire that final replies to the recommendation/observations for which only interim replies have been given by the government should be furnished within three months of the presentation of this Report.**

4. The Committee will now deal with some of the replies received from the Government, which need reiteration or merit comments.



## **(Recommendation No.2)**

5. The Committee had noted that a major portion of Ministry's budgetary allocation was being utilized in promoting technical and economic cooperation with friendly countries by way of taking up various developmental projects and programmes in those countries. The Committee had, therefore, desired that the Ministry of External Affairs should make proper coordination with these friendly countries and get requisite governmental clearances so as to ensure timely execution and completion of the projects. In the same context, it was also noted that the Committee in their previous Reports had recommended for adoption of practices of overall sound financial management particularly in terms of the projects at various stages since inception to its delivery, the delay in execution had resulted in low utilization of allocated funds. The Committee had once again reiterated that the Ministry should strengthen accounting management within the Finance Division and the overall budgetary management to include financial reporting and internal control etc. in order to ensure better control of expenditure and utilization of allocated resources.

6. The Ministry of External Affairs in their action taken reply have stated as under:

"The Divisions concerned invariably liaise with the foreign governments and/or the authorities concerned in those countries, through the local Indian Missions/Posts, and through the agencies implementing the projects. This ensures that necessary coordination is in place. Besides, Project Monitoring Committees have been instituted to monitor timely execution of the projects. However, in spite of our best efforts, local issues/factors which are beyond the control of the Ministry, sometimes lead to delays.

In general, the projects finances are handled by the various Divisions of the Ministry, in consultation with the Finance Division. As soon as the commitments are made known to the Finance Division by the spending Divisions, all efforts are made to make available the required funds so that the projects do not suffer time/cost overruns for want of funds. However, this is also subject to the overall budgetary ceiling communicated by the Ministry of Finance. The project handling Divisions are required to coordinate with the respective project authorities to ensure that, as far as possible, neither savings nor excesses over budget occur. Also, quarterly expenditure overview meetings are taken by the Additional Secretary and Financial Advisor to have a close watch over the expenditure and requirements. Nevertheless, the Committee's suggestions are noted and spending Divisions would be sensitized accordingly."

**7. The Committee have been continuously stressing that the Replies to the recommendations made in the Reports of the Committee should be comprehensive and not inconclusive, vague or**

couched in general terms like 'noted' or 'accepted'. However, the Committee note that the Ministry has once again submitted stereotype, vague and general replies to the several recommendations made by the Committee using similar phrases. The Committee expects concrete action on the part of the Ministry rather than mere such assurances. The Committee therefore, once again reiterate that the Ministry should focus on the matter and submit a specific and conclusive replies stating the actual action taken or proposed to be taken by them in context of the recommendations/observations made by the Committee.

**(Recommendation No. 4)**

8. The Committee had found that out of 37 passport offices, 18 passport offices were operating from rental buildings. Out of these 18 rented offices, Ministry had purchased plots of land for 9 offices. Besides, the plots had been identified at three places namely Bhopal, Trivandrum and Jammu and the Ministry were reportedly in the process to liaise with the respective State Governments at those places for allotment of land. The Committee had specifically drew the attention of the Ministry towards the promise made by the Ministry regarding completion of construction of building for RPO Guwahati by December 2011 and had reiterated that the Ministry of External Affairs to expedite a time-bound construction of RPO buildings at the places where the land had been purchased including one at RPO Guwahati and speed up the process for the remaining places. The Committee had also wanted to be apprised of the status of constructions of building at those places.

9. The Ministry of External Affairs in their action taken reply have stated as under:

"Regarding completion of construction of Passport Office building at Guwahati, by December, 2011, it is informed that Ministry has hoped that after approval of drawings, the project would be completed in 2 years time CPWD had sought some clarifications for revision of drawings for deletion of the sections affected in the event of opening of PSK (as recommended by "the committee" during its study visit to PO Guwahati in July, 2010). The PSK system is in initial stages, hence, its exact impact on the space requirements could not be assessed with perfection.

Meanwhile, Ministry felt that due to shortage of accommodation for PO staff and also Branch Secretariat, Guwahati, is functioning from rented premises, this plot of land is insufficient. Therefore, Ministry is seeking a bigger plot of nearly 1 acre in the nearby location from State Government. A request in this regard has been made to Chief Secretary, Assam Government, who directed the Collector, District Kamrup to locate another plot as requisitioned by Ministry. Therefore, if State Government would be able to allot another plot the existing plot would be disposed off.

As far as status of acquiring land at Bhopal, Trivandrum and Jammu is concerned, the status is as follows:

- a. **Bhopal:** Government of Madhya Pradesh has now formally allotted a plot of land admeasuring 2044.8 Sq M on lease basis for a premium of Rs. 8,58,73,000/- (Rupees Eight Crore Fifty Eight Lakh Seventy Three Thousand only). The plot is located in a prime locality of Bhopal at Arera Hills. The process of making the payment to State Government is underway.
- b. **Trivandrum:** State Government of Kerala changed its stand on allotment of a plot of land due to growing demand from various State Government and Gol offices. It has now proposed to construct a building, in which space would be allotted as per requirement of individual offices of various State and Centre Government Ministries. They have asked Ministry to intimate space requirements for the Passport Office also. But the past experience of Ministry in purchasing the built-up properties from state governments has not been that good. Passport Office is a public dealing office and has specific requirements. State Government would construct space but not as per our special requirements. Therefore, this proposal of State Government is not found viable. Ministry would like to purchase a plot of land and construct a building exclusively for Passport Office.
- c. **Jammu:** State Government has identified a plot of land admeasuring 1300 Sq M. Ministry has to check the feasibility of this plot of land. The average plot of land area acquired by the Ministry is in the range of 1800 Sq M e.g. Surat 3000 Sq M, Amritsar 1672 Sq M, Bhopal 2044 Sq M, Jalandhar 1430 Sq M, Pune 1602 Sq M and Dehradun 2594 Sq M. Currently Passport Office is running from a rented building. The rented area is approximately 500 Sq M (carpet area) in addition we would need nearly 500 Sq M more carpet area for locating PSK in the same building. In addition to this there is space required for walls, staircases, lifts, Electrical Sub-station, DG Set, parking for cars and two-wheelers etc. A team from Ministry is going in the first week of December to check the suitability of the plot and tentative permissible building control parameters.

As desired by the committee, status of plots ongoing projects as well as the places where plots of land have been acquired by the Ministry, is as under:

1. **Vizag:** The Passport office has been shifted to new building.
2. **Mumbai:** Construction of this project is in full swing and CPWD has assured to complete the project in 2012.

3. **Surat:** Construction of Passport Office building and 22 Staff residences is going on at full swing.

4. **Jalandhar:** Drawings approved by the Ministry, have been submitted to Punjab Urban Development Authority (PUDA) in July 2011 and approval is still awaited.

5. **Srinagar:** CPWD has been requested to revise concept drawings because, as per Passport Seva Project (PSP) based on Public Private Partnership (PPP) model envisages co-location of Passport Seva Kendra (PSK) in the Passport Office building which was not earlier in the concept plan. Revised drawings are awaited.

6. **Dehradun:** State government has not handed over the possession of the plot of land as the area available at site was less than allotted. Passport Officer has been directed to sort out the matter at the earliest.

7. **Pune:** CPWD has been requested to provide the concept drawings, which are awaited.

8. **Amritsar:** NBCC had submitted revised concept drawings and Preliminary Estimate amounting to Rs., 14.3 crores, which are under consideration in the Ministry.

9. **Guwahati:** State Government has been requested to provide an alternate plot of land admeasuring at least 1 acre so that Passport Office, Branch Secretariat Office and staff residences could be constructed. In this connection, Regional Passport Officer, Guwahati met with Chief Minister, Assam, Principal Secretary (Revenue), DC, Kamrup for immediate allotment. Deputy Secretary (Revenue), Govt. of Assam issued letter No. RSS.342/2002/32 dated 21/09/2011 enclosed the request letter of Ministry to Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup to furnish a suitable proposal. RPO is constantly pursuing the matter with state government. A suitable proposal is awaited from State Government, Assam.”

10. The Committee draw the attention of the Ministry to the promise made by the Ministry regarding completion of the said project by December 2011. The Committee are dismayed to note that after the lapse of the proposed deadline for completion of the project relating to

construction of building for Regional Passport Office, Guwahati, however, the Ministry has now felt that the plot of land in possession is insufficient and now, the State Government has been requested to provide an alternate bigger plot of land. The Committee, therefore, desire that no more time should now be devoted in the name of locating another piece of land for RPO Guwahati and the Ministry should make all possible efforts to settle the issue and start the work considering all the requirements including opening of PSK in Guwahati. Similarly, the issue of acquiring land at Bhopal, Trivandrum and Jammu should also be settled amicably with the concerned State Governments in the shortest possible time and work should start without any further delay.

The Committee also desire that the Government should explore the possibility to establish PSKs in the newly proposed building of RPOs well within the building control parameters of the concerned localities. The Committee further desire that a clear cut decision about the change in drawings of construction of Passport Offices in progress should be taken in view of the requirements of the new Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) at those places. The Committee also desire that the decision should be taken quickly so that the work on all those projects be completed without any significant time and cost overrun.

**(Recommendation No. 5)**

11. Taking into account the grievances of Indian citizens as well as foreigners in respect of delivery of efficient and fast services by Indian Missions/Posts abroad, the Committee had urged the Ministry to establish a centralized monitoring system at the Headquarters to keep check/ensure delivery of efficient and fast services provided by those Indian establishments abroad. The Committee desired that the public interface should be improved and the officials/officers posted at such places should undergo not only orientation programme but also be trained in soft skills and should be well informed about the procedures and legalities. The Committee had also desired that adequate training should be provided to the staff

attending public counters and handling telephone. They should also be adequately aware of the procedures so that the information provided to service seekers/applicants was accurate and updated. Apart from communication links like telephone, call centres etc, the Ministry should take help of social media on the web to acquire feedback and to know the grievances/suggestions of the people to make the services better.

12. The Ministry of External Affairs in their action taken reply have stated as under:

“Following are the details of the action taken on the Recommendation:

1. One of the primary activities of the Foreign Service Institute is the training of Indian Foreign Service (IFS) Probationers with the objective of preparing them to handle the wide range of tasks that they would be required to perform during their professional careers, both in Missions and Posts abroad as well as in India. Probationers are duly trained in the procedures and legalities regarding relevant subjects. They are also imparted training in soft skills including representational skills.

2. In addition, FSI has diversified its activities to include training programmes for staff and officers of the Ministry of External Affairs at different levels, in particular, refresher programmes before they proceed abroad on posting. At the Section Officers' level, FSI conducts refresher courses, which include soft skills and communication skills, in addition to special sessions on dealing with general public on Consular, Passport and Visa matters while posted in missions abroad.

3. Similar courses are also mandatory for Assistants, UDCs and LDCs of MEA before they proceed abroad on transfer. In addition, training in Integrated Mission's Accounting Software (IMAS) is compulsory for posting abroad for all levels upto Section Officers. Since January, 2011, four Refresher Courses have been held, apart from seven IMAS training programmes.

4. FSI has also conducted a training programme for departmentally promoted clerks from Group D from August 1 to 23, 2011. In addition to basic office procedure, accounts and basic computer training, they were also trained on handling telephone and on Basic English speaking, in order to provide better services to applicants and information seekers, while they are posted in missions abroad.

5. FSI has conducted one-day training sessions on Right to Information Act, 2005 so that MEA officers/officials are familiar with the various aspects of the Act and take requisite action on receiving requests for information from the general public.

6. The Joint Secretary level officers of MEA were briefed on the “New Public Diplomacy Tools” as part of their Mid-Career Training Programme in May, 2011.”

**13. In view of the grievances of Indian Citizens as well as foreign nationals, the Committee had specifically urged the Ministry to establish a centralized monitoring system at Headquarters to keep check/ensure delivery of efficient and fast services provided by the Indian establishments abroad. But in their reply, the Ministry in the name of action taken on the recommendation of the Committee has simply stated the facts based on the routine type of training being imparted to the officials at various levels and there is no mention of any fresh initiative to improve the delivery of services by Indian posts/missions abroad. The Committee have a firm view that establishment of a centralized monitoring system at the Headquarters will certainly improve the situation in this regard and therefore, this should be undertaken on priority basis.**

**Though the Committee take note of the endeavours made by the Ministry regarding training and refresher programme for the officials before they proceed abroad, the Committee, however, desire that Foreign Service Institute (FSI) should also conduct refresher courses at all the levels of the Officers and staff to inculcate soft skills, communication skills along with the sessions on dealing with general public on passport, visa and consular matters. The Committee also desire that the briefing and orientation programme should be arranged for the local staff engaged with Indian Missions/Posts, if they deal with public.**

**(Recommendation No.11)**

14. The Committee had noted that the project of e-passport was supposed to be rolled out in general category by the end of year 2009. But the project had been delayed due to pendency of fresh security clearance in respect of a technically qualified bidder from the Ministry of Home Affairs. Moreover, discussions were going on to devise a passport which would be tamper proof and which could not be forged. The parameter for biometrics had also not been standardized. The Committee had, therefore, desired that MEA should take up the matter at the highest level so that all the discussions were completed and such an ambitious project might reach at the implementation level without any further delay.

15. The Ministry of External Affairs in their action taken reply have stated as under:

“As noted by the Committee, the project of implementation of e-passport has been delayed due to pendency of fresh security clearance in respect of a technically qualified bidder from the Ministry of Home Affairs. Consultations are still going on with Ministry of Home Affairs and other security agencies to devise a passport which would be tamper proof and which could not be forged. E-passports have been partially introduced for Diplomatic and Official passports since 5 August, 2008.”

**16. Considering the importance of e-passport project, the Committee had desired that the Ministry should take up the matter so that the project could reach the implementation level without any further delay. But, from the reply of the Ministry it is evident that no progress has been made so far since last year and the consultation process with Ministry of Home Affairs is still on, without any specific timeframe. The Committee therefore, desire that the matter should be taken at the highest level so that the Ministry of Home Affairs may arrive at some clear decision on the issue of security so that such an important project is not delayed further.**



**(Recommendation No.14)**

17. The Committee had noted that the ICCR had engaged itself proactively over the last several years to project India's soft power and undertaken a rapid expansion of its activities and outreach both within and outside India. The Council was maintaining 25 Indian Cultural Centres abroad including the 10 Cultural Centres established during the last 3 years. The proposal for establishing 12 more Cultural Centres at overseas locations were under active consideration of the Ministry. The Committee had regularly been recommending to set up more Centres of ICCR in the country and abroad also besides diversifying the activities of the existing Centres. But, the Committee had expressed their concern to note that there had been inordinate delays in opening of Regional Centres in India and Cultural Centres overseas. For example, the opening of an Indian Cultural Centre at Washington had been under consideration for more than 5 years. The Committee had, therefore, expected that the Ministry to take appropriate steps for completion of all the pending projects in a time-bound manner. The Committee had further expressed that the responsibility of the Ministry was not just to open a centre in particular part of the country or world but sufficient staff should also be ensured for the proper functioning of the Centre. The Committee had, therefore, desired that in all newly set up Centres abroad, posts should be created to appoint persons who had sound knowledge of cultural heritage of India as well as of countries covered by the Centre so that they might be able to form a cultural link between India and that particular country(ies). The Committee had desired to be apprised of the initiatives taken in that regard.

18. The Ministry of External Affairs in their action taken reply have stated as under:

"Presently, the Council is maintaining 37 Indian Culture Centres and sub centres abroad. The proposal for establishing 08 more Culture Centers are under active consideration including ICC, Washington and Paris (list enclosed). Proposal to open the Centre has already been sent to Embassy of India, Washington and finalization of a suitable premise is still under consideration.

The delay in opening new centers / completion of pending projects could be partly attributed to finalizing suitable premises in consultation with the Ministry and the Mission.

