

THIRTY-FIFTH REPORT
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(2012-2013)

(FIFTEENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(DEPARTMENT OF LAND RESOURCES)

*[Action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained
in the Twenty-Eighth Report (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on Demands for
Grants (2012-13) of the Ministry of Rural Development
(Department of Land Resources)]*

Presented to Lok Sabha on 18.12.2012

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 18.12.2012



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COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
RURAL DEVELOPMENT (2012-2013)

Shrimati Sumitra Mahajan — *Chairperson*

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3. Shri Pulin Bihari Baske
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| 3. Smt. Meenakshi Sharma | — | <i>Deputy Secretary</i> |
| 4. Shri Ravi Kant Prasad Sinha | — | <i>Committee Assistant</i> |

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Rural Development (2012-2013) having been authorised by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, present the 35th Report on the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 28th Report of the Standing Committee on Rural Development (15th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants (2012-13) of the Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Land Resources).

2. The 28th Report was presented to Lok Sabha/laid in Rajya Sabha on 2 May, 2012. Replies of the Government to all the recommendations contained in the Report were received on 1 August, 2012.

3. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their sitting held on 14 December, 2012.

4. An analysis of the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 28th Report of the Committee (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) is given in **Appendix-II**.

NEW DELHI;
14 December, 2012

23 Agrahayana, 1934 (Saka)

SUMITRA MAHAJAN,
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on
Rural Development.

CHAPTER I

REPORT

This Report of the Standing Committee on Rural Development (2012-13) deals with the action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in their Twenty-Eighth Report (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Land Resources) for the year 2012-2013.

2. The Twenty-Eighth Report was presented to Lok Sabha on 2 May, 2012 and was laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on the same date. The Report contained 14 Observations/Recommendations.

3. Action Taken Notes in respect of all the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Report have been received from the Government. These have been examined and categorised as follows:—

- (i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government:

Serial Nos. 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13 and 14

Total: 10
Chapter-II

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

Serial No. Nil

Total: Nil
Chapter-III

- (iii) Observation/Recommendation in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee:

Serial No. 9

Total: 01
Chapter-IV

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

Serial Nos. 1, 4 and 12

Total: 03
Chapter-V

4. The Committee desire that final replies in respect of recommendations for which only interim replies have been given by the Government included in Chapter-V of this Report and replies to recommendations made in the Chapter-I of this Report may be furnished to the Committee expeditiously.

5. The Committee will now deal with action taken by the Government on some of their Observations/Recommendations that require reiteration or merit comments.

A. Progress of implementation of IWMP projects

Recommendation (Serial No. 3, Para No. 2.3)

6. With regard to the implementation of IWMP projects, the Committee had recommended as under:—

“The Committee note that Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) was started in the year 2009-10 after integrating the Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP), Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP) into a single programme. Reportedly, IWMP is a demand driven programme and the activities taken up under the programme are spread over in three phases — the Preparatory Phase of 1 to 2 years, the Watershed Works Phase of 2 to 3 years and the Consolidation and Withdrawal Phase of 1-2 years. In other words, there is a project duration of 4-7 years for IWMP. The Committee are dismayed to note that the physical performance under IWMP is not encouraging in view of the fact that during the fiscal year 2011-12 (upto 15.02.2012), against the target for sanction of new projects covering an area of 87.40 lakh hectare and for ongoing projects covering an area of 16.78 lakh hectare, the achievements were 70.01 lakh hectare (80%) and 4.95 lakh hectare (29%) respectively. The financial performance has also remained dismal during this period as against the target of Rs. 2314.20 crore, the Department has been able to infuse only an amount of Rs. 2055.35 (88%). The Department, for the year 2012-13, has fixed a target of 50 lakh hectare which is based on minimum tentative allocation system. The Committee are apprehensive that keeping in view the past performance, achievement of this target by the Department would remain a pipe dream. The Committee are also aware of the fact that, at this juncture, the targets spelled out by the Department are only confined to sanctioning of projects. The performance of the Department would depend on actual completion of the projects,

the details of which would start emanating in the middle of Twelfth Five Year Plan. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that a detailed and practicable strategy be put in place and proper plan be prepared to ensure that the target for sanctioning of new and ongoing projects are met with surgical precision and methodical approach. The Committee would also like the Department to approach the Ministry of Finance to allocate optimum funds, at the time of revised estimates so that the implementation of projects do not suffer for wants of funds."