The Council deputed India based Staff i.e. Directors, Dy Directors, Programme Assistants and India based Teachers in the stream of Yoga, Tabla, Bharatnatyam Dance, Hindi, Kathak Dance etc. for conducting classes in the Centre to promote Indian Culture through the classes in Dance and Music. Through regular interaction & guidance, the Centres are becoming hubs for promoting Indian Culture & heritage by organizing exhibitions of art & sculpture, Literary events such as Book Reading, Poetry sessions, Lectures on wide range of topics like Philosophy, History, Sociology, Economic Trends etc. Indian Festivals – Holi and Diwali – are

being celebrating as joint programmes with local institutions/resources resulting to form a cultural link between Indian and that particular country/ies. More importantly the Centres act as hubs for dialogue and interaction between cultural trends and personalities both India and the host country.

A number of Centres have already started new activities such as Music events, Book Launches, Kavi Sammelans etc. The India based teachers have been encouraged to do 'outreach activities' including visits to other cities and joint programmes with local institutions.

Local resources are being increasingly utilized, such as using local experts to teach Indian dance, music, yoga etc. as and when required. Exchange of Cultural troupes are also spreading an awareness of cultural importance, values & tradition and foster a close link.

Recommendations of the Committee regarding appointment of persons with sound knowledge of cultural heritage of India and the host countries have been noted by the ICCR and followed in all such appointments. Council has appointed Directors of newly opened Centres keeping in view the recommendations of the Committee and in compliance with decisions of the Statutory Bodies of the Council.

With regard to creation of posts for Indian Cultural Centres Abroad (ICCs), the Council had submitted in December 2010 the proposal for creation of additional posts of the levels Director (Counselor/ First Secretary/ Second Secretary) and Dy. Director (Third Secretary level) five posts for each level totaling to 20 to run the Indian Cultural Centres abroad. The Ministry External Affairs sought additional information with respect to the level of the post at each cultural centre. ICCR in response on 15.6.2011 had stated that the level of the Director of the cultural centre would be decided keeping in view the size of the Mission and cultural diversity of the accredited country. Thereafter, MEA, on 22.6.2011 returned the file with the remarks that in view of the circular on economy measures banning creation of posts, the proposal for creation of these posts may be taken up in the next financial year. In view of the strong recommendation of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on MEA, the proposal for creation of posts would again being submitted to MEA.

At present ICCR has 14 Regional offices. Five more Regional Offices are proposed to be opened at Bhopal, Ahmedabad, Jammu, Srinagar and Patna. The Regional Offices at Bhopal and Ahmedabad are expected to be operational by December 2011.

#### **LIST OF INDIAN CULTURAL CENTERS ABROAD**

1. Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture, Cairo, Egypt
2. The Tagore Centre, Berlin, Germany
3. Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture, Port Louis, Mauritius
4. Indian Cultural Centre, Paramaribo, Suriname

5. Indian Cultural Centre Georgetown, Guyana
6. Jawaharlal Nehru Indian Cultural Centre, Jakarta, Indonesia
7. Indian Cultural Centre, Bali, Indonesia
8. Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Centre, Moscow, Russia
9. The Nehru Centre, London, United Kingdom
10. Indian Cultural Centre, Astana, Kazakhstan
11. Lal Bahadur Shastri Centre for Indian Culture, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
12. Indian Cultural Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa
13. Indian Cultural Centre, Durban, South Africa
14. Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Cultural Co-operation, Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago
15. Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo, Sri Lanka
16. Indian Cultural Centre, Dushanbe, Tajikistan
17. Indian Cultural Centre, Suva, Fiji
18. Indian Cultural Centre, Lautoka, Fiji
19. Indian Cultural Centre, Kabul, Afghanistan
20. Indian Cultural Centre, Beijing, China
21. Indian Cultural Centre, Kathmandu, Nepal
22. Indian Cultural Centre, Bangkok, Thailand
23. Indian Cultural Centre, Tokyo, Japan
24. Indian Cultural Centre, Abu Dhabi, UAE
25. Indian Cultural Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
26. Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre, Dhaka, Bangladesh
27. Nehru Wangchuck Cultural Centre, Thimphu, Bhutan
28. Indian Cultural Centre, Mexico city, USA
29. Indian Cultural Centre, Yangon, Myanmar
30. Indian Cultural Centre, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania
31. Indian Cultural Centre, Seoul, South Korea
32. Indian Cultural Centre, Prague, Czech Republic
33. Indian Cultural Centre, Budapest, Hungary
34. Indian Cultural Centre, Male, Maldives
35. Indian Cultural Centre, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
36. Indian Cultural Centre, Sao Paulo, Brazil
37. The Gandhi Centre, The Hague, Netherlands

### **CULTURAL CENTRES WHICH ARE UNDER PROCESS**

1. Indian Cultural Centre, Washington
2. Indian Cultural Centre, Sydney
3. Indian Cultural Centre, Singapore
4. Indian Cultural Centre, Paris
5. Indian Cultural Centre, Buenos Aires, Argentina
6. Indian Cultural Centre, Toronto
7. Indian Cultural Centre, Hanoi
8. Indian Cultural Centre, Lagos

19. The Committee had expressed their concern over inordinate delays in opening of Regional Offices in India and Cultural Centres of ICCR abroad. The Committee had specifically pointed out the case of the opening of Indian Cultural Centre at Washington. The Ministry has replied that the proposal to open the Centre has already been sent to Embassy of India, Washington and finalization of suitable premises is still under consideration. The Ministry has further stated that the delay in opening other new Centres/completion of the pending projects could be partly attributed to finalizing suitable premises in consultation with the Ministry and the Mission. In this context, the Committee feel that the issue of opening of the Cultural Centre at Washington has already faced inordinate delay and is under consideration since very long as the Committee in their 5<sup>th</sup> Report (2001-02 of 13<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha) had also taken up the issue. The Committee, therefore, strongly urge the Ministry of External Affairs to seriously look into the issue of acquisition of property/plot and property management, relating to all proposed overseas centres of ICCR.

**(Recommendation No.15)**

20. The Committee had observed that ICCR had been designated as the principal/coordinating organization in the country to take welfare measures for all foreign students in India. The Committee had also noted that in order to provide better services to the scholars studying under ICCR scholarships, an e-portal was to be set up with the facility of interaction between ICCR, institutions and scholars/students. The Committee had expressed their hope that proper feedback mechanism would also be established to address the grievances posed by scholars/students and ICCR would act as a guardian and facilitator for them ensuring their security and facilities being provided to them including accommodation etc. through their respective universities/institutions etc. The Committee had also desired that besides looking into the various aspect of welfare of foreign students, the

Council/Ministry would consider widening of the scope of scholarships and increase in their numbers also.

21. The Ministry of External Affairs in their action taken reply have stated as under:

“It may please be noted that no such e-portal was to be set up by ICCR. Ministry of HRD was mandated to set-up the e-portal with the help of EdCIL, together with a helpline.

Foreign Secretary had desired that ICCR’s alumni data base would be launched at the same time as the establishment of the e-portal. We are awaiting a notification from Ministry of HRD regarding the setting up/ launch of e-portal. Meanwhile, a window of ICCR’s website would also be available to foreign students to post their views/ issues.

With reference to having feedback mechanisms in place and ICCR acting as a guardian and facilitator for foreign students, ICCR currently fulfils this role primarily through our Regional Offices, whose mandate is to maintain regular interactions with International Students, FRRO's., and other relevant organizations to monitor the welfare of the students.

Each University / Institute where ICCR students have been admitted has been requested to appoint a high level official (normally Head of the Department) as International Students Advisor (ISA) to look into the day to day issues related to foreign students including problems with landlords and brokers, as also to provide counselling and guidance and our Regional Offices interact closely with these ISAs. The Council also organizes an annual meeting of all ISAs where problems being faced by students are discussed and addressed on a coordinated and comprehensive basis. For the first time, this year student representatives are also being invited to participate in the annual ISA meeting. Vice Chancellors of major Universities also have an opportunity to raise student-related issues in the annual meeting of ICCR's General Assembly of which they are Members.

The ICCR is providing approximately 2500 scholarships every year to students from more than 100 countries to enable them to pursue under graduate / post graduate / M. Phil / Ph.D/Post Doctorate courses, including professional courses. The scope of scholarships offered is already very wide, as students are free to apply for admission to any subject except Medicine where no quota is given to ICCR by the Ministry of Health and Family Planning / Ministry of HRD, and Engineering, Pharmacy and Architecture, where also the quota allotted to ICCR students is limited for all other courses, the only restrictions are the total number of scholarships available and the acceptance by the University for admission.

Also, ICCR entertains applications to all recognized Central/State Universities / Institutions including those Deemed Universities recognized by the Government of India. The only restriction here is that we do not send students to private institutions not recognized by the Government of India.

As regards the increase in the number of scholars every year, this does not fall within the purview of ICCR as we only administer schemes on behalf of other Ministries, / Government agencies, and the increase in number of scholarships is decided by these Ministries / agencies.”

**22. The Committee are of the view that since ICCR is mandated for ensuring welfare measures for the foreign students in India, the Ministry should pro-actively pursue the matter of setting up of/launch of e-portal with Ministry of HRD. In the meanwhile, the ICCR’s alumni data base should be kept ready and should be launched simultaneously. The Committee further observe that since, ICCR administers schemes for foreign students on behalf of other Ministries/Government Agencies, it is all the more important to establish a student helpline under the overall jurisdiction of ICCR. The Committee also feel that number of scholarships provided by ICCR is not adequate and those should be considerably increased specially for the students belonging to Asia particularly South-East Asia and Central Asia.**

**(Recommendation No.17)**

23. The Committee had observed that Government had announced an allocation of Rs. 500 crores for assisting the Sri Lankan Government in the resettlement and rehabilitation of internally displaced persons in the Northern Province through a number of projects. But the Committee had noted that as against an allocation of Rs. 90 crores only Rs. 68.96 crores was spent during 2009-10, during the year 2010-11, Rs. 83.82 crores had been spent by February 2011 against the allocation of Rs. 90 crores and a higher budgetary allocation of Rs. 290 crores had been made for the year 2011-12. The Committee had felt that the rehabilitation and resettlement projects had been already delayed and therefore, had desired that all the proposed projects including building of 50,000 houses should be completed in a specific timeline so that the beneficiaries might get the benefit without any further delay.

24. The Ministry of External Affairs in their action taken reply have stated as under:

“Government of India, based on the capacity to absorb the assistance on ground in Northern Sri Lanka, has implemented several resettlement, rehabilitation and reconstruction projects for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Northern Sri Lanka. Several constraints, including anti-human mines spread across vast areas of Northern Sri Lanka also slowed down the project implementation. Notwithstanding the above, GoI during the FY 2009-10, spent Rs. 68.96 crores, out of allocated Rs. 70 crores under ‘Aid to Sri Lanka’ budget, on immediate relief and rehabilitation measures.

During the FY 2010-11 total of Rs. 90 cores were allocated under ‘Aid to Sri Lanka’ for several resettlement, rehabilitation and reconstruction projects for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Northern Sri Lanka. The total amount spent during the FY on various projects aimed at resettlement and reconstruction in Sri Lanka stood at Rs. 93.86 crores. The main areas of expenditure included supply of roofing/shelter material for IDPs in Northern Sri Lanka, supply of cement bags for resettling IDPs, ongoing de-mining work by Indian teams, supply of 500 Tractors and agricultural implements, supply of 95,000 agricultural packs, supply of seeds to revive agriculture in Northern Sri Lanka, month long artificial limb fitment camp, development of Jaffna Teaching Hospital, establishment of Vocational Training Institute among others.

A pilot project for construction of 1000 new houses for IDPs in Northern Sri Lanka is under implementation. Around 100 are ready for occupation, work on 200 houses is till roof level and 400 under various stages of construction. Government of Sri Lanka has handed over another 150 sites to contractor after clearing jungle and the work at these sites is being taken up by the contractor. Another 150 sites are yet to be cleared of jungle by Government of Sri Lanka.

The Committee on Non Plan Expenditure (CNE), on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2011, gave its in-principle approval for the modalities for construction of remaining 49,000 houses. The Government is working towards expeditious implementation of the project.

Government has allocated Rs 290 cores under 'Aid to Sri Lanka' in the CFY 2011-12. The funds are being utilized towards construction of houses for IDPs and other infrastructure development projects, including rehabilitation of Kankesanthurai harbour, deployment of Indian de-mining teams, repair and construction of hospital and schools, supply of 1280 computers to schools in the eastern province, project for capacity building of war widows by SEWA, second limb re-fitment camp in Jaffna, setting up of Vocational Training Centres in Batticaloa and Nuwra Eliya, construction of the Cultural Centre in Jaffna, restoration of the Duraiappah stadium in Jaffna and other small developmental projects."

**25. The Committee observe that the Government has undertaken certain rehabilitation and resettlement projects in Northern Sri Lanka for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) there. But the Committee observe that the most important project relating to construction of 50,000 houses for IDPs has been delayed a lot. The Committee are dismayed to note that out of the 1000 houses projected to be constructed under pilot project, only 100 houses are ready for occupation and 500 are at various levels of construction. Modalities for construction of 49000 houses has been approved. The Committee therefore, desire that the construction work should now be expedited as any further delay will hurt the interests of the affected people. The Government should pursue the matter with the Government of Sri Lanka regarding the availability of sites. The Ministry should furnish the status report of the project on quarterly basis to the Committee.**



**(Recommendation No.19)**

26. The Committee had noted that a new Head 'Energy Security' was created by the Ministry and the allocation made for 2011-12 was Rs. 89 Lakhs. The Committee were of the opinion that keeping the mandate in mind and the international climate on the issue of energy security, the Ministry should be ready with adequate fieldwork, background studies and data with the help of academics institutions and those engaged in the field so as to support and legitimize their claim at international level. They had also desired that the Ministry should make vigorous efforts and engage with various stake-holders at diplomatic and political level in that regard. The Committee were of the view that the functions of the Division had become all the more important in light of the recent events in North-Africa and West-Asia. The Committee had urged the Ministry to adopt a proactive role in ensuring that India's interest were secured in the region in a more sustainable manner with the long term vision. The Committee were of the view that alongwith bringing out the handbook on Energy Security, the Missions/Posts should also act as facilitator in encouraging investment and securing energy resources. The Ministry should also look at the qualitative aspects of the expenditure. Keeping in view the mandate on that account, the Committee had stressed upon the need to adequately enhance the budgetary allocation during the current financial year which could be taken up by the Ministry suitably at RE stage.

27. The Ministry of External Affairs in their action taken reply have stated as under:

"With respect to the observation that **"the Ministry should be ready with adequate fieldwork, background studies and data with the help of academics institutions and those engaged in the field so as to support and legitimize its claim at international level"**, Energy Security Division is in the final stages of the process for hiring an institutional consultant who will be tasked with producing studies and research papers and compiling databases for the Ministry in the field of energy security. The following papers/studies have been identified for execution by the consultant:

- Commissioned Research Papers
- Paper on New and Emerging Energy Sources (focusing on technology, political economy and business potential aspects of sources like CBM, Shale Gas, new hydrocarbon finds)
- Paper on Pipelines and Energy Diplomacy (focusing on technology, political economy, and recent developments in pipeline projects around the world)
- Commissioned Reports on energy opportunities on a regional basis:
  - On Africa
  - On Latin America
  - On Central Asia
  - On South East Asia

- Case study: An analysis of the Experience of Indian Energy companies working abroad

With respect to the recommendation that **“Ministry should make vigorous efforts and engage with various stake-holders at diplomatic and political level in this regard”**, Energy Security division will provide active support to initiatives like the 3<sup>rd</sup> India-Africa Hydrocarbon Conference (9-10 December) organized by Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas which are aimed at engaging the relevant Oil and Gas / Energy Ministers of key African nations. Similarly ES division will be assisting GAIL in organizing 7<sup>th</sup> Asia Gas Partnership Summit in 2012 Energy Security Division will also provide active assistance to other nodal ministries in their engagements with International organizations These include assistance to MNRE for engagement with the IRENA; M/o Power for engagements with the IEA and the IPEEC; and M/o Petroleum and Natural Gas for engagements with IEA, IEF and other bodies.

With respect to the recommendation that **“along with bringing out the handbook on Energy Security, the Missions/Posts should also act as facilitator in encouraging investment and securing energy resources”**, Energy Security Division will be tasking the institutional consultant with generating the content for the Energy Security Handbook which will be distributed to officers in all Indian missions abroad. This publication should be ready for distribution before the end of the financial year in March 2011. This will be an useful tool in carrying out of energy security related work. With the help of focused inputs from the institutional consultant, Energy Security Division will provide timely inputs to our Missions/Posts to gather information and intervene in a manner which will encourage investment and secure more energy assets abroad.

With respect to the recommendation that **“adequately enhance the budgetary allocation during the current financial year which can be taken up by the Ministry suitably at RE stage”**, while the budget at the Revised Estimate state is at Rs 0.435 Crore, the budget proposed for the next year, 2012-13, is at Rs 0.89 crore. It may be noted that the proposed budget at BE stage for the current year was Rs 0.89 crore, but it was reduced to Rs 0.435 crore at RE stage, since this is a new Division dealing with a highly specialized field and it took some time to work out in detail the modalities of implementing the proposal to hire an institutional consultant.”

**28. Considering the mandate and the importance of the issue of energy security, the Committee had stressed upon the need to adequately enhance the budgetary allocation during the current financial year and to take the matter at RE stage. However, it is surprising that the budget allocation for this newly created Head has been substantially reduced at RE stage. The Committee take a serious note of the issue as it reflects the casual approach of the Government**

on a very burning and important issue of energy security of India. Though the Committee understand the nuances of establishing a new Division, however, the Committee desire that the Ministry should not take much time in deciding the modalities in implementing their proposals in view of the relevance of the issue. The Committee further recommend that the Ministry should engage in Inter-Ministerial consultations to enhance the arena of the Commissioned Reports/ research papers or any other research activities. The Committee further desire that due consideration and deliberation should be done before hiring of institutional consultant and qualitative aspects should also be taken care of.

**(Recommendation No.23)**

29. As per information furnished by the Ministry, during the last five years (2007-2011) a total of 175 Indian crew members were taken hostage on board of various merchant ships. The Ministry of External Affairs had a limited role and they use Diplomatic Channels to facilitate release of Indian Nationals from pirates. In order to deal with prosecution of pirates, the Ministry of External Affairs was engaged in piloting a comprehensive domestic legislation. The Committee further noted that the MEA was coordinating with the UN and other international bodies like the contract group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia and the International Maritime Bureau to seek coordinated solutions to the problem of combating piracy off the coast of Somalia and had also demanded that naval patrolling in the affected area should be carried out under the UN flag. The Committee had expressed their concern over the growing incidents of abduction of Indian seafarers from private/foreign/cargo ships by pirates in the Gulf of Aden. Referring to the involvement of many agencies in the process of their release and communication gap, the Committee had desired the issue of piracy needed to be addressed with the utmost seriousness it deserved. Besides appropriately taking up the matter with the international community to avert incidents of piracy, the Committee had also desired the Ministry of External Affairs to draw a long term strategy in coordination with other concerned Ministries viz. Ministries of Shipping and Defence, to stringently deal with the issue of piracy and making the sea lanes safer. At the same time, the Committee had also desired the Ministry of External Affairs to expeditiously finalize the proposed legislation to deal with the prosecution of pirates. The Committee further desired to be apprised of the concrete steps taken by the Ministry in this regard.

30. The Ministry of External Affairs in their action taken reply have stated as under:

“1. MEA has been closely coordinating with the Ministry of Shipping and the Ministry of Defence regarding the counter-piracy action to be taken at the international level. Composite delegations of these Ministries have been

participating in the deliberations of the Contact Group on Piracy off the coast of Somalia. The Indian Navy has been coordinating and exchanging information with other naval forces operating in the Gulf of Aden regarding action against the pirates and for protection of maritime traffic.

2. A draft of an Anti-Piracy Act has been prepared by MEA in consultation with the Ministry of Shipping, Ministry of Defence, Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guard and the Directorate General of Shipping. The draft has been submitted to the Department of Legislative Affairs, Ministry of Law & Justice for legal vetting. As soon as the legally vetted draft is received back by MEA, it will be submitted for Cabinet's consideration with the approval of the External Affairs Minister."

**31. The Committee are happy to note that a draft Anti-Piracy Act has been prepared by Ministry of External Affairs in consultation with other concerned Ministries and agencies. However, considering its importance, the Committee desire that an effective Bill capable to handle the issue of piracy stringently should be finalized and placed before the Parliament at the earliest. The Committee further desire that the Government should continue with its engagement with various international actors and domestic agencies to curb the menace of piracy. However, the Committee would like to urge the Government to adopt humane approach to the hostages and provide clear cut information to their families/concerned at the time of distress.**

#### **(Recommendation No.24)**

32. In connection with the Indian nationals languishing in jails in neighbouring countries, the Committee had noted that there were 317 Indian civilian prisoners in jails of Bangladesh. The Government of India were reportedly making efforts for their repatriation to their homeland. The Committee had expressed their deep concern and had requested the Government of India to expedite their release. Similarly, the Committee had desired that the process of preparation of a list of Indian prisoners in jails of Pakistan should be expedited and the concrete steps should be taken by the Government to secure their early and safe release after completion of the nationality verification process.

33. The Ministry of External Affairs in their action taken reply have stated as under:

“The total number of Indian nationals in Bangladesh jails has come down from 317 to 263. Out of this, 88 are convicted prisoners and 91 are under trial prisoners, leaving only 84 prisoners who have finished their jail sentences and are due for repatriation.

Our Mission has been making consistent efforts to get these 84 Indian nationals repatriated. In many of the cases, repatriation gets delayed on account of incorrect and incomplete addresses of the prisoners provided by the Bangladesh Government. We have sought consular access to meet the Indian nationals in jails to ascertain their correct addresses.

In January, 2011, the Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Persons between the two countries came into force and under Article 4 of the bilateral agreement Mission has already sought details of 88 Indian convicts from the Bangladesh Government in order to transfer them to Indian jails to serve their remaining sentences.

Government of India has been consistently taking up the issue of release and repatriation of all Indian prisoners, lodged in Pakistani jails with the Government of Pakistan at all appropriate levels. The matter was raised with Pakistan at the Foreign Secretary Level talks on February 25, 2010 in New Delhi and again on June 24, 2010 in Islamabad. The issue was also raised during Home Minister's visit to Islamabad on June 25-26, 2010 and during the Foreign Minister level talks in Islamabad on July 15, 2010. The issue was again taken up at the Foreign Secretary level talks in February 2011 in Thimphu; Home/Interior Secretary level talks on March 28-29, 2011 in New Delhi; Foreign Secretary level talks in Islamabad on 23-24 June, 2011 and Foreign Minister level talks in New Delhi on July 27, 2011.

In the Foreign Minister level talks between India and Pakistan held on July 27, 2011, in New Delhi both sides noted with satisfaction the fact that since the resumption of dialogue earlier this year, the process of release of prisoners and fishermen from both sides has continued. In this regard, the Ministers agreed with the recommendations of the Judicial Committee on Prisoners regarding (a) early repatriation of the prisoners who have completed their sentences and whose travel documents are available; (b) adoption of a humane approach in dealing with cases of fishermen, women, elderly, juvenile prisoners, prisoners terminally ill or suffering from serious illness or physical / mental disability and (c) need to monitor the welfare of prisoners in order to ensure their humane treatment

Further, an India-Pakistan Judicial Committee on Prisoners consisting of four retired judges from each side has been set up to recommend steps for humane treatment and expeditious release of prisoners of the respective countries in each other's jails. The committee has so far had four meetings and has given several recommendations. The Committee has to-date met four times on 26-27 February 2008, 9-14 June 2008, 18-23 August 2008 and 19-23 April, 2011.

Members of the India-Pakistan Judicial Committee on Prisoners visited Pakistan from 18-23 April 2011 and visited jails in Karachi, Rawalpindi and Lahore. During the visit, the Pakistani side shared the lists of Indian Fishermen and civilian prisoners. Consular Access was conducted in respect of some of the fishermen and prisoners on the spot. The Committee suggested that the Nationality verification process should be facilitated and all those prisoners who have completed their sentences and whose travel documents are available should be repatriated to their respective countries at the earliest. The next meeting of the Judicial Committee is likely to be held in India shortly.

High Commission of India, Islamabad, on a continuing basis, monitors the status of Indian prisoners in Pakistani jails and requests for consular access for these prisoners. Once the consular access is granted by the Government of Pakistan, the verification papers are sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs through the Ministry of External Affairs for nationality status verification of these prisoners. High Commission of India, on a continuing basis, takes up the matter with the Government of Pakistan for the release of all those Indian prisoners who have completed their sentences. A Consular Access Agreement was signed on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008 between the two countries, which provides that India and Pakistan exchange list of prisoners of each in the other's country on 01 January and 01 July each year. Government is committed to taking all necessary steps for earliest possible release and repatriation of all Indian Prisoners, in Pakistani jails.

As a result of Governments efforts, 473 Indian nationals lodged in Pakistani jails were released and repatriated to India in the 2010. In 2011, as on 1<sup>st</sup> September, 116 Indian nationals have been released and repatriated to India from Pakistan."

**34. The Committee are satisfied to note that total number of Indian nationals in Bangladesh Jails has come down from 314 to 263. There are 84 prisoners who have finished their jail sentences and waiting for repatriation such persons should be repatriated soon resolving the issues relating to their current addresses etc. The Committee are, however, deeply concerned about the plight of Indian citizens who are convicted prisoners or under trial prisoners.**

**The Committee are happy to note that 589 Indian prisoners lodged in Pakistani Jails were released during 2010 and 2011. However, the Committee feel that along with monitoring the status of Indian prisoners, the Ministry should also look whether inspite of all the efforts, there are many unidentified Indian citizens in Pakistan jails and take up the matter at the highest level. The process of preparation of list of such prisoners should be expedited.**

## **CHAPTER – II**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS/ OBSERVATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT**

#### **(Recommendation No.1)**

1. The Committee acknowledge that during the last two years, the Ministry has made efforts to reduce the tendency to surrender the allocated resources at the end of the year. However, the Committee also note that there is still a vast gap between the proposals made by the Ministry of External Affairs and the budget granted by the Ministry of Finance. Budgetary Allocation of MEA for the financial year 2011-12 is pegged at Rs. 7106 crores which is grossly lower to the tune of 65% of allocation of nearly Rs. 11,000 crores initially proposed by the Ministry. Therefore, the Committee are of the opinion that while formulating the Budgetary proposals, Ministry should ensure that proposals are formulated in accordance with the actual needs and provide enough justification for allocation so that the Ministry of Finance is convinced enough not to reduce the grants at the time of consideration of demands of the Ministry of External Affairs.

#### **Reply of the Government**

The suggestion of the Committee is well-considered. In this connection, it is stated that the spending Units/Divisions are invariably advised to prepare a realistic budgetary requirement, as exhaustively and comprehensively as possible, so that no item is lost sight of or inadequately projected. The Ministry invariably gives full justification for the budgetary allocation that it seeks from the Ministry of Finance at the proposal stage. Additional funds are generally allocated only in those cases where inescapable commitments have been made. Further, all these Units/Divisions are also advised to surrender identified excess allocations, if any, at RE stage itself, unutilizable during the remaining part of the FY. Thus, the spending Units/Divisions are time and again sensitized to match their proposals with the actual needs during the ensuing Financial year.

**(File No. AA/PARL/125/188/2011)**

#### **(Recommendation No.2)**

The Committee also note that a major portion of Ministry's budgetary allocation is utilized in promoting technical and economic cooperation with friendly countries by way of taking up various developmental projects and programmes in those countries. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry of External Affairs should make proper coordination with those friendly countries and get requisite governmental clearances so as to ensure timely execution and completion of the projects. In the same context, it is worthwhile to note that the Committee in their previous Reports had recommended for adoption of practices of overall sound financial

management particularly in terms of the projects at various stages since inception to its delivery, the delay in execution resulted in low utilization of allocated funds. The Committee once again reiterate that the Ministry should strengthen accounting management within the Finance Division and the overall budgetary management to include financial reporting and internal control etc. in order to ensure better control of expenditure and utilization of allocated resources.

### **Reply of the Government**

The Divisions concerned invariably liaise with the foreign governments and/or the authorities concerned in those countries, through the local Indian Missions/Posts, and through the agencies implementing the projects. This ensures that necessary coordination is in place. Besides, Project Monitoring Committees have been instituted to monitor timely execution of the projects. However, in spite of our best efforts, local issues/factors which are beyond the control of the Ministry, sometimes lead to delays.

In general, the projects finances are handled by the various Divisions of the Ministry, in consultation with the Finance Division. As soon as the commitments are made known to the Finance Division by the spending Divisions, all efforts are made to make available the required funds so that the projects do not suffer time/cost overruns for want of funds. However, this is also subject to the overall budgetary ceiling communicated by the Ministry of Finance. The project handling Divisions are required to coordinate with the respective project authorities to ensure that, as far as possible, neither savings nor excesses over budget occur. Also, quarterly expenditure overview meetings are taken by the Additional Secretary and Financial Advisor to have a close watch over the expenditure and requirements. Nevertheless, the Committee's suggestions are noted and spending Divisions would be sensitized accordingly.

**(File No. AA/PARL/125/188/2011)**

### **(Recommendation No.3)**

The Committee in their various reports have been recommending for reduction in rental liabilities of MEA. However, the Committee note that contrary to their recommendations, the rental liabilities of the Ministry is increasing year after year which has gone to the extent of Rs. 215.97 crores in the year 2010-2011 (upto February, 2011). Despite continuous advising the MEA to acquire built up property/construction of property, MEA has fallen short of action. The delay in acquiring property and the process involved in it has been a matter of grave concern which is evident from C&AG reports also. Taking a cue from the observation made by C&AG in regard to purchase/acquire of property at Prague, the Committee note that the Ministry has reportedly entered into sale/purchase agreements for acquisition of property and contracts for construction of properties abroad and has been striving to improve property management. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should evolve certain mechanism and



prepare guidelines relating to purchase/acquisition of property abroad keeping in mind the qualitative, security & structural aspects of the property and engagement of consultant/evaluator of property wherever needed. The Committee also feel that the Ministry should conduct a study to assess that whether the existing properties abroad are being optimally utilized and on the basis of that study the property management system should appropriately be modified. The Committee may be apprised of the steps taken in this regard and also the reply furnished by the Ministry on the observations made by C&AG pertaining to property purchased at Prague. As the real estate prices are falling in various parts of the world especially in Europe, the Committee desire that the Government should appropriately explore this opportunity to create the assets for Indian Missions/Posts abroad with an objective to reduce huge rental liabilities.