7. The DoLR in their action taken reply have stated as under:—

"It is to submit that during 2011-12, against the target of 87.40 lakh ha, Department has sanctioned IWMP projects covering an area of 90.79 lakh ha (103.87%). Against the financial target of Rs. 2314.20 crore, Department has released Rs. 2312.09 crore (99.9%) under IWMP during 2011-12. The Department will make all efforts to achieve the target of 50 Lakh ha. set for 2012-13 under IWMP. As indicated in reply to para 2.2, the Department will approach the Ministry of Finance to allocate optimum funds.

To ensure timely completion of the on-going projects and sanction of new projects, as indicated in reply to para 2.1, the Department is closely monitoring the progress of implementation of IWMP with States.

Para 2.1 states as under:—

".....The Department has been emphasizing on expediting the implementation of watershed projects in the Steering Committee meetings, Regional Review Meetings, field visits, visit of Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development to States. Recently, one-day conference with Chief Executive Officers of the State Level Nodal Agencies (SLNAs) was organized on 21.5.2012 at New Delhi under the chairmanship of Secretary (Land Resources). In addition, one-day conference with State Ministers was organized in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on 08.6.2012 under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble MRD to review the implementation of watershed programmes. The issue of expediting implementation and submitting proposals for new projects were discussed and States have been directed to ensure necessary action for the same....."

8. The Committee note from the action taken reply that the Department while updating the status of sanction of IWMP projects and the financial performance for the year 2011-12 has stated that

the physical achievements in terms of sanction of projects was to the tune of 103.87 per cent whereas financial performance stood at 99.9 per cent. However, the Committee are surprised to note that the Department has conveniently skipped the figures relating to physical achievements of the ongoing projects covering an area of 16.78 lakh hectare for the said duration.

The Committee are apprised that to ensure completion of the on-going projects and sanction of new projects, the Department is closely monitoring the progress of implementation of IWMP with States by taking up the issue at the Steering Committee meetings, Regional Review Meetings, field visits and during the visit of Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development to States. The Committee also find that the Department has also held one day conference each with the Chief Executive Officers of the State Level Nodal Agencies (SLNAs) under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Land Resources) and with the State Ministers under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development for expediting the implementation of IWMP. While appreciating the steps being taken by the Department, the Committee would like to be apprised of the status of the implementation of the ongoing projects.

B. Progress of completion of IWDP projects

Recommendation (Serial No. 5, Para No. 2.5)

9. With regard to the progress of completion of IWDP projects, the Committee had recommended as under:—

“The Committee note that Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP) is aimed at integrated development of wastelands/degraded lands based on village/micro watershed plans. The Department has stated that the projects under the programme are sanctioned in the Blocks not covered by Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP). The Department has further stated that from 2007-08 onwards, no new projects are sanctioned under this scheme and 609 projects are proposed to be completed during the fiscal year, 2012-13. While the Committee appreciate the timeline given by the Department to complete 609 projects, at the same time, they express concern over the retarded rate of completion of projects which are more than 6 years old, apparently, due to poor coordination between the implementing agencies. Going by the past record of the Department with regard to completion of 278 projects during the fiscal year 2010-11 and 142 projects during

the fiscal year 2012-13, the Committee have serious apprehension regarding completion of 609 projects during the fiscal year 2012-13 that too at the rate of 50 projects per month. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Department should play a pro-active role by strengthening their monitoring system so that all the 609 projects are completed within the end of this fiscal year. The Committee would like to be kept informed about the progress made in this regard."

10. The DoLR in their action taken reply have stated as under:—

"As recommended by the Hon'ble Committee, the Department is closely monitoring the progress of Watershed Projects through Regional Review Meetings, Steering Committee Meetings, Meetings with CEOs/Chairman SLNA, Monthly & Quarterly Progress reports, and through field visits by Department's Officials and visits of Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development. This issue of timely completion of projects was also discussed in one-day conference of CEOs of State Level Nodal Agencies of States held on 21.05.2012 and one-day conference of States Ministers looking after watershed programmes held on 08.06.2012. States were directed to ensure completion of ongoing IWDP projects within the timelines set by the Department.

As on 30.6.12, 49 projects have been completed out of 609 ongoing projects of IWDP."