### **Reply of the Government**

The Ministry has taken note of the recommendations of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and has purchased a number of properties at various stations and initiated action on construction of properties abroad with a view to reduce the rental liability. The Ministry has also been seeking enhanced allocation under Capital Outlay in order to meet the requirements of funds for purchase / construction of properties abroad. The allocation and utilization of funds in the past four years as detailed below is reflective of the focussed and increased attention being given to acquisition and construction of properties as well as to renovation of existing properties:

### **BUDGET ALLOCATION AND ACTUAL UTILIZATION SINCE 2007-08**

<b>FY</b>	<b>Budget allocated under Major Head 4059 (Actual Utilization) (In ₹ Crores)</b>	<b>Budget allocated under Major Head 4216 (Actual Utilization) (In ₹ Crores)</b>	<b>Total Allocation (Total Utilization) (In ₹ Crores)</b>
2007-08	165 (154.18)	85 (101.51)	250 (255.69)
2008-09	200 (211.20)	100 (131.52)	300 (342.72)
2009-10	275 (260.28)	80 (83.18)	355 (343.46)
2010-11	300 (315.08)	100 (100.22)	400 (415.3)

2. Details of various properties purchased since 2007-08 are as follows:

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Station</b>	<b>Particulars.</b>	<b>Cost (In ₹ crores)</b>
1	2007-08	E/I, Bogota	Chancery	10.89
2	2007-08	E/I, Sofia	Embassy Residence	15.33
3	2007-08	CGI, Milan	Staff Residences	33.38
4	2007-08	RPO Surat	Plot of land	6.83
5	2007-08	RPO, Amritsar	Plot of land	9.01

6	2008-09	E/I, Tripoli	Embassy Residence	12.54
7	2008-09	CGI, Hamburg	CG Residence	11.66
8	2008-09	E/I, Dublin	Chancery	31.26
9	2008-09	HCI, Gaborone	Plot of land	0.17
10	2008-09	HCI, Wellington	Plot of land	22.43
11	2009-10	CGI, Dubai	CG Residence	21.39
12	2009-10	South Asian University, New Delhi	Plot of land	63.5
13	2009-10	CGI, Sydney	Residences	4.25
14	2010-11	CGI, Hong Kong	Chancery	63.78
15	2010-11	E/I, Rabat	Chancery	9.51
16	2010-11	E/I, Paris	Indian Cultural Centre Building	30.38
17	2010-11	E/I, Paris	Residence	10
18	2010-11	E/I, Helsinki	Chancery	14.1
19	2010-11	E/I, Santiago	Chancery	10.22
20	2010-11	E/I, Santiago	Residence	11.32
21	2010-11	CGI, Sydney	Chancery	39.5
22	2011-12	CGI, Houston	Chancery	16.87
23	2011-12	CGI, Perth	Chancery	17.86
24	2011-12	CGI, Perth	CG's Residence	12.07
25	2011-12	HCI, Port of Spain	Residences	9.36

3. The proposals for purchase of properties at Atlanta (Chancery & CG's Residence), Rome (Chancery), Slovenia (Chancery and Embassy Residence), Munich (Chancery) and Yerevan (Embassy Residence) are at advanced stages and likely to be concluded in the financial year 2011-12.

4. The Ministry has taken note of the conclusions / recommendations of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and is closely monitoring the progress on various construction / renovation projects with the objective of ensuring their early commencement / completion. Details in respect of the recently concluded projects as well as those which are at implementation stage and projects which are at pre-construction stage are given as under:

S. No.	Name of Project	Present Status
1.	Jawaharlal Nehru Bhawan (MEA Headquarters)	Nearing completion
2.	Canning Lane (Hostel)	Completed in November, 2009
3.	Chanakyapuri Officers Residential Complex	Completed in 2009
4.	Kathmandu Chancery cum Residence Complex	Construction is in progress (project is delayed and efforts are being made to get the contractor to speed up construction)

5.	Beijing Chancery cum Residence Complex	Nearing completion
6.	Tokyo Reconstruction of Chancery and Residences	Completed in July, 2009
7.	Singapore Embassy Residence renovation	Completed in March, 2009
8	Muscat	Completed in January, 2008
9	Budapest Chancery Extension Project	Completed in November, 2010
10	Kabul Chancery cum Residence Complex	Nearing completion
11	Brasilia Chancery cum Residence Complex	Agreement with the contractor to be signed shortly and construction is expected to commence in December 2011.
12	Dhaka Chancery cum Residence Complex	Construction is in progress (scheduled completion date is February 2012)
13	Islamabad Residence Complex	Construction is in progress (scheduled completion date is March, 2012)
14	Tashkent Chancery cum Residence Complex	Design Proposal approved by local authorities in 2010. Project is at the stage of Pre-Qualification of Contractors
15	Warsaw Chancery cum Residence Complex	Project is at the stage of Prequalification of Contractors
16	Abuja Chancery cum Residence Complex and HC's residence	Agreement with Contractor signed and construction activities commenced.
17	Wellington Chancery cum Residence Complex	Architect has been appointed in September 2010; the architectural design has been finalised
18	Addis Ababa Chancery cum Residence Complex and Ambassador's residence	Architect has been selected for development of designs.
19	Bahrain Chancery cum Residence Complex	Architect has been appointed and concept design has been finalized.
20	Doha Construction Project	Architect has been appointed. Project is at design stage.
21	Gaborone Chancery Project	Approval of local Government for construction of residences (in addition to the Chancery) is awaited.
22	Mauritius Chancery-cum-Residence Complex	Architect has been appointed. Project is at the Design stage.
23	Dar-es-Salaam Chancery cum Residence Complex	Pre-qualification of contractors is under process.
24	Kyiv Chancery cum Residence Complex	Architect has been appointed and Project is at conceptual design stage and the approval from various local bodies for change of land use and construction of both Chancery and residences is in process.

25	Nicosia residential project	Concept Design has been finalised. Detailed design is being developed for seeking local approvals.
26	Bangkok residential complex	The utilization/disposal of land acquired in 1974 has been reviewed by the Ministry and it has been decided that in the long term interest of the Government of India the plot will be developed for residences for Indian based officials of the Mission. Concept design for the residential complex is being developed.
27	Berlin residential complex	The design brief for the construction of residential complex has been finalised. Process has been initiated for appointment of Architect and Project Manager for implementation of the Project.
28	Redevelopment of GOI properties in Singapore	Redevelopment of GOI-owned properties in Singapore with a view to make it a zero rental station has been approved in principle. Design brief for the redevelopment of the properties is at advanced stage of processing.

5. The Ministry has taken note of the recommendations of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and refined the guidelines for purchase / acquisition of properties abroad. An exercise was undertaken to revise the space norms for construction / acquisition of properties abroad for residences with a view to make the properties suitable for meeting the functional / representational requirements. The revised area norms for residences were approved in February 2011 and have been incorporated in the guidelines for purchase / construction. The security and structural aspects for both purchase and construction of properties are being thoroughly examined in each case with the engagement of professional agencies.

6. The Ministry has taken note of the recommendations of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and based on the success of the Tokyo reconstruction project, has identified Singapore and Oslo for redevelopment of Government of India-owned properties with a view to utilize the existing properties optimally. The Singapore redevelopment project has progressed well and as per the preliminary design for redevelopment of properties, all the office and residential requirements in Singapore would be met. As regards Oslo, it has been decided to explore the options for redevelopment of GOI-owned properties and a team, including a technical representative, is expected to visit at an early date. The Ministry has also reviewed the construction projects at preliminary stage and wherever found feasible, has revised the design with a view to optimally utilize the existing properties abroad. The concept design for the construction projects in Dar-es-Salaam and Kyiv have been suitably revised taking into account the qualitative and other functional / representational requirements. The Ministry has also examined various options to improve property management and decided to

set up a project / technical cell to be manned with personnel having requisite experience in project management. In this regard, Ministry has sought nomination of qualified engineers from Central Public Works Department for deputation to the Ministry for the proposed projects / technical cell for property management.

7. As regards the C&AG observations on purchase of a property for the Chancery in Prague, the Ministry has furnished the Action Taken Note to the office of the C&AG. It has been stated by the Ministry that the surrounding area of the Chancery in Prague is generally considered among the more secured areas in Prague, close to the official residence of the Prime Minister, and not far from Prague Castle (the seat of the Czech President). Two other Embassies are located in the vicinity, with the Israeli Embassy (which maintains a very high level of security world-wide) located just behind the Chancery. The building was found to be structurally sound and the residual life of the building was assessed at 50 years. It has also been conveyed to the audit authorities that at the time of the purchase of the property, knowledge of the tunneling project was not in public domain. The Ministry had no information that an underground tunnel project would be implemented close to the property, as concluded in the report of the C&AG. It was only subsequently, in the course of discussions on the project with the Consultant and with the city authorities, that the Mission became aware of the Prague City Council's decision to go ahead with this project which had been conceived many years ago but had been indefinitely shelved. Even in January 2006, there remained considerable uncertainty about whether the project would ever go ahead, since funding had not been tied up. Moreover, important details of the tunnel project – like the actual alignment of the tunnel or the extent of its proximity to the Embassy – were not available. In the absence of this crucial information, it was impossible to assess the impact of the tunnel project on the structural soundness of the Embassy building.

8. The Ministry has taken note of the recommendations of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and advised Missions / Posts abroad to make efforts and locate suitable properties for acquisition with a view to seize the opportunity of low real estate prices in various parts of the world and has separately requested for additionality under Capital Outlay of the Ministry for making the requirement of funds for purchase of properties abroad in the current and next financial year.

**(File No. AA/PARL/125/188/2011)**

**(Recommendation No.6)**

The Committee find that a review of the staff strength in Missions/Posts abroad had been undertaken and a cabinet note proposing augmentation of local posts in select 31 Missions/Posts is under preparation in consultation with Administration and Finance Division. The Committee may like to be informed of the various steps taken to make these services better and also the progress made so far in the direction of augmentation of the staff in select Missions/Posts as well as the implementation of IMAS in those 16 Missions where it has not been implemented so far.

### **Reply of the Government**

With a view to improving the quality of consular services especially at stations with large and expanding presence of Indian diaspora, the Ministry has carried out an assessment taking into account the inputs received from the concerned Indian Missions/Posts abroad. Based on these inputs and the Ministry's assessment, a proposal is already under consideration for creation of additional 145 local posts spread over 29 carefully selected Missions/Posts abroad. The proposal is currently under submission for necessary financial approval.

Of the 16 Missions/Posts abroad where the iMAS System could not be introduced till the last report, the implementation of IMAS has been successfully accomplished in 15. Only one station is pending, namely, Zahidan (Iran). A team from the Principal Chief Controller of Accounts is scheduled to visit Zahidan very soon. With this the Ministry aims to complete the introduction of IMAS at all Missions/Posts abroad.

**(File No. AA/PARL/125/188/2011)**

### **(Recommendation No.7)**

The Committee reiterate their concern that the Foreign Service Cadre is not being augmented adequately to meet India's growing diplomatic requirements around the world for which the Committee have been continuously recommending in their earlier Reports and urge the Ministry to take effective and urgent measures in this regard.

### **Reply of the Government**

The long-term Expansion Plan of the Indian Foreign Service Cadre that was approved by the Union Cabinet in August 2008 is currently under implementation to address the issue of shortages of officers and staff in this Ministry. A total of 514 posts are to be created over ten years under this Expansion Plan. 249 such posts (including 139 posts of Group 'A' officers) will be located at Headquarters, while 265 (including 75 posts of Group 'A' officers) such posts will be located in Missions and Posts abroad.

The proposal is being implemented following a three pronged strategy of increasing Direct Recruitment, fast tracking promotions from IFS (B) and attracting officers from other cadres on deputation. Action to operationalise all the three tracks is underway. Around 155 additional posts have already been created over three rounds. Creation of 4<sup>th</sup> tranche is underway. The indent for Direct Recruit Officers was suitably adjusted for the 2011 Batch of IFS Officers to incorporate the approved augmentation.

Ministry has also identified areas of work with MEA where deputation of officers from other Ministries/Departments would be of benefit. Eleven officers from other Ministries have already joined MEA and more requests are in the pipeline. Requests have been made to the Ministries/Departments mentioned below:

1. Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance
2. Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance
3. Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance.
4. Comptroller & Auditor General of India
5. Ministry of Information & Broadcasting
6. Ministry of Defence
7. Railway Board
8. Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.

**(File No. AA/PARL/125/188/2011)**

**(Recommendation No.8)**

The Committee note that under the Pilot Project 7 Passport Seva Kendra (PSKs) have been launched under RPO Bengaluru and RPO Chandigarh in order to improve and to streamline the passport delivery system. There is proposal to open 70 more PSKs in various parts of the country in the current financial year. The Committee during their visit to one such Passport Seva Kendra at Bengaluru had observed all the procedural aspects from entry of applicant for depositing of passport application till exit of the applicant and had made several suggestions to improve the system. The Committee are happy to note that adequate measures have been taken to reduce waiting time and reduce congestion in PSKs and they have also become successful in getting expeditious police verification too. But, the Committee have apprehension that similar situation may arise in other new PSKs also. Therefore, all the measures based on the experiences of Pilot Projects should be taken from the very beginning so that the primary objective of timely and efficient issue of passport to citizens through PSKs is achieved. The Committee would also like to caution that the passport offices should not keep pending applications in RPOs which are received through post or through direct submission in RPOs or District Collection Centres as it was being done during implementation of the pilot projects in Bengaluru. Such applications should also be cleared simultaneously within the prescribed time-frame. The Committee further assert that before proceeding further, the Ministry should evaluate the results of the ongoing pilot projects and make necessary amendments, if required, depending upon the outcomes and feedback from service seekers. The Committee further desire that delivery of passport services to smaller towns/cities should not be adversely affected due to establishment of PSKs only in big cities.

The Committee are anguished to note that no initiatives have been taken to fulfill the commitment made by the Ministry during the study visit of the Committee in July 2010 at Guwahati where it was promised to establish Mini PSKs in Aizwal by December, 2010 and other Mini PSKs in the North-Eastern States by the end of December, 2011 and desire that the establishment of Mini PSKs should be undertaken on priority basis without any further delay.

## **Reply of the Government**

Having due regard to the comments and suggestions of the Committee on the improvement of the system and the experience gained during the operationalisation of the Pilot Project in Bengaluru and Chandigarh, adequate measures have been taken to reduce waiting time and congestion in PSKs. The RPOs have been instructed to clear the pendency in the old system as well as to deal expeditiously with the cases received through post or the District Passport Centres. The Standardisation, Testing and Quality Certification (STQC), under the Deptt. of Information Technology, Govt. of India, after several rounds of testing, has verified the project for compliance on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2011. It was only after the certification by STQC that the Ministry started rolling out the PSP further in the country. As on 31st October 2011, 22 Passport Seva Kendras have been operationalised in Bangalore (2), Mangalore, Hubli-Dharwad, Chandigarh, Ambala, Ludhiana, Trichy, Madurai, Thanjavur, Tirunelveli, Coimbatore, Visakhapatnam, Delhi, Gurgaon, Chennai (3), Jalandhar (2), Hoshiarpur and Amritsar. It is clarified that the PSKs are being established in smaller towns as well such as Tirupati, Nizamabad, Alapuzha and Behrampore besides the ones in major cities.

As regards setting up mini-PSKs in the North-Eastern States, contract has been awarded to a Consultant for carrying out civil and electrical works for mini-PSK at Aizawl (Mizoram). Earnest efforts are being made to establish mini-PSKs in other North-Eastern States.

**(File No. AA/PARL/125/188/2011)**

### **(Recommendation No.9)**

The Committee observe that under the PSK Scheme, the Ministry has outsourced some of the front-end and non-sensitive activities to a service provider. The existing passport offices will be converted as passport back offices for handling of applications received through the District Passport Cells (DPCs) and designated Speed Post Centres (SPCs). The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should examine the issue of coordination in its entirety alongwith studying the minutest of all details and functional specifications and also that there should be clear-cut demarcation of jurisdiction and distribution of work and responsibility between the two offices namely PSKs and RPOs. The Committee feel that well defined limits would enable transparency in operational aspects and demarcation of the responsibility and accountability at each level will ensure that there is no overlapping and duplication of work. To avoid any future complexities, communication channels should be well defined. The Committee also fore-caution the Ministry that opening of PSK should not become analogous to Passport Office and become another channel of delay. Moreover, the role and functions of District Passport Collection Centre and various Passport Collection Centres, within the ambit of the Passport Seva Project should also be analyzed in detail.



## **Reply of the Government**

(a) The role and responsibilities to be performed at the PSK and the Passport Office under the PSP have been clearly delineated. Front-end activities, such as initial scrutiny of the application forms and supporting documents, token issuance, acceptance of fee, scanning of documents, capturing photos, signature and biometrics of the applicant, are performed by the Service Provider's staff. The sovereign functions such as the verification of documents, index and Prior Approval Category checks and granting functions are performed by Government officials at the PSK. A Centralised Passport Printing Facility, under the control of the Ministry, has also been set up to take care of spill-over printing load emanating from various Passport Offices.

b) The type of applications namely Pre-Police-Verification cases, complex cases, policy cases which require further investigation are escalated to Passport Office where requisite actions are taken by concerned officers. Other functions performed at the Passport Office are review of Police Verification Report, Revocation/Impounding of passports and decisions on DPC/SPC cases which are digitized at PSKs and then sent to Passport Offices for further action. In addition, printing and dispatch of passports are undertaken at the Passport Office.

c) It may be ideal to close down the DPCs and other application form collection channels such as SPCs where PSKs are operational because of two reasons i.e. i) in the DPC applications, biometric fingerprints are not taken resulting in risk of duplicate issuance of passports and ii) the DPC/SPC applications take longer time to process because of lack of proper documents and insufficient data provided by applicants in the physical (hard) copy of forms. Moreover, these applications require digitisation, once received at the Passport Office and further actions like verification and granting amounting to additional staff needs.

d) However, till the PSP system is operational throughout the country with sufficient number of PSKs, it is prudent to have DPCs in place as part of the existing application collection channel. A clearer picture could emerge on the full roll-out of 77 PSKs across the country when a final decision on continuance of DPCs and PACCs and on opening of more PSKs could be taken.

**(File No. AA/PARL/125/188/2011)**

### **(Recommendation No.10)**

The Committee during the course of the study visit went through the concerns regarding the issues of security and other procedural aspects in the Passport Seva Kendras. The Committee stress upon the need to take into consideration the security aspect in the Passport Seva Project. The Committee opine that utmost care must be paid to the issue of strategic control and software security. Random technical audit should be conducted periodically to check that technical standards are maintained and fraud detection ability of the system should be enhanced. The Government should

also have a full fledged blue-print of the contingency plan. The Committee urge the Ministry to particularly look into the issue of digital signature and strive to establish certain mechanism to establish some kind of accountability on part of the employees of PSK.

### **Reply of the Government**

(A) It is submitted that security of the overall system (technical, functional and operational) has been given utmost care in the Project. The Ministry has appointed the Standardisation, Testing & Quality Certification (STQC), an organisation under the Department of Information Technology to act as the Third Party Audit Agency for ensuring security compliance of the PSP system. Strategic assets like Data Centre, Application software, System software, Disaster Recovery Centre and Central Passport Printing Facility are owned by the Ministry to have the strategic control over the Passport Seva System. A strategic control team of the Ministry is taking care of required technical functional and operational control of PSP system. In order to ensure security of the “Software Codes”, the following security procedures have been followed :

- i. Application Software has been written by the Service Provider (SP) as per approved Software Requirement Specifications (SRS) prescribed by the Ministry.
- ii. SP had done various round of its internal QA (Quality Assurance) of the “Code” as per the international norms. Ministry reviewed the “Code” developed by SP with the help of independent the Third Party Audit Agency (3PAA) viz. STQC.
- iii. Six rounds of Software Testing and QA had been done by the 3PAA before moving the “Code” and application software into production (Live environment).
- iv. Development Zone and Production Zone for the PSP is physically and logically separated and has been verified and okayed by the 3PAA.
- v. Even development zone for the PSP is kept Physically and Logically separated from other development zones being used by the SP for other projects.
- vi. Ministry’s Strategic Control Team consisting of C-DAC (a Govt. Agency specialized in software system) and PMU and the MEA personnel supervise all software/system related activities, right from development zone to pre-production/ testing and production zone.
- vii. The production zone is fully and solely controlled and supervised by Ministry’s Strategic Control Team.
- viii. Dual Software Key has been implemented in the production zone (like a Bank Locker), having one software key with the Strategic Control Team of the Ministry

- ix. The Root Key is held only with the Ministry.
- x. Any task being performed in the production zone with the help of dual key, be it software specific or system specific – the use of dual key is audited, logs are preserved, tampered-proof and is subject to audit by 3PAA on a periodic basis.
- xi. All tasks of the Application Administrator, System Administrator, Database Administrator, Storage Administrator, Back-up Administrator, Network Administrator etc are audited and are subject to Audit by 3PAA on a periodic basis.

(B) (i) As regards the need to establish accountability of the employees as well as SP's personnel, in respect of any task performed in the PSP system, it is submitted that three level authentication and authorisation checks are being followed i) biometric log-in, ii) User ID/Password and iii) Digital Signatures. A **digital signature** to electronic documents is what a handwritten signature is to printed documents. A digital signature is an electronic signature that can be used to authenticate the identity of the sender of a message or the **signer of a document**. Electronic documents, for example e-forms are required to be signed digitally using a Digital Signature Certificate in the same way as physical documents are signed manually,

(ii) The digital signatures have been recognized under the Indian Information Technology Act 2000 (IT Act). The Act provides for legal recognition of electronic transactions and digital signatures. Section 5 of the Act gives legal recognition to digital signatures. The Act provides for the use of Digital Signatures on the documents submitted in electronic form in order to ensure the security and authenticity of the documents. Digital Certificates are issued only through a valid Certification Authority (CA). In India, the Controller of Certifying Authorities (CCA) is the governing body under the Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, which is empowered to license and regulate the working of Certifying Authorities. The Certifying Authorities (CAs) issue digital signature certificates for electronic authentication of users. Currently there are eight CAs who have been licensed by the CCA to issue Digital Signature Certificates under the Information Technology Act 2000.

(iii) The advantages of Digital Signatures are as under :--

- **Fraud prevention:** By using digital signatures, the possibility of committing fraud is eliminated as the digital signature cannot be altered. Moreover the signature cannot be forged.
- **Message integrity:** By having a digital signature, the recipient is assured that the document is valid and free from forgery or false information.
- **Legal requirements:** Using a digital signature satisfies certain types of legal requirements for the document in question. A digital signature takes care of any formal legal aspect of executing the document. For

example, when sending e-mail to a bank for a transaction, a digital signature will verify that the request has come from the account holder.

(C) The **security measures** deployed as part of the PSP are as under :-

-

1) As soon as the user switches on, the System asks for mapping of Biometric-Authentication of the concerned user for entering into the system. This authentication takes place from the central servers and the logs are preserved and are made available for post-facto audit.

2) Even after entering into the desktop system after Bio-metric authentication, the user is not allowed to access the PSP application as it requires 2 more levels of authentication processes i.e. Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) and PIN number as password.

3) Once user attaches his/her DSC and provides the PIN, the specific part of the PSP application (as per the role and task assigned to the user) is made accessible to the user.

4) Thereafter, whatever task is performed by the user, each of his/her activity is audited and kept tamper - proof for post-facto verification as per the need.

5) Typically various audit trails that are preserved in the PSP System are:

- Bio-metric Log-in
- Web Server Logs
- Token Life Cycle
- Activity Trails
- Digital Signature Signing

In essence, the PSP system has been designed, developed and implemented as per the best security norms followed internationally and as per the ISO 27001 security controls.

**(File No. AA/PARL/125/188/2011)**

### **(Recommendation No.12)**

The Committee observe that system of online appointment to submit the passport applications was introduced by the Ministry to make the entire process speedier, citizen friendly and delivery oriented. However, the Committee came across certain instances in some passport offices wherein applicants had to wait for more than a week and in some cases upto 20 days just to get an online appointment, which defeated the very purpose of installing the system. The Committee desire that all initiatives should be taken to identify the reasons which cause such inordinate delays and the current practices and procedure should be reviewed with an objective to resolve the hindrances including the technical hiccups in the process, if any.

### **Reply of the Government**

Having given due regard to the recommendation of the Committee and to implement the vision of the PSP, the practices and procedures, including technical aspects relating to giving appointments have been reviewed by the Ministry. As a result of intensive efforts made by the

Ministry in consultation with the Service Provider, the time lag in giving appointments has been greatly reduced. It is submitted that at the 22 PSKs in operation as on 31st October 2011, appointments are released in advance varying from 2 – 9 days, keeping in view the load/volume, handling capacity of the Government staff and capacity of each PSK which is gradually settling down in the new system. In addition, Walk-in facility is also available for those applicants requiring passports on urgent and emergency basis. The appointments situation is continuously monitored and efforts are continuously underway to address this issue.

**(File No. AA/PARL/125/188/2011)**

**(Recommendation No.13)**

The Committee observe that there are 17 posts of Passport Officers in CPO Cadre. But surprisingly, as against the 12 posts available for CPO Personnel, there is not a single officer from that cadre in position and all the positions are occupied by deputationists belonging to All India Services. The Committee do not agree with the reason given by the Ministry that that this situation has arisen due to non-availability of officers from the CPO cadre with qualifying service. The Committee understand that non-availability of officers with qualifying service in CPO is due to delays in promotions in the CPO cadre. DPCs meetings are not being organized on regular basis during the last several years and after a long time promotions have taken place recently in 2010-11. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should re-look at the recruitment rules and make necessary amendments/relaxation in eligibility for officers of CPO cadre, so that all the posts available to them are filled from CPO cadre personnel and that the deputationists are posted within the limit only.

**Reply of the Government**

Recruitment Rules for Group 'B' posts in Central Passport Organization were amended in December 2010. Promotions, as per the amended rules have since been affected in December 2010 and in August 2011 respectively.

2. Amended Recruitment Rules for Group 'A' posts were notified in June 2011. For affecting promotions in accordance with these rules, prescribed qualifying service needs to be relaxed for the grades of Assistant Passport Officer and Deputy Passport Officer for promotions to next higher grades. A proposal seeking necessary relaxation was sent to Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) in June 2011. The DoPT has given its necessary relaxation on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2011 for panel year 2012-13 for the post of Passport Officer and Deputy Passport Officer and for the panel year of 2011-12 for the post of Assistant Passport Officer which has been sent to Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2011 for their concurrence. However, the DoPT has also given relaxation for ad-hoc promotion, till regular appointment is made. Departmental Promotion Committee met for ad hoc promotion of Passport Officer, Deputy Passport Officer and Assistant Passport Officer on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2011 and

promoted 5 Deputy Passport Officer as Passport Officer, 9 Assistant Passport Officer as Deputy Passport Officer and 47 Passport Granting Officer as Assistant Passport Officer.

3. Committee's observation that deputationists are posted in CPO within the limits only has been noted and are kept in view.

**(File No. AA/PARL/125/188/2011)**

**(Recommendation No.16)**

International cooperation and providing aid through Technical and Economic Cooperation to neighbouring countries and countries of Africa and Eurasia has been one of the outstanding features of Ministry's budget allocation. Out of a total budget of Rs. 7120 crores at BE 2011-2012, an amount of Rs. 3050 crores has been shown as loan and aid to these developing countries on account of technical cooperation and on carrying out mega projects. However, there are instances where time and again the additional grants have been sought by the Ministry through Supplementary Demands to meet the urgent needs of projects in these countries. Thereupon, the Committee observe that due to long implementation schedule and other external forces in the countries where the projects are being implemented, excessive delays take place in completion of the projects consequently causing time and cost overrun. Recognizing the need to strengthen relationship with these developing countries, the Committee would like to reiterate the suggestions given by the Committee in their 15th Report (14th LS on DFG 2006-07) that the relevant project details such as the original and anticipated dates of completion, factor-wise analysis of cost escalation, impact of cost overrun and viability of project etc. should be disclosed in the Outcome Budget of the Ministry every year.

**Reply of the Government**

The requirement of disclosure of the relevant project details such as the original and anticipated dates of completion, factor-wise analysis of cost escalation, impact of cost overrun and viability of project etc. in the Outcome Budget of each year has been noted. The same will be implemented in the forthcoming Outcome Budget of the Ministry and onwards.

Incidentally, the budgetary allocation of the Ministry in BE 2011-12 is Rs. 7106 crore and not Rs. 7120 crore.

**(File No. AA/PARL/125/188/2011)**

**(Recommendation No.18)**

The Committee note that Nalanda University Act 2010 was passed and came into force w.e.f. 25 November, 2010. The Vice Chancellor assumed charge in October, 2010. The State Government of Bihar allotted 446.85 acres of land to the University and a timeline for the construction

work of the University has been drawn according to which the construction work is likely to begin by January 2012 and a part of academic session will likely begin in the year 2013-14. The Committee observe that East Asia Summit (EAS) countries namely Australia, China, Singapore and Laos have offered voluntary contributions for the Project. The Governing Body has also proposed to establish a Group called 'Friends of Nalanda' comprising various countries who could help the University in various ways including raising funds for it. But the Committee are surprised to note that no initiatives have been taken to remove the drawbacks of the Report submitted by EdCIL regarding cost of the project in the year 2007. The Committee would, therefore, like that EdCIL should be asked to submit fresh report without any drawback so that the cost of the project may be ascertained taking into account all the factors. The contribution made by the Nalanda in ancient times in spreading the knowledge at that time should also be projected in all the countries particularly in China, Greece, Italy and the Arabian Countries, where similar seat of learning had flourished in ancient times for cooperation and for their financial contribution. Nalanda has provided an opportunity to us to revive the emotional bonding with the countries having similar heritage of old and rich civilizations. The Committee also desire that the 'Friends of Nalanda' Group may be constituted immediately and the collection of contributions from other countries should also start immediately. The Committee expect that a timely release of funds and ensuring diligent use of allocated resources only can avoid any further delay in completion of the project. The Committee would like to be apprised of the progress made in the Project from time to time.

### **Reply of the Government**

At the second meeting of Nalanda University Governing Board held in Patna on July 6-7, 2011, EdCIL made a preliminary presentation on the Detailed Project Report (DPR). It was observed that its presentation needed improvement and its budget projection was far from realistic. Based on suggestions from the Governing Board and several rounds of meetings between Nalanda University and EdCIL, a revised 2<sup>nd</sup> draft DPR was submitted by EdCIL on October 5, 2011. This document is being scrutinized.

### **Master Plan**

The Master Plan for Nalanda University will be developed by a specialized firm in campus planning. It will have three different areas - academic, recreational and residential - but all connected through a road network, pathways and open spaces. All buildings in Nalanda University are to be designed to follow the criteria of Green Rating Integrated Habitat Assessment (GRIHA) 4 star rating.

### **Schools**

According to the revised draft DPR, the University will have 7 Schools of Learning with a two year Masters' program and a Research/Doctoral program. Each School will have 5 departments each, with an annual student intake of 20 (increased to 30 in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of

establishment of the university). Each School will have a maximum annual intake of 10 for research/doctoral programs. The student intake will be stabilized by the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> year, with 2,100 students in the Masters program and 350 students in the Research/Doctoral program.

The School of Environment and Ecology and the School of Historical Studies will be operational in the first year of establishment of the university. The School of Languages and Literature will be operational in the second year. The School of Buddhist Studies, Philosophy and Comparative Religions and the School of International Relations and Peace Studies will be operational in the fourth year. The School of Management and the School of Information Technology will be operational in the sixth year.

### **Staff**

Three categories of human resources, i.e Teaching Staff, Non-Teaching Staff and Outsourced Staff are being considered for the University. The Teacher- to- Student ratio is proposed as 1:5. The Teacher-to- Non teaching staff ratio is proposed as 1:1. Teaching Staff is subdivided into three categories, i.e. Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor in the ratio of 1:2:3, i.e, for each Professor there will be two Associate Professors and three Assistant Professors. Professors can be promoted to a fourth category called Dean/Founding Professor/Director. By the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> year, the total requirement for teaching and non teaching staff will be 490 each. Housekeeping, security, horticulture, cafeteria etc. will be dealt with by outsourced staff.