11. The Committee find that against a set target of completion of 609 ongoing projects under IWDP during the fiscal year 2012-13, the Department has been able to complete only 49 projects i.e. 8% during the first quarter of the current fiscal ending 30.06.2012. With this abysmally slow pace of progress which comes to around completion of mere 16 projects per month, i.e. 2.6%, the Committee are apprehensive of the completion of remaining 560 projects i.e. 92% in the remaining three quarters of the fiscal by the Department. The Committee are of the view that the various measures taken by the Department viz. closely monitoring the progress of watershed projects and directions given to States to ensure completion of ongoing projects within the timelines, have not been able to produce the desired results. The Committee, therefore, desire that it is high time the Department revisits its strategy and also pursue it vigorously so that the target of completing 560 projects in the remaining period of the year 2012-13 is achieved.

C. Coverage under Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP)

Recommendation (Serial No. 6, Para No. 2.6)

12. In the context of coverage under DPAP, the Committee had recommended as under:—

“The Committee observe that Drought Prone Areas Programme aimed at minimizing the adverse impact of drought on the production of crops, productivity of crops, productivity of land, availability of water, livestock and human resources, thereby, ultimately leading to drought proofing of the affected areas. With these objectives in view, the programme was implemented on watershed basis from 1995 onwards and 13.72 million hectare was earmarked as project area. The Committee have been informed that upto 2006-07, 27,439 watershed projects were sanctioned and from 2007 onwards, no new projects had been sanctioned. It has also come to the notice of the Committee that 16,323 projects covering an area of 8.16 million hectare have been completed. Physical performance of DPAP which presently stands at 59% is far from satisfactory. On analyzing the entire gamut of activities taken up by the Department under the programme, the Committee are astonished to find that there are fundamental conceptual flaws in the scheme as the total identified area in the country requiring drought proofing is a mammoth 74.59 million hectare, whereas, the project area taken up by the Department is only 13.71 million hectare which comes to around 18 percent. Similarly, 6086 projects have been closed mid-way for various reasons which also do not augur well of the overall performance of the Department. Now that DPAP alongwith DDP and IWDP have been integrated and consolidated into a single programme called IWMP, the Committee strongly recommend that under the integrated programme, the conceptual flaws in the form of taking an indicative target of coverage should be appropriately rectified by bringing the balance rainfed/degraded areas of 125 million hectare under the activity zone. The Committee also recommend that all the on-going 5030 projects should be completed by December, 2012 as committed by the Department themselves and thereafter, the entire activity mapping for drought proofing of the entire affected areas/identified areas in the country should be taken by the Department at the right earnest.”

13. The DoLR in their action taken reply have stated as under:—

“Under IWMP while selecting project areas, due priority is being given to DPAP, DDP, and wasteland areas. During 11th Plan, an area of 24.21 m.ha. has been covered under IWMP projects for development. For 12th Plan, it is proposed to cover 25 m.ha. under IWMP.

Out of 27,439 sanctioned DPAP projects, 24,895 projects have been completed/closed as on 31.03.2012. As recommended by the Hon'ble Committee, Department is closely monitoring with States to complete ongoing DPAP projects by the end of December 2012."

14. The Committee are unhappy to note that the reply of the Government is silent on their recommendation for bringing the balance rainfed/degraded areas of 125 million hectare under the activity zone by rectifying the conceptual flaws in the form of taking an indicative target of coverage and minimizing the adverse impact of drought on the production of crops, productivity of crops and land, availability of water, livestock and human resources thereby ultimately leading to drought proofing of the affected areas. Although the Committee expect that all ongoing 5030 projects should be completed by December, 2012 as targeted, they strongly recommend the Government to prepare a perspective plan to cover 125 million hectare under the activity zone.

D. National Land Records Modernisation Programme (NLRMP)

Recommendation (Serial No. 9, Para No. 2.9)

15. In the context of the NLRMP the Committee had recommended as under:—

"The Committee note that the schemes for Computerization of Land Records (CLR) and Strengthening of Revenue Administration & Updating of Land Records (SRA & ULR) were merged into a single scheme in the shape of National Land Records Modernization Programme (NLRMP) and launched in August, 2008. The modified programme aimed at providing computerized copies of Records of Rights (RoRs) with maps, other land-based certificates such as caste certificates, income certificates, domicile certificates etc. The Committee have also been informed that abolition of stamp papers and payment of stamp duty and registration fees through banks, e-linkages to credit facilities, automatic and automated mutations and single window service can also be achieved under the programme. However, the Committee observe that Budget Outlays for the last two fiscals (2010-11 and 2011-12) were always downward at Revised Estimates/Actual Expenditure/Releases stage. This was attributed to procedural delays by various implementing agencies, which lead to timelines being staggered for this scheme till the end of the Twelfth Five Year Plan. Appalled by this shoddy state of affairs, the Committee in their Twenty First Report (2011-12) had recommended that corrective action with regard to

implementation of the programme be taken urgently so as to achieve the objectives of the scheme within the shortest possible time. The Committee, therefore, again reiterate their recommendation and follow-up action should be urgently taken thereon in the right earnest so that availability of funds should not come in the way of attainment of objectives of the scheme.”

16. The DoLR in their action taken reply have stated as under:—

“The ‘land and maintenance of land records’ is a State subject under the Constitution. So, the Central Government has a limited role to play for ushering in the system of modern land records management system in the States/UTs. However, policy interventions by the Central Government through schemes like Computerization of Land Records (CLR), Strengthening of Revenue Administration & Updating of Land Records (SRA&ULR) and National Land Records Modernization Programme (NLRMP) have yielded good results. The availability of the funds has not been a constraint in the implementation of the NLRMP, so far. Funds for 267 districts have been released under the NLRMP upto 30th June, 2012. The Central Government has taken following initiatives to help in smooth implementation of the programme:

- (i) Detailed guidelines for implementation of the NLRMP have been prepared and circulated to the States.
- (ii) Management Information System (MIS) has been prepared and put online to facilitate monitoring of the programme.
- (iii) Guidelines for the establishment of the Project Management Unit (PMU) have been prepared and circulated to the States/UTs for better coordination between different Departments and smoother fund flow.
- (iv) Considering the special circumstances prevalent in the North-Eastern States, the funding pattern (Central Share: State Share) for them has been changed from 50:50 (survey/ resurvey and modern record rooms), and 25:75 (computerization of registration) to 90:10.
- (v) Technical fair, symposium and workshops etc. are being organized for experience sharing and guidance of the States/UTs in implementation of the programme.
- (vi) Regional review meetings are being organized to review the implementation of the programme and chalk out the future course of action for each State/UT.
- (vii) Model Request for Proposal (RFP) and tender documents for various components of the NLRMP have been prepared and circulated to the States.”

17. While looking at the downward trend of Budget outlays at Revised Estimates/Actual Expenditure/Release stage during the fiscals (2010-11 and 2011-12) due to procedural delays by various implementing agencies which led to the timelines being staggered for the NLRMP till the end of 12th Five Year Plan, the Committee in their 21st Report (2011-12), had recommended that corrective action with regard to implementation of the programme be taken urgently so as to achieve the objectives within shortest possible time. The Committee also reiterated in their 28th Report that follow up action be taken urgently in the right earnest so that availability of funds should not come in the way of attainment of objectives of the scheme.

The Committee are not satisfied with the reply of the Department that Central Government has a limited role to play for ushering in the system of modern land records management system in the States/UTs as 'land and maintenance of land records' is a State subject under the Constitution. However, policy interventions by the way of Centrally sponsored schemes like CLR and SRA & ULR and NLRMP have yielded good results. The Committee feel that instead of stating that the Central Government has a limited role to play, the Government should work with the States with better coordination and impress upon them by way of strict monitoring so as to achieve the objectives of the scheme within stipulated time frame.

The Committee also note that in response to their recommendation for taking corrective action for the procedural delays, the Department has enumerated a number of initiatives taken for smooth implementation of the programme. The Committee while taking note of these initiatives taken by the Department feel that still a lot more is desired to be done to remove the procedural delays which is crucial for time bound success of the programme. The Committee, therefore, expect the Department to take corrective action in this regard in the right earnest and apprise the Committee of the same.

The Committee further note from the reply of the Department that availability of the funds has not been a constraint in the implementation of NLRMP so far. Despite this, till 30.06.2012, the funds for 267 Districts have been released. The Committee are hopeful that with the corrective action taken for the procedural delays, the target to cover the remaining Districts of the country under the scheme would be achieved before the end of 12th Five Year Plan.