### **Budget**

The projected total capital expenditure is Rs. 2153.8 cr. (US \$ 431 mn). This includes cost of Building & Civil Works - Rs. 1840 cr., cost of Furniture, Teaching Equipment and Machinery- Rs. 202.29 cr., Preliminary expenses- Rs. 50 cr. and contingency -Rs. 61.27 cr.

The projected recurring cost in the 1<sup>st</sup> year is Rs.32.69 cr.(US \$ 6.5 mn), and in the 10<sup>th</sup> year is Rs. 323.25 cr.(US \$ 65 mn.) (Rate of Exchange, US \$ 1 = Rs. 49.90). This includes all running administrative expenses of the university.

### **Current Status of EdCIL report**

At its meeting in Beijing on October 14-15, 2011, the Governing Board discussed the revised draft DPR. The Board suggested that EdCIL project the estimated cost of construction in future (say, the next five years) based on the trend of inflation in the last 5 years, so that a more realistic figure is available and can be budgeted for. Detailed comments by the Governing Board and the university are awaited.

Meanwhile, the report needs to address a number of other issues. EdCIL has to indicate if thought has been given to the proposed fee structure, and, if so, how much the university is likely to earn from this, or



any other source. EdCIL needs to clarify whether the estimated 15% cost towards achieving the GRIHA standard is an additional cost, as compared to non-GRIHA construction. Taking these suggestions into consideration, EdCIL is expected to submit its Final DPR soon.

### **Friends of Nalanda**

At the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Nalanda University Governing Board held in New Delhi on February 21-22, 2011, it was proposed that a group titled “Friends of Nalanda” could be constituted, comprising of a group of people who could help the university in various ways. The consensus was that such persons should not be labeled as “fundraisers” for the university. It was suggested that core funding should come from the Government of India. It was suggested that “Friends of Nalanda” will not be stakeholders in the university but can give suggestions to the Chairman of Governing Board and to the Vice Chancellor.

The “Friends of Nalanda” is an informal group and not a statutory body. This group is expected to provide informal advice and assistance to the university in academic matters, the general management of the university and the raising of funds.

### **International Advisors Panel**

At its 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting in Patna in July, 2011, the Board decided to institute a body similar to, but different from “Friends of Nalanda”, called “International Advisors Panel”. This would be a panel of eminent persons to ensure continuity and create greater global awareness of the broader vision and objectives of Nalanda University, and to perform such roles and functions as the Governing Board may determine. At its meeting in Patna, the Board decided that the Panel will be chaired by Mr. George Yeo, the former Foreign Minister of Singapore, and a member of the present Board. The Board had, however, not deliberated upon who the other members of the Panel would be. At its 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting in Beijing in October, 2011, the Board discussed inviting distinguished persons to join the Panel. Approval of the External Affairs Minister and Prime Minister has been sought for the constitution of the International Advisors Panel and the appointment of Mr. George Yeo as its chair. Thereafter, the approval of the President as Visitor of the university would be sought.

### **Contributions**

EAS member states had been asked to send contributions for Nalanda University by October 24, 2011. The Singapore Buddhist Community has indicated a contribution of S \$ 8 mn (US\$ 5mn approximately) for the library of the Nalanda University. The Government of China has pledged US \$ 1 mn. Australia has announced that they would establish (set up/fund) a Chair in the University. Mr. Madanjeet Singh, Goodwill Ambassador for UNESCO, and an Indian citizen, has pledged US \$ 1 mn. Lao PDR has announced a contribution of US \$ 50,000. Countries

like Sri Lanka and Bhutan outside the EAS have indicated their interest in being associated with the university in some manner.

At the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Nalanda University Governing Board in Beijing, Thailand pledged US \$ 100,000. The Chinese Executive Vice Foreign Minister, Mr. Zhang Zhijun, informed the Chair at their meeting on October 14, 2011 that China wants a part of its contribution of US \$ 1 mn to be spent on a China floor in the university library. He said that China would consider funding a Centre for Chinese Studies at a later date. To date, written pledges have come from Mr. Madanjeet Singh and the Government of Thailand.

### **India's contribution**

India as the host country has made the major contribution. The Government of Bihar has provided 446.85 acres of land free of cost on a 99 year lease. In 2010-2011, the Government of India provided Rs. 1.12 crores to the university. In 2011-2012, the government made a budgetary allocation of Rs.10 crores and had already provided Rs. 5.5 crores, out of which Rs. 3 crores is for beginning the construction of boundary wall. Revised Estimates of Rs. 19.834 crores for 2011-2012 and Budget Estimates of Rs. 15.922 crores for 2012-2013 are being sent to Ministry of Finance for approval. All the funds the university has so far received have come from the government of India.

### **Current Progress**

Steps have been taken in recent weeks to speed up work on the university. The Visitor has been requested to confirm the appointment of Dr. Gopa Sabharwal as the Vice-Chancellor. On November 3, 2011, the university has signed an agreement with Bihar Rajya Pul Nirman Nigam Ltd. on the construction of the boundary wall. The Ministry of Human Resource Development has nominated Professor Peter Ronald De Souza, Director, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, as a member of the new Governing Board. The Government of Bihar has also nominated two members to the new Governing Board. Steps are being taken for the selection of a project management consultant for the Global Design Competition and construction of the university.

To demonstrate its intent to begin functioning even before the construction of a campus and selection of faculty and students, the university has begun sponsoring academic events, to build the Nalanda brand. It sponsored two scholars at the workshop on Historic and Cultural Interactions between China and India, held at Beijing on October 15, 2011.

**(File No. AA/PARL/125/188/2011)**

### **(Recommendation No.19)**

The Committee note that a new Head 'Energy Security' has been created by the Ministry and the allocation made for 2011-12 is Rs. 89 Lakhs. The Committee are of the opinion that keeping the mandate in mind and the international climate on the issue of energy security, the Ministry should be ready with adequate fieldwork, background studies and data with the help of academics institutions and those engaged in the field so as to support and legitimize its claim at international level. Ministry should make vigorous efforts and engage with various stake-holders at diplomatic and political level in this regard. The Committee are of the view that the functions of the Division have become all the more important in light of the recent events in North-Africa and West-Asia. The Committee urge the Ministry to adopt a proactive role in ensuring that India's interest are secured in the region in a more sustainable manner with the long term vision. The Committee are of the view that alongwith bringing out the handbook on Energy Security, the Missions/Posts should also act as facilitator in encouraging investment and securing energy resources. The Ministry should also look at the qualitative aspects of the expenditure. Keeping in view the mandate on this account, the Committee stress upon the need to adequately enhance the budgetary allocation during the current financial year which can be taken up by the Ministry suitably at RE stage.

### **Reply of the Government**

With respect to the observation that **“the Ministry should be ready with adequate fieldwork, background studies and data with the help of academics institutions and those engaged in the field so as to support and legitimize its claim at international level”**, Energy Security Division is in the final stages of the process for hiring an institutional consultant who will be tasked with producing studies and research papers and compiling databases for the Ministry in the field of energy security. The following papers/studies have been identified for execution by the consultant:

- Commissioned Research Papers
- Paper on New and Emerging Energy Sources (focusing on technology, political economy and business potential aspects of sources like CBM, Shale Gas, new hydrocarbon finds)
- Paper on Pipelines and Energy Diplomacy (focusing on technology, political economy, and recent developments in pipeline projects around the world)
- Commissioned Reports on energy opportunities on a regional basis:
  - On Africa
  - On Latin America
  - On Central Asia
  - On South East Asia
- Case study: An analysis of the Experience of Indian Energy companies working abroad

With respect to the recommendation that **“Ministry should make vigorous efforts and engage with various stake-holders at diplomatic and political level in this regard”**, Energy Security division will provide active support to initiatives like the 3<sup>rd</sup> India-Africa Hydrocarbon Conference (9-10 December) organized by Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas which are aimed at engaging the relevant Oil and Gas / Energy Ministers of key African nations. Similarly ES division will be assisting GAIL in organizing 7<sup>th</sup> Asia Gas Partnership Summit in 2012 Energy Security Division will also provide active assistance to other nodal ministries in their engagements with International organizations These include assistance to MNRE for engagement with the IRENA; M/o Power for engagements with the IEA and the IPEEC; and M/o Petroleum and Natural Gas for engagements with IEA, IEF and other bodies.

With respect to the recommendation that **“along with bringing out the handbook on Energy Security, the Missions/Posts should also act as facilitator in encouraging investment and securing energy resources”**, Energy Security Division will be tasking the institutional consultant with generating the content for the Energy Security Handbook which will be distributed to officers in all Indian missions abroad. This publication should be ready for distribution before the end of the financial year in March 2011. This will be an useful tool in carrying out of energy security related work. With the help of focused inputs from the institutional consultant, Energy Security Division will provide timely inputs to our Missions/Posts to gather information and intervene in a manner which will encourage investment and secure more energy assets abroad.

With respect to the recommendation that **“adequately enhance the budgetary allocation during the current financial year which can be taken up by the Ministry suitably at RE stage”**, while the budget at the Revised Estimate state is at Rs 0.435 Crore, the budget proposed for the next year, 2012-13, is at Rs 0.89 crore. It may be noted that the proposed budget at BE stage for the current year was Rs 0.89 crore, but it was reduced to Rs 0.435 crore at RE stage, since this is a new Division dealing with a highly specialized field and it took some time to work out in detail the modalities of implementing the proposal to hire an institutional consultant.

**(File No. AA/PARL/125/188/2011)**

**(Recommendation No.20)**

The Committee welcome India's election as a Non-permanent Member of the United National Security Council for the term 2011-12 with an overwhelming support from the other UN Member States. The Committee desire that India should assume a leadership role and take principled stand on various global issues and challenges and channelize its creative energies to resolve contentious international issues in an amicable and peaceful manner. The Committee express that as a founder and pioneer member of the Non-Aligned Movement, India should live upto the spirit and work towards non-interference by global actors in regional and internal issues of the Member States. The Committee feel that India should

also champion the cause of developing, under-developed and least developed countries at various fora and at various negotiations for treaties and agreements particularly on the issues of new emerging politics and trade.

### **Reply of the Government**

1. India joined the Security Council as a non-permanent member on 1 January 2011 for a two year term 2011-2012. At the Council, India has taken a leadership role and stressed the need to respect the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member-states and non-interference by global actors. India has also supported the peaceful resolution of conflicts without recourse to the threat of or actual use of force, for the need to consult national authorities, and for transparency in the working methods of the UN Security Council.
2. During the period that India has been on the Security Council, the Council has adopted 54 resolutions, 18 Presidential Statements and 52 Press statements. India abstained on Resolution 1973 which authorized military action against Libya. India also abstained on a resolution in the Security Council which called for sanctions against Syria. We instead called for a Syrian-led inclusive political process, without foreign interference, which should address the legitimate concerns of all sections of the Syrian society. Prime Minister, speaking at the General Debate of the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly on 24 September 2011 reiterated this view when he said, "the observance of the rule of law is as important in international affairs as it is within countries. Societies cannot be reordered from outside through military force".
3. As the leading contributor to the UN peacekeeping operations, India expressed its concern at the expansion of the mandates of UN Peacekeeping missions without commensurate increase in resources which are made available to them. India stressed the need that peacekeeping missions should work on the principle of national consent and should support the efforts of the national authorities to resolve conflicts.
4. As part of its ongoing commitment to the purposes and principles of the Non-Aligned Movement, India participated at the XVI NAM Ministerial Conference in Bali, Indonesia in May 2011 and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Commemorative Meeting in Belgrade in September 2011. India reaffirmed its solidarity with the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and reiterated its commitment to their needs at the First India-LDC Conference hosted in New Delhi in February 2011 and again at the IV UN LDC Conference held in Istanbul in May this year. At the Second India-Africa Forum Summit held in Addis Ababa, also in May, Prime Minister announced lines of credit to African countries worth five billion US dollars for the next three years and an additional 700 million dollars to establish new institutions and training programmes in consultation with the African Union and its institutions.

**(File No. AA/PARL/125/188/2011)**

### **(Recommendation No.21)**

Taking note of the proceedings of the Exchange of the 7th Round of the Inter-Governmental Negotiations on UNSC Reforms, the Committee are of the opinion that Government of India must strategically work with other like minded countries and built up the case of UN reforms including expansion of Security Council and seek their support and cooperation in favour of India. Further, in the light of the recent visits of Heads of State/Government of all P-5 Members and their broadly positive approach on the issue of reform and support to India endorsed by most of them, Government must strive to channelize the goodwill generated by such visits and seek further endorsement of India's claim to UNSC permanent seat. However, the Committee also acknowledge the road-blocks in the process posed by some countries which have built stake in the status-quo and hence, challenge the very idea of UN Reforms and particularly to India's claim for permanent seat in the new structure. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to draw a suitable strategy to deal with those countries to steer clear the road for India's claim for permanent seat in an expanded UN Security Council. The Committee may also be kept apprised of the latest developments made in this regard from time to time.

### **Reply of the Government**

1. The Minister of External Affairs of India, the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, the Minister of External Relations of Brazil and the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Japan met in New York on 11 February 2011 to exchange views on Security Council reform. At this meeting the Ministers "agreed to press ahead, with all necessary steps to achieve at the earliest an expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent membership categories of the Security Council".

2. Beginning early March 2011, the G-4 (India, Brazil, Japan and Germany) started a process of reaching out to others on their proposal that calls for expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories and an improvement in working methods. This outreach was also in response to the letter of Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Chair of the inter- Governmental Negotiations on Security Council reforms of 23 February, 2011 which stated that the process of Council reform must evolve in an open, transparent, inclusive and comprehensive membership-driven manner. The G-4 initiative has garnered cross-regional support and demonstrated that a wide coalition of member States support expansion of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories and an improvement of its working methods.

3. The Foreign Ministers of the G-4 countries met again in New York on the margins of the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly on 23 September, 2011. At this meeting they agreed that the strong support for expansion of the Security Council in both categories and an improvement of its working methods "should be considered as the basis for further discussions in the on-going inter-Governmental Negotiations to create the momentum needed for real negotiations."

The Government has been actively seeking support from all UN member-states for India's candidature for permanent membership in an expanded Security Council. The reactions to our demarches have been positive and there is a clear acknowledgment of the increasingly important role that India is playing in international affairs. As a result of these efforts, there has been a steady accretion of support from every region for India's candidature for permanent membership of the UN Security Council.

**(File No. AA/PARL/125/188/2011)**

**(Recommendation No.22)**

The Committee are happy to note the 'Operation Home Coming' exercised by the Ministry in evacuation of more 18000 Indian nationals from Libya when the violence escalated there and the cost of operation was borne by the Government of India. However, at the same time the Committee feel stressed to note that 749 Indian nationals those were brought back from Cairo (Egypt) to Mumbai were charged air-fare more than the normal air fare by Air India. The Committee are not satisfied with the explanation of the Ministry of External Affairs that this was not an evacuation but an arrangement facilitated by the Government upon a request made by the Indian community in Egypt. In the backdrop of prevailing circumstances and the whole issue of evacuation in such situations, the Committee desire the Ministry of External Affairs to constantly monitor the situations in these countries and draw an advance contingent plan and strategy in consultation with the other concerned Ministries/Departments including the Air India to deal with such situations and the safe evacuation of Indian nationals, whenever so warranted in future.

**Reply of the Government**

The Ministry of External Affairs has taken note of the recommendation for compliance in the future on similar occasions such as had happened in Egypt earlier this year when Indian nationals in distress had to be brought back to India. Ministry continues to constantly and closely monitor the situation in the Arab world. Ministry has a strategy and contingency plan drawn up in consultation with the concerned Missions and other Ministries/Departments including Air India to ensure smooth handling of the situation and, if required, consequent evacuation of Indian nationals.