CHAPTER II

RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation (Sl. No. 2, Para No. 2.2)

The Committee observe that the projected outlay for various schemes of the Department during the Twelfth Five Year Plan will be approximately Rs. 36,460 crore at current rates. The outlay for the fiscal year 2012-13 is Rs. 3201 crore, which is Rs. 501 crore higher than that of the previous fiscal year.

The Committee endorse the Demands for Grants of the Department. The Committee's recommendations on availability of funds and related matters are detailed in succeeding paragraphs. The Committee also note that during this year, there is an increase of 19.65 percent in the allocation of funds under Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP), whereas, for National Land Records Modernization Programme (NLRMP), the increase in allocation is a meagre 0.33 percent. Notably, no funds have been allocated for bio-fuel during the current financial year. The Committee's examination has revealed glaring mismatch between the yearly allocation of funds *vis-à-vis* total projected outlay for the entire Twelfth Five Year Plan. For instance, Rs. 7292 crore is required to be allocated to the Department, on yearly basis, for meeting the total projected outlay of Rs. 36,460 crore for various schemes of the Department during the Twelfth Five Year Plan, whereas, fund to the tune of Rs. 3208.20 crore has been allocated for the fiscal year 2012-13. The Committee strongly feel that at the current pace of allocation of funds, the overall achievement of targets during the Twelfth Five Year Plan are not likely to be fully achieved. In view of the foregoing, the Committee would like the Department to approach the Planning Commission/Ministry of Finance to allocate more funds, on evenly basis during all the 5 years of the Plan, so that the time bound implementation and completion of projects can be ensured and the work is not suffered for want of funds.

Reply of the Government

It is submitted that an unspent balance of Rs. 3573 crore is available with States as on 01.04.2012 under IWMP. The Department is emphasizing on utilization of the unspent balance by States. To tackle

the issue of unspent balances, the department has revised mechanism of release of Central assistance *w.e.f.* current financial year (2012-13). As per the revised release mechanism, the unspent balance available with the States is being taken into account while releasing Central assistance. With the introduction of new system for release of Central assistance under IWMP, during the current year, department will make all the efforts to liquidate unspent balance and also utilize the current financial year budget allocation *i.e.* Rs. 3050 crores. However, if States require more funds, the department will approach the Planning Commission/Ministry of Finance to allocate more funds during 2012-13.

Further, as desired by the Hon'ble Committee, the Department will also take up the matter with the Planning Commission for allocation of funds on evenly basis during all the years of 12th Plan.

[O.M. No. H-11011/3/2012-GC dated 1 August, 2012, Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development)]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 3, Para No. 2.3)

The Committee note that Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) was started in the year 2009-10 after integrating the Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP), Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP) into a single programme. Reportedly, IWMP is a demand driven programme and the activities taken up under the programme are spread over in three phases — the Preparatory Phase of 1 to 2 years, the Watershed Works Phase of 2 to 3 years and the Consolidation and Withdrawal Phase of 1-2 years. In other words, there is a project duration of 4-7 years for IWMP. The Committee are dismayed to note that the physical performance under IWMP is not encouraging in view of the fact that during the fiscal year 2011-12 (upto 15.02.2012), against the target for sanction of new projects covering an area of 87.40 lakh hectare and for ongoing projects covering an area of 16.78 lakh hectare, the achievements were 70.01 lakh hectare (80%) and 4.95 lakh hectare (29%) respectively. The financial performance has also remained dismal during this period as against the target of Rs. 2314.20 crore, the Department has been able to infuse only an amount of Rs. 2055.35 (88%). The Department, for the year 2012-13, has fixed a target of 50 lakh hectare which is based on minimum tentative allocation system. The Committee are apprehensive that keeping in view the past performance, achievement of this target by the Department would remain a pipe dream. The Committee are also aware of the fact that, at this juncture, the targets spelled out by the Department are only

confined to sanctioning of projects. The performance of the Department would depend on actual completion of the projects, the details of which would start emanating in the middle of Twelfth Five Year Plan. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that a detailed and practicable strategy be put in place and proper plan be prepared to ensure that the target for sanctioning of new and ongoing projects are met with surgical precision and methodical approach. The Committee would also like the Department to approach the Ministry of Finance to allocate optimum funds, at the time of revised estimates so that the implementation of projects do not suffer for wants of funds.