**(File No. AA/PARL/125/188/2011)**

**(Recommendation No.23)**

As per information furnished by the Ministry, during the last five years (2007-2011) a total of 175 Indian crew members were taken hostage on board of various merchant ships. The Ministry of External Affairs has a limited role and they use Diplomatic Channels to facilitate release of Indian Nationals from pirates. In order to deal with prosecution of pirates, the

Ministry of External Affairs is currently engaged in piloting a comprehensive domestic legislation. The Committee further note that the MEA is coordinating with the UN and other international bodies like the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia and the International Maritime Bureau to seek coordinated solutions to the problem of combating piracy off the coast of Somalia and has also demanded that naval patrolling in the affected area should be carried out under the UN flag. The Committee express their concern over the growing incidents of abduction of Indian seafarers from private/foreign/cargo ships by pirates in the Gulf of Aden. The Committee understand the sufferings of the families of Indian sailors who are taken hostages by pirates. The issue becomes more complicated for them since many agencies are involved in the process of their release and more often they do not get information/status of their safety and release. Hence, the Committee desire the issue of piracy needs to be addressed with the utmost seriousness it deserves. Besides appropriately taking up the matter with the international community to avert incidents of piracy, the Committee also desire the Ministry of External Affairs to draw up a long term strategy in coordination with other concerned Ministries viz. Ministries of Shipping and Defence, to stringently deal with the issue of piracy and making the sea lanes safer. At the same time, the Committee also desire the Ministry of External Affairs to expeditiously finalise the proposed legislation to deal with the prosecution of pirates. The Committee may be apprised of the concrete steps taken by the Ministry in this regard.

### **Reply of the Government**

1. MEA has been closely coordinating with the Ministry of Shipping and the Ministry of Defence regarding the counter-piracy action to be taken at the international level. Composite delegations of these Ministries have been participating in the deliberations of the Contact Group on Piracy off the coast of Somalia. The Indian Navy has been coordinating and exchanging information with other naval forces operating in the Gulf of Aden regarding action against the pirates and for protection of maritime traffic.

2. A draft of an Anti-Piracy Act has been prepared by MEA in consultation with the Ministry of Shipping, Ministry of Defence, Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guard and the Directorate General of Shipping. The draft has been submitted to the Department of Legislative Affairs, Ministry of Law & Justice for legal vetting. As soon as the legally vetted draft is received back by MEA, it will be submitted for Cabinet's consideration with the approval of the External Affairs Minister.

**(File No. AA/PARL/125/188/2011)**

### **(Recommendation No.24)**

As regards the Indian nationals languishing in jails in neighbouring countries, the Committee note that there are 317 Indian civilian prisoners in jails of Bangladesh. The Government of India are reportedly making efforts for their repatriation to their homeland. The Committee express their deep concern and request the Government of India to expedite their release.



Similarly, the Committee desire that the process of preparation of a list of Indian prisoners in jails of Pakistan should be expedited and the concrete steps should be taken by the Government to secure their early and safe release after completion of the nationality verification process.

### **Reply of the Government**

The total number of Indian nationals in Bangladesh jails has come down from 317 to 263. Out of this, 88 are convicted prisoners and 91 are under trial prisoners, leaving only 84 prisoners who have finished their jail sentences and are due for repatriation.

Our Mission has been making consistent efforts to get these 84 Indian nationals repatriated. In many of the cases, repatriation gets delayed on account of incorrect and incomplete addresses of the prisoners provided by the Bangladesh Government. We have sought consular access to meet the Indian nationals in jails to ascertain their correct addresses.

In January, 2011, the Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Persons between the two countries came into force and under Article 4 of the bilateral agreement Mission has already sought details of 88 Indian convicts from the Bangladesh Government in order to transfer them to Indian jails to serve their remaining sentences.

Government of India has been consistently taking up the issue of release and repatriation of all Indian prisoners, lodged in Pakistani jails with the Government of Pakistan at all appropriate levels. The matter was raised with Pakistan at the Foreign Secretary Level talks on February 25, 2010 in New Delhi and again on June 24, 2010 in Islamabad. The issue was also raised during Home Minister's visit to Islamabad on June 25-26, 2010 and during the Foreign Minister level talks in Islamabad on July 15, 2010. The issue was again taken up at the Foreign Secretary level talks in February 2011 in Thimphu; Home/Interior Secretary level talks on March 28-29, 2011 in New Delhi; Foreign Secretary level talks in Islamabad on 23-24 June, 2011 and Foreign Minister level talks in New Delhi on July 27, 2011.

In the Foreign Minister level talks between India and Pakistan held on July 27, 2011, in New Delhi both sides noted with satisfaction the fact that since the resumption of dialogue earlier this year, the process of release of prisoners and fishermen from both sides has continued. In this regard, the Ministers agreed with the recommendations of the Judicial Committee on Prisoners regarding (a) early repatriation of the prisoners who have completed their sentences and whose travel documents are available; (b) adoption of a humane approach in dealing with cases of fishermen, women, elderly, juvenile prisoners, prisoners terminally ill or suffering from serious illness or physical / mental disability and (c) need to monitor the welfare of prisoners in order to ensure their humane treatment

Further, an India-Pakistan Judicial Committee on Prisoners consisting of four retired judges from each side has been set up to recommend steps for humane treatment and expeditious release of

prisoners of the respective countries in each other's jails. The committee has so far had four meetings and has given several recommendations. The Committee has to-date met four times on 26-27 February 2008, 9-14 June 2008, 18-23 August 2008 and 19-23 April, 2011.

Members of the India-Pakistan Judicial Committee on Prisoners visited Pakistan from 18-23 April 2011 and visited jails in Karachi, Rawalpindi and Lahore. During the visit, the Pakistani side shared the lists of Indian Fishermen and civilian prisoners. Consular Access was conducted in respect of some of the fishermen and prisoners on the spot. The Committee suggested that the Nationality verification process should be facilitated and all those prisoners who have completed their sentences and whose travel documents are available should be repatriated to their respective countries at the earliest. The next meeting of the Judicial Committee is likely to be held in India shortly.

High Commission of India, Islamabad, on a continuing basis, monitors the status of Indian prisoners in Pakistani jails and requests for consular access for these prisoners. Once the consular access is granted by the Government of Pakistan, the verification papers are sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs through the Ministry of External Affairs for nationality status verification of these prisoners. High Commission of India, on a continuing basis, takes up the matter with the Government of Pakistan for the release of all those Indian prisoners who have completed their sentences. A Consular Access Agreement was signed on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008 between the two countries, which provides that India and Pakistan exchange list of prisoners of each in the other's country on 01 January and 01 July each year. Government is committed to taking all necessary steps for earliest possible release and repatriation of all Indian Prisoners, in Pakistani jails.

As a result of Governments efforts, 473 Indian nationals lodged in Pakistani jails were released and repatriated to India in the 2010. In 2011, as on 1<sup>st</sup> September, 116 Indian nationals have been released and repatriated to India from Pakistan.

**(File No. AA/PARL/125/188/2011)**

## **CHAPTER – III**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS/ OBSERVATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT REPLIES**

**-NIL-**

## **CHAPTER – IV**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS/ OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE AND REQUIRE REITERATION**

#### **(Recommendation No.11)**

The Committee note that the project of e-passport was supposed to be rolled out in general category by the end of year 2009. But the project has been delayed due to pendency of fresh security clearance in respect of a technically qualified bidder from the Ministry of Home Affairs. Moreover, discussions are still going on to devise a passport which would be tamper proof and which could not be forged. The parameter for biometrics has also not been standardized so far. The Committee, therefore, desire that MEA should take up the matter at the highest level so that all the discussions are completed and such an ambitious project may reach at the implementation level without any further delay.

#### **Reply of the Government**

As noted by the Committee, the project of implementation of e-passport has been delayed due to pendency of fresh security clearance in respect of a technically qualified bidder from the Ministry of Home Affairs. Consultations are still going on with Ministry of Home Affairs and other security agencies to devise a passport which would be tamper proof and which could not be forged. E-passports have been partially introduced for Diplomatic and Official passports since 5 August, 2008.

**(File No. AA/PARL/125/188/2011)**

#### **(Recommendation No.14)**

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) functions as the cultural arm of the Ministry of External Affairs to formulate policies and programmes relating to India's external cultural relations. The ICCR has engaged itself proactively over the last several years to project India's soft power and undertaken a rapid expansion of its activities and outreach both within and outside India. The Council is presently maintaining 25 Indian Cultural Centres abroad including the 10 Cultural Centres established during the last 3 years. The proposal for establishing 12 more Cultural Centres at overseas locations are under active consideration of the Ministry. The Committee has been regularly recommending to set up more Centres of ICCR in the country and abroad also besides diversifying the activities of the existing Centres. But, the Committee express their concern to note that there have been inordinate delays in opening of Regional Centres in India and Cultural Centres overseas. For example, the opening of an Indian Cultural Centre at Washington has been under consideration for more than 5 years. The Committee, therefore, expect that the Ministry would take

appropriate steps for completion of all the pending projects in a time-bound manner. The responsibility of Ministry is not just to open a centre in particular part of the country or world but sufficient staff should also be ensured for the proper functioning of the Centre. The Committee, therefore, desire that in all newly set up Centres abroad, posts should be created to appoint persons who have sound knowledge of cultural heritage of India as well as of countries covered by the Centre so that they may be able to form a cultural link between India and that particular country(ies). The Committee would like to be apprised of the initiatives taken in this regard.

### **Reply of the Government**

Presently, the Council is maintaining 37 Indian Culture Centres and sub centres abroad. The proposal for establishing 08 more Culture Centers are under active consideration including ICC, Washington and Paris (list enclosed). Proposal to open the Centre has already been sent to Embassy of India, Washington and finalization of a suitable premise is still under consideration.

The delay in opening new centers / completion of pending projects could be partly attributed to finalizing suitable premises in consultation with the Ministry and the Mission.

The Council deputed India based Staff i.e. Directors, Dy Directors, Programme Assistants and India based Teachers in the stream of Yoga, Tabla, Bharatnatyam Dance, Hindi, Kathak Dance etc. for conducting classes in the Centre to promote Indian Culture through the classes in Dance and Music. Through regular interaction & guidance, the Centres are becoming hubs for promoting Indian Culture & heritage by organizing exhibitions of art & sculpture, Literary events such as Book Reading, Poetry sessions, Lectures on wide range of topics like Philosophy, History, Sociology, Economic Trends etc. Indian Festivals – Holi and Diwali – are being celebrating as joint programmes with local institutions/resources resulting to form a cultural link between Indian and that particular country/ies. More importantly the Centres act as hubs for dialogue and interaction between cultural trends and personalities both India and the host country.

A number of Centres have already started new activities such as Music events, Book Launches, Kavi Sammelans etc. The India based teachers have been encouraged to do 'outreach activities' including visits to other cities and joint programmes with local institutions.

Local resources are being increasingly utilized, such as using local experts to teach Indian dance, music, yoga etc. as and when required. Exchange of Cultural troupes are also spreading an awareness of cultural importance, values & tradition and foster a close link.

Recommendations of the Committee regarding appointment of persons with sound knowledge of cultural heritage of India and the host countries have been noted by the ICCR and followed in all such

appointments. Council has appointed Directors of newly opened Centres keeping in view the recommendations of the Committee and in compliance with decisions of the Statutory Bodies of the Council.

With regard to creation of posts for Indian Cultural Centres Abroad (ICCs), the Council had submitted in December 2010 the proposal for creation of additional posts of the levels Director (Counselor/ First Secretary/ Second Secretary) and Dy. Director (Third Secretary level) five posts for each level totaling to 20 to run the Indian Cultural Centres abroad. The Ministry External Affairs sought additional information with respect to the level of the post at each cultural centre. ICCR in response on 15.6.2011 had stated that the level of the Director of the cultural centre would be decided keeping in view the size of the Mission and cultural diversity of the accredited country. Thereafter, MEA, on 22.6.2011 returned the file with the remarks that in view of the circular on economy measures banning creation of posts, the proposal for creation of these posts may be taken up in the next financial year. In view of the strong recommendation of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on MEA, the proposal for creation of posts would again being submitted to MEA.

At present ICCR has 14 Regional offices. Five more Regional Offices are proposed to be opened at Bhopal, Ahmedabad, Jammu, Srinagar and Patna. The Regional Offices at Bhopal and Ahmedabad are expected to be operational by December 2011.

### **LIST OF INDIAN CULTURAL CENTERS ABROAD**

1. Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture, Cairo, Egypt
2. The Tagore Centre, Berlin, Germany
3. Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture, Port Louis, Mauritius
4. Indian Cultural Centre, Paramaribo, Suriname
5. Indian Cultural Centre Georgetown, Guyana
6. Jawaharlal Nehru Indian Cultural Centre, Jakarta, Indonesia
7. Indian Cultural Centre, Bali, Indonesia
8. Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Centre, Moscow, Russia
9. The Nehru Centre, London, United Kingdom
10. Indian Cultural Centre, Astana, Kazakhstan
11. Lal Bahadur Shastri Centre for Indian Culture, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
12. Indian Cultural Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa
13. Indian Cultural Centre, Durban, South Africa
14. Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Cultural Co-operation, Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago
15. Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo, Sri Lanka
16. Indian Cultural Centre, Dushanbe, Tajikistan
17. Indian Cultural Centre, Suva, Fiji
18. Indian Cultural Centre, Lautoka, Fiji
19. Indian Cultural Centre, Kabul, Afghanistan
20. Indian Cultural Centre, Beijing, China
21. Indian Cultural Centre, Kathmandu, Nepal
22. Indian Cultural Centre, Bangkok, Thailand

23. Indian Cultural Centre, Tokyo, Japan
24. Indian Cultural Centre, Abu Dhabi, UAE
25. Indian Cultural Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
26. Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre, Dhaka, Bangladesh
27. Nehru Wangchuck Cultural Centre, Thimphu, Bhutan
28. Indian Cultural Centre, Mexcio city, USA
29. Indian Cultural Centre, Yangon, Myanmar
30. Indian Cultural Centre, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania
31. Indian Cultural Centre, Seoul, South Korea
32. Indian Cultural Centre, Prague, Czech Republic
33. Indian Cultural Centre, Budapest, Hungary
34. Indian Cultural Centre, Male, Maldives
35. Indian Cultural Centre, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
36. Indian Cultural Centre, Sao Paulo, Brazil
37. The Gandhi Centre, The Hague, Netherlands

### **CULTURAL CENTRES WHICH ARE UNDER PROCESS**

1. Indian Cultural Centre, Washington
2. Indian Cultural Centre, Sydney
3. Indian Cultural Centre, Singapore
4. Indian Cultural Centre, Paris
5. Indian Cultural Centre, Buenos Aires, Argentina
6. Indian Cultural Centre, Toronto
7. Indian Cultural Centre, Hanoi
8. Indian Cultural Centre, Lagos

**(File No. AA/PARL/125/188/2011)**

## CHAPTER – V

### RECOMMENDATIONS/ OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED

#### (Recommendation No.4)

The Committee find that out of 37 passport offices, 18 passport offices are presently operating from rental buildings. Out of these 18 rented offices, Ministry has purchased plots of land for 9 offices. Besides, the plots have been identified at three places namely Bhopal, Trivandrum and Jammu and the Ministry are reportedly in the process to liaise with the respective State Governments at these places for allotment of land. The Committee would specifically like to draw the attention of the Ministry towards the promise made by the Ministry regarding completion of construction of building for RPO Guwahati by December 2011 and reiterate the Ministry of External Affairs to expedite a time-bound construction of RPO buildings at the places where the land has been purchased including one at RPO Guwahati and speed up the process for the remaining places. The Committee would like to be apprised of the status of constructions of building at these places.

#### Reply of the Government

Regarding completion of construction of Passport Office building at Guwahati, by December, 2011, it is informed that Ministry has hoped that after approval of drawings, the project would be completed in 2 years time CPWD had sought some clarifications for revision of drawings for deletion of the sections affected in the event of opening of PSK (as recommended by "the committee" during its study visit to PO Guwahati in July, 2010). The PSK system is in initial stages, hence, its exact impact on the space requirements could not be assessed with perfection.

Meanwhile, Ministry felt that due to shortage of accommodation for PO staff and also Branch Secretariat, Guwahati, is functioning from rented premises, this plot of land is insufficient. Therefore, Ministry is seeking a bigger plot of nearly 1 acre in the nearby location from State Government. A request in this regard has been made to Chief Secretary, Assam Government, who directed the Collector, District Kamrup to locate another plot as requisitioned by Ministry. Therefore, if State Government would be able to allot another plot the existing plot would be disposed off.

As far as status of acquiring land at Bhopal, Trivandrum and Jammu is concerned, the status is as follows:

- a. **Bhopal:** Government of Madhya Pradesh has now formally allotted a plot of land admeasuring 2044.8 Sq M on lease basis for a premium of Rs. 8,58,73,000/- (Rupees Eight Crore Fifty Eight Lakh Seventy Three Thousand only). The plot is located in a prime locality



of Bhopal at Arera Hills. The process of making the payment to State Government is underway.

**b. Trivandrum:** State Government of Kerala changed its stand on allotment of a plot of land due to growing demand from various State Government and Gol offices. It has now proposed to construct a building, in which space would be allotted as per requirement of individual offices of various State and Centre Government Ministries. They have asked Ministry to intimate space requirements for the Passport Office also. But the past experience of Ministry in purchasing the built-up properties from state governments has not been that good. Passport Office is a public dealing office and has specific requirements. State Government would construct space but not as per our special requirements. Therefore, this proposal of State Government is not found viable. Ministry would like to purchase a plot of land and construct a building exclusively for Passport Office.

**c. Jammu:** State Government has identified a plot of land admeasuring 1300 Sq M. Ministry has to check the feasibility of this plot of land. The average plot of land area acquired by the Ministry is in the range of 1800 Sq M e.g. Surat 3000 Sq M, Amritsar 1672 Sq M, Bhopal 2044 Sq M, Jalandhar 1430 Sq M, Pune 1602 Sq M and Dehradun 2594 Sq M. Currently Passport Office is running from a rented building. The rented area is approximately 500 Sq M (carpet area) in addition we would need nearly 500 Sq M more carpet area for locating PSK in the same building. In addition to this there is space required for walls, staircases, lifts, Electrical Sub-station, DG Set, parking for cars and two-wheelers etc. A team from Ministry is going in the first week of December to check the suitability of the plot and tentative permissible building control parameters.

As desired by the committee, status of plots ongoing projects as well as the places where plots of land have been acquired by the Ministry, is as under:

1. **Vizag:** The Passport office has been shifted to new building.
2. **Mumbai:** Construction of this project is in full swing and CPWD has assured to complete the project in 2012.
3. **Surat:** Construction of Passport Office building and 22 Staff residences is going on at full swing.
4. **Jalandhar:** Drawings approved by the Ministry, have been submitted to Punjab Urban Development Authority (PUDA) in July 2011 and approval is still awaited.
5. **Srinagar:** CPWD has been requested to revise concept drawings because, as per Passport Seva Project (PSP) based on Public Private Partnership (PPP) model envisages co-location of Passport Seva Kendra (PSK) in the Passport Office building which was not earlier in the concept plan. Revised drawings are awaited.

6. **Dehradun:** State government has not handed over the possession of the plot of land as the area available at site was less than allotted. Passport Officer has been directed to sort out the matter at the earliest.
7. **Pune:** CPWD has been requested to provide the concept drawings, which are awaited.
8. **Amritsar:** NBCC had submitted revised concept drawings and Preliminary Estimate amounting to Rs. 14.3 crores, which are under consideration in the Ministry.
9. **Guwahati:** State Government has been requested to provide an alternate plot of land admeasuring at least 1 acre so that Passport Office, Branch Secretariat Office and staff residences could be constructed. In this connection, Regional Passport Officer, Guwahati met with Chief Minister, Assam, Principal Secretary (Revenue), DC, Kamrup for immediate allotment. Deputy Secretary (Revenue), Govt. of Assam issued letter No. RSS.342/2002/32 dated 21/09/2011 enclosed the request letter of Ministry to Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup to furnish a suitable proposal. RPO is constantly pursuing the matter with state government. A suitable proposal is awaited from State Government, Assam.

**(File No. AA/PARL/125/188/2011)**

### **(Recommendation No.5)**

Taking into account the grievances of Indian citizens as well as foreigners in respect of delivery of efficient and fast services by Indian Missions/Posts abroad, the Committee urge the Ministry should establish a centralized monitoring system at the Headquarters to keep check/ensure delivery of efficient and fast services provided by these Indian establishments abroad. The Committee desire that the public interface should be improved and the officials/officers posted at such places should undergo not only orientation programme but also be trained in soft skills and should be well informed about the procedures and legalities. The Committee also desire that adequate training be provided to the staff attending public counters and handling telephone and should be adequately aware of the procedures so that the information provided to service seekers/applicants is accurate and updated. Apart from communication links like telephone, call centres etc, the Ministry should take help of social media on the web to acquire feedback and to know the grievances/suggestions of the people to make the services better.

### **Reply of the Government**

Following are the details of the action taken on the Recommendation:

1. One of the primary activities of the Foreign Service Institute is the training of Indian Foreign Service (IFS) Probationers with the objective of

preparing them to handle the wide range of tasks that they would be required to perform during their professional careers, both in Missions and Posts abroad as well as in India. Probationers are duly trained in the procedures and legalities regarding relevant subjects. They are also imparted training in soft skills including representational skills.

2. In addition, FSI has diversified its activities to include training programmes for staff and officers of the Ministry of External Affairs at different levels, in particular, refresher programmes before they proceed abroad on posting. At the Section Officers' level, FSI conducts refresher courses, which include soft skills and communication skills, in addition to special sessions on dealing with general public on Consular, Passport and Visa matters while posted in missions abroad.

3. Similar courses are also mandatory for Assistants, UDCs and LDCs of MEA before they proceed abroad on transfer. In addition, training in Integrated Mission's Accounting Software (IMAS) is compulsory for posting abroad for all levels upto Section Officers. Since January, 2011, four Refresher Courses have been held, apart from seven IMAS training programmes.

4. FSI has also conducted a training programme for departmentally promoted clerks from Group D from August 1 to 23, 2011. In addition to basic office procedure, accounts and basic computer training, they were also trained on handling telephone and on Basic English speaking, in order to provide better services to applicants and information seekers, while they are posted in missions abroad.

5. FSI has conducted one-day training sessions on Right to Information Act, 2005 so that MEA officers/officials are familiar with the various aspects of the Act and take requisite action on receiving requests for information from the general public.

6. The Joint Secretary level officers of MEA were briefed on the "New Public Diplomacy Tools" as part of their Mid-Career Training Programme in May, 2011.

**(File No. AA/PARL/125/188/2011)**

**(Recommendation No.15)**

The Committee observe that ICCR has been designated as the principal/coordinating organization in the country to take welfare measures for all foreign students in India. The Committee also note that in order to provide better services to the scholars studying under ICCR scholarships, an e-portal has been set up with the facility of interaction between ICCR, institutions and scholars/students. The Committee hope that proper feedback mechanism would also be established to address the grievances posed by scholars/students and ICCR would act as a guardian and facilitator for them ensuring their security and facilities being provided to them including accommodation etc. through their respective

universities/institutions etc. The Committee also desire that besides looking into the various aspect of welfare of foreign students, the Council/Ministry would consider widening of the scope of scholarships and increase in their numbers also.

### **Reply of the Government**

It may please be noted that no such e-portal was to be set up by ICCR. Ministry of HRD was mandated to set-up the e-portal with the help of EdCIL, together with a helpline.

Foreign Secretary had desired that ICCR's alumni data base would be launched at the same time as the establishment of the e-portal. We are awaiting a notification from Ministry of HRD regarding the setting up/ launch of e-portal. Meanwhile, a window of ICCR's website would also be available to foreign students to post their views/ issues.

With reference to having feedback mechanisms in place and ICCR acting as a guardian and facilitator for foreign students, ICCR currently fulfils this role primarily through our Regional Offices, whose mandate is to maintain regular interactions with International Students, FRRO's., and other relevant organizations to monitor the welfare of the students.

Each University / Institute where ICCR students have been admitted has been requested to appoint a high level official (normally Head of the Department) as International Students Advisor (ISA) to look into the day to day issues related to foreign students including problems with landlords and brokers, as also to provide counselling and guidance and our Regional Offices interact closely with these ISAs. The Council also organizes an annual meeting of all ISAs where problems being faced by students are discussed and addressed on a coordinated and comprehensive basis. For the first time, this year student representatives are also being invited to participate in the annual ISA meeting. Vice Chancellors of major Universities also have an opportunity to raise student-related issues in the annual meeting of ICCR's General Assembly of which they are Members.

The ICCR is providing approximately 2500 scholarships every year to students from more than 100 countries to enable them to pursue under graduate / post graduate / M. Phil / Ph.D/Post Doctorate courses, including professional courses. The scope of scholarships offered is already very wide, as students are free to apply for admission to any subject except Medicine where no quota is given to ICCR by the Ministry of Health and Family Planning / Ministry of HRD, and Engineering, Pharmacy and Architecture, where also the quota allotted to ICCR students is limited for all other courses, the only restrictions are the total number of scholarships available and the acceptance by the University for admission.

Also, ICCR entertains applications to all recognized Central/State Universities / Institutions including those Deemed Universities recognized by the Government of India. The only restriction here is that we do not send students to private institutions not recognized by the Government of India.

As regards the increase in the number of scholars every year, this does not fall within the purview of ICCR as we only administer schemes on behalf of other Ministries, / Government agencies, and the increase in number of scholarships is decided by these Ministries / agencies.

**(File No. AA/PARL/125/188/2011)**

**(Recommendation No.17)**

The Committee observe that Government had announced an allocation of Rs. 500 crores for assisting the Sri Lankan Government in the resettlement and rehabilitation of internally displaced persons in the Northern Province through a number of projects. But the Committee note that as against an allocation of Rs. 90 crores only Rs. 68.96 crores was spent during 2009-10, during the year 2010-11, Rs. 83.82 crores have been spent by February 2011 against the allocation of Rs. 90 crores and a higher budgetary allocation of Rs. 290 crores has been made for the year 2011-12. The Committee feel that the rehabilitation and resettlement projects have already been delayed and therefore, desire that all the proposed projects including building of 50,000 houses should now be completed in a specific timeline so that the beneficiaries may get the benefit without any further delay.

**Reply of the Government**

Government of India, based on the capacity to absorb the assistance on ground in Northern Sri Lanka, has implemented several resettlement, rehabilitation and reconstruction projects for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Northern Sri Lanka. Several constraints, including anti-human mines spread across vast areas of Northern Sri Lanka also slowed down the project implementation. Notwithstanding the above, GoI during the FY 2009-10, spent Rs. 68.96 crores, out of allocated Rs. 70 crores under 'Aid to Sri Lanka' budget, on immediate relief and rehabilitation measures.

During the FY 2010-11 total of Rs. 90 cores were allocated under 'Aid to Sri Lanka' for several resettlement, rehabilitation and reconstruction projects for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Northern Sri Lanka. The total amount spent during the FY on various projects aimed at resettlement and reconstruction in Sri Lanka stood at Rs. 93.86 crores. The main areas of expenditure included supply of roofing/shelter material for IDPs in Northern Sri Lanka, supply of cement bags for resettling IDPs, ongoing de-mining work by Indian teams, supply of 500 Tractors and agricultural implements, supply of 95,000 agricultural packs, supply of seeds to revive agriculture in Northern Sri Lanka, month long artificial limb fitment camp, development of Jaffna Teaching Hospital, establishment of Vocational Training Institute among others.

A pilot project for construction of 1000 new houses for IDPs in Northern Sri Lanka is under implementation. Around 100 are ready for occupation, work on 200 houses is till roof level and 400 under various stages of construction. Government of Sri Lanka has handed over another 150 sites to contractor after clearing jungle and the work at these sites is being taken up by the contractor. Another 150 sites are yet to be cleared of jungle by Government of Sri Lanka.

The Committee on Non Plan Expenditure (CNE), on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2011, gave its in-principle approval for the modalities for construction of remaining 49,000 houses. The Government is working towards expeditious implementation of the project.

Government has allocated Rs 290 cores under 'Aid to Sri Lanka' in the CFY 2011-12. The funds are being utilized towards construction of houses for IDPs and other infrastructure development projects, including rehabilitation of Kankesanthurai harbour, deployment of Indian de-mining teams, repair and construction of hospital and schools, supply of 1280 computers to schools in the eastern province, project for capacity building of war widows by SEWA, second limb re-fitment camp in Jaffna, setting up of Vocational Training Centres in Batticaloa and Nuwra Eliya, construction of the Cultural Centre in Jaffna, restoration of the Duraiappah stadium in Jaffna and other small developmental projects.

**(File No. AA/PARL/125/188/2011)**

**NEW DELHI**  
**28 March, 2012**  
**Chaitra 08, 1934 (Saka)**

**ANANTH KUMAR,**  
**Chairman,**  
**Standing Committee on External Affairs**

**MINUTES OF THE SIXTEENTH SITTING OF THE STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS HELD ON 28<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2012**

The Committee sat from 1600 hrs. to 1645 hrs. in Committee Room 'B',  
Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

**PRESENT**

**Shri Ananth Kumar – Chairman**

**MEMBERS  
LOK SABHA**

2. Shri Anandrao Adsul
3. Dr. Shafiqur Rahman Barq
4. Shri Bhudeo Choudhary
5. Shri Rajendrasinh Rana
6. Dr. Bhola Singh
7. Shri Janardhana Swamy
8. Dr. Shashi Tharoor

**RAJYA SABHA**

9. Shri Birendra Prasad Baishya
10. Shri A.W. Rabi Bernard
11. Shri H.K. Dua
12. Dr. K.P. Ramalingam
13. Dr. Karan Singh
14. Shri Shreegopal Vyas

**SECRETARIAT**

- |    |                  |   |                     |
|----|------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1. | Shri U.S. Saxena | - | Joint Secretary     |
| 2. | Shri K. D. Muley | - | Director            |
| 3. | Dr. Ram Raj Rai  | - | Additional Director |

2. At the outset, the Chairman welcomed Members to the sitting of the Committee.

3. The Committee then took up for consideration the draft Report on Action Taken by Govt. on the recommendations contained in the 10<sup>th</sup> Report (15<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha) of the Committee on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the year 2011-12. The Chairman invited the Members to offer their suggestions, if any, for incorporation in the draft Report. The Members suggested some minor modifications.

**5. The Committee then adopted the draft Report and authorized the Chairman to finalize the Action Taken Report incorporating the suggestions made by the Members and present the same to Parliament.**

*The Committee then adjourned.*



*(Vide Para 4 of Introduction of Report)*

**ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT ON THE  
RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS CONTAINED IN THE  
TENTH REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (15<sup>TH</sup> LOK SABHA)**

(i) Total Number of Recommendations 24

(ii) Recommendations/Observations, which have been accepted by the Government.

Recommendation Nos. 1-3,6-10,12,13,16,18 and 19-24.

**Total-18**

**Percentage: 75%**

(iii) Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government replies.

Recommendation No. -Nil-

**Total-00**

**Percentage: Nil**

(v) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration.

Recommendation Nos. 11 and 14,

**Total- 02**

**Percentage: 08.33%**

(vi) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited.

Recommendation Nos. 4,5,15 and 17

**Total-04**

**Percentage: 16.66%**