Reply of the Government

It is to submit that during 2011-12, against the target of 87.40 lakh ha., Department has sanctioned IWMP projects covering an area of 90.79 lakh ha. (103.87%). Against the financial target of Rs. 2314.20 crore, Department has released Rs. 2312.09 crore (99.9%) under IWMP during 2011-12. The Department will make all efforts to achieve the target of 50 lakh ha. set for 2012-13 under IWMP. As indicated at reply to para 2.2, the Department will approach the Ministry of Finance to allocate optimum funds.

To ensure timely completion of the on-going projects and sanction of new projects, as indicated in reply to para 2.1 above, the Department is closely monitoring the progress of implementation of IWMP with States

[O.M. No. H-11011/3/2012-GC dated 1 August, 2012, Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development)]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 8 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Sl. No. 5, Para No. 2.5)

The Committee note that Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP) is aimed at integrated development of wastelands/ degraded lands based on village/micro watershed plans. The Department has stated that the projects under the programme are sanctioned in the Blocks not covered by Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP). The Department has further stated that from 2007-08 onwards, no new projects are sanctioned under this scheme and 609 projects are proposed to be completed during the fiscal year, 2012-13. While the Committee

appreciate the timeline given by the Department to complete 609 projects, at the same time, they express concern over the retarded rate of completion of projects which are more than 6 years old, apparently, due to poor coordination between the implementing agencies. Going by the past record of the Department with regard to completion of 278 projects during the fiscal year 2010-11 and 142 projects during the fiscal year 2012-13, the Committee have serious apprehension regarding completion of 609 projects during the fiscal year 2012-13 that too at the rate of 50 projects per month. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Department should play a pro-active role by strengthening their monitoring system so that all the 609 projects are completed within the end of this fiscal year. The Committee would like to be kept informed about the progress made in this regard.

Reply of the Government

As recommended by the Hon'ble Committee, the Department is closely monitoring the progress of Watershed Projects through Regional Review Meetings, Steering Committee Meetings, Meetings with CEOs/Chairman SLNA, Monthly & Quarterly Progress reports, and through field visits by Department's Officials and visits of Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development. This issue of timely completion of projects was also discussed in one-day conference of CEOs of State Level Nodal Agencies of States held on 21.05.2012 and one-day conference of States Ministers looking after watershed programmes held on 08.06.2012. States were directed to ensure completion of ongoing IWDP projects within the timelines set by the Department.

As on 30.6.2012, 49 projects have been completed out of 609 ongoing projects of IWDP.

[O.M. No. H-11011/3/2012-GC dated 1 August, 2012, Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development)]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 11 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Sl. No. 6, Para No. 2.6)

The Committee observe that Drought Prone Areas Programme aimed at minimizing the adverse impact of drought on the production of crops, productivity of crops, productivity of land, availability of water, livestock and human resources, thereby, ultimately leading to drought proofing of the affected areas. With these objectives in view,

the programme was implemented on watershed basis from 1995 onwards and 13.72 million hectare was earmarked as project area. The Committee have been informed that upto 2006-07, 27,439 watershed projects were sanctioned and from 2007 onwards, no new projects had been sanctioned. It has also come to the notice of the Committee that 16,323 projects covering an area of 8.16 million hectare have been completed. Physical performance of DPAP which presently stands at 59% is far from satisfactory. On analyzing the entire gamut of activities taken up by the Department under the programme, the Committee are astonished to find that there are fundamental conceptual flaws in the scheme as the total identified area in the country requiring drought proofing is a mammoth 74.59 million hectare, whereas, the project area taken up by the Department is only 13.71 million hectare which comes to around 18 percent. Similarly, 6086 projects have been closed mid-way for various reasons which also do not augur well of the overall performance of the Department. Now that DPAP alongwith DDP and IWDP have been integrated and consolidated into a single programme called IWMP, the Committee strongly recommend that under the integrated programme, the conceptual flaws in the form of taking an indicative target of coverage should be appropriately rectified by bringing the balance rainfed/degraded areas of 125 million hectare under the activity zone. The Committee also recommend that all the on-going 5030 projects should be completed by December, 2012 as committed by the Department themselves and thereafter, the entire activity mapping for drought proofing of the entire affected areas/identified areas in the country should be taken by the Department at the right earnest.

Reply of the Government

Under IWMP while selecting project areas, due priority is being given to DPAP, DDP and wasteland areas. During 11th Plan, an area of 24.21 m.ha. has been covered under IWMP projects for development. For 12th Plan, it is proposed to cover 25 m.ha. under IWMP.

Out of 27,439 sanctioned DPAP projects, 24,895 projects have been completed/closed as on 31.03.2012. As recommended by the Hon'ble Committee, Department is closely monitoring with States to complete ongoing DPAP projects by the end of December 2012 as given in reply to para 2.5 above.

[O.M. No. H-11011/3/2012-GC dated 1 August, 2012, Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development)]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 14 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial No. 7, Para No. 2.7)

The Committee note that Desert Development Programme was started in the hot desert areas of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Haryana and the cold deserts of Jammu & Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh in 1977-78. For this purpose, the Department had earmarked 78.7 lakh hectare as project area out of the total 457.9 lakh hectare of identified area for which 15,746 watershed projects with a total cost of Rs. 4487.12 crore were sanctioned upto 2006-07. Against these targets, 11,489 projects covering an area of 57.44 lakh hectare have been accomplished. Besides, 825 projects have been closed as non-performing. The Department, for the year 2012-13 has fixed a target of completion of 3432 on-going projects by December, 2012 except the projects sanctioned in snow bound areas which would be completed by December, 2015. The Committee hope that the Department would honour their commitment for completing the on-going DDP projects. However, the Committee are unable to understand the reasons for restricting the total project area to 78.7 lakh hectare which is a meagre 17% of the total identified area of 457.9 lakh hectare. The Committee also express their serious concern on the slow pace of development of 57.44 lakh hectare desert area over a period of 30 years which comes to around 2 lakh hectare per year. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that the Department should make all out efforts to complete all the on-going projects, whether in plain areas or in snow bound areas, by the end of current financial year. The Committee would also like to be apprised of the reasons for taking a small percentage of project area *vis-à-vis* total identified area alongwith a road map *inter alia* containing the future plan of action for desert development in the new Integrated Watershed Management Programme.

Reply of the Government

It is submitted that a total of 15,746 projects covering an area of 78.73 lakh hectares were sanctioned under DDP by the end of 10th Plan (2002-03 to 2006-07). During 11th Plan (2007-08 to 2011-12), no new projects were sanctioned under DDP. The DDP alongwith Drought Prone Areas Programme and Integrated Wastelands Development Programme has been consolidated into single modified programme called Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) with effective from 26.02.2009.

Under IWMP, while selecting project areas, due priority is being given to DDP, DPAP and wasteland areas. Further, it is to submit that desert areas have been considered as difficult areas and higher cost

norm of Rs. 15000/ha. is provided under IWMP. During 11th Plan, an area of 24.21 m.ha. has been covered under IWMP projects for development. For 12th Plan, it is proposed to cover 25 m.ha. under IWMP.

Out of 15,746 sanctioned DDP projects, 13,940 projects have been completed/closed as on 31.03.2012. As recommended by the Hon'ble Committee, Department is closely monitoring with States to complete ongoing DDP projects by the end of December 2012 except snow bound areas as given in reply to para 2.5 above.

Regarding the DDP projects in snow bound areas of Lahul & Spiti and Kinnaur districts in Himachal Pradesh and Kargil and Leh districts in Jammu & Kashmir it is submitted that the projects in these districts are being executed in difficult geographical terrain, where working season is only for 3-4 months in a year. The area remains under snow for the remaining period/months of the year. The execution of the project work in areas under snow is extremely difficult during 7-8 months in the year. Considering the difficult geographical terrain and limited working season in the snow bound area, the Ministry has allowed a grace period of three years beyond the cut-off date for completing the projects in snow bound areas. As recommended by the Hon'ble Committee, the Department will make efforts to ensure that all ongoing projects in snow bound areas are completed at the earliest even before the grace period is over.

[O.M. No. H-11011/3/2012-GC dated 1 August, 2012, Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development)]

Recommendation (Serial No. 8, Para No. 2.8)

The Committee note that in order to accelerate the pace of development of wastelands/degraded lands, the Government had set up the National Wastelands Development Board in 1985 under the Ministry of Environment and Forests. Later, a separate Department of Wastelands Development in the Ministry of Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation was created in 1992 and the National Wastelands Development Board was transferred to it. In April 1999, Department of Wastelands Development was renamed as the Department of Land Resources to act as a nodal agency for land resource management. The Committee also note that the Department of Land Resources has been implementing three area development programmes *viz.*, Integrated Wastelands Development Programme, Drought Prone Areas Programme and Desert Development Programme. These programmes have now been consolidated into a single modified programme namely

Integrated Watershed Management Programme. While formulating these programmes, the Department has prescribed the objectives which *inter alia* include increase in the productivity of rainfed/degraded areas, increase in income of rural household and empowerment through increased people's participation in local decision making processes. However, the Committee are flabbergasted to find that in all the documents published by the Department *i.e.*, the Annual Report or the Outcome Budget, only the reforms measures and policy initiatives, past performance of the individual programmes/schemes, financial review have been highlighted. As a matter of fact, there has been no attempt of the Department to either mention the impact of watershed projects on actual increase in the productivity of rainfed/degraded land or actual increase in income of rural household or their empowerment through increased people's participation in local decision making processes including the provisions contained under Article 243(G) read with Schedule XI of the Constitution which are stated objectives of the programme. The Committee are of the firm opinion that the success of all the watershed programmes could be measured not in terms of deliverables or achievements but on the basis of these aforementioned attributes. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Department should assess and provide a detailed account of attainment of these objectives so that the viability of various watershed programmes could be reviewed by them for betterment of rural populace of the country.

The Committee are also dismayed to note that the various social welfare schemes/programmes are initially formulated by the Ministry and soon thereafter, without making any realistic assessment of attainment of objectives in terms of overall benefits to the masses, the schemes/programmes are merged/renamed/reframed on the pretext of administrative convenience and judicious utilization of resources. As a matter of fact, similar methodology has been adopted by the Ministry while integrating the watershed programmes (IWDP, DPAP and DDP) into a new programme, namely, IWMP. This sort of malady becomes all the more serious when the projects under earlier programmes are not completed as it has been noticed in the case IWDP, DPAP and DDP projects. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that all the pending projects under IWDP, DPAP and DDP are completed within the end of this fiscal year (2012-13) and thereafter, the integrated IWMP programme may be functionalized and operated as per modified guidelines.

Reply of the Government

The impact assessment studies of watershed programmes (DPAP, DDP & IWDP) of the department conducted by engaging institutions like The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI),

International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) & National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), have *inter-alia* reported the following:—

1. The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)-2004:

- The Study was carried out in 16 States. Overall improvement in land use was reported from all States following the implementation of the Watershed Development Programmes. Increase in the net sown area, gross cropped area, and area sown more than once was reported from Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh.
- Several States reported changes in their cropping pattern from one to two crops annually. This was directly attributed to the availability of irrigation water in the dry season. Some States reported the adoption of improved crop varieties. Only a few states have recorded pre and post project yield for dominant crops in the annual cropping cycle. Where data has been available, an increase in yield has been reported.
- Several States reported an increase in agriculture-related employment opportunities among beneficiaries and in other sectors for non-beneficiaries. These included trade, dairy, poultry, masonry, etc. Physical works carried out under the Watershed Development Programmes provided varying numbers of man-days of work in nearly all States. Some States witnessed no change in income levels whereas other States showed changes to over 50% in the income levels.

2. International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)—2008:

- A meta-analysis based upon 636 studies *inter-alia* reported as below:
- The watershed projects are largely aimed to conserve soil and water to raise farm productivity. The available evidences revealed that both these objectives were accomplished in the watershed areas. Soil loss of about $1.1 \text{ ha}^{-1} \text{ y}^{-1}$ was saved due to interventions in the watershed framework. Conserving soil means raising farm productivity

and transferring good soils to the next generation. On water conservation, it was noted that on an average about 38m ha. additional water storage capacity was created in a 500 ha watershed as a result of watershed program. Augmenting water storage capacity contributed in (i) reducing rate of run-off, and (ii) Increasing groundwater recharge. These have direct impact in expanding the irrigated area and increasing cropping intensity. On an average, the irrigated area increased by about 52 per cent, while the cropping intensity increased by 35.5 per cent.

- The average additional annual employment generation in the watershed area on various activities and operations was about 154 person days per ha.
- The results further show that the benefits vary depending upon the location, size, type, rainfall, implementing agency and peoples participation etc.

3. National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD)—2011:—

At the initiative of this Department, NIRD has completed the impact assessment of watershed projects sanctioned under DPAP, DDP and IWDP during the period of 1st April, 2002 to 31st March, 2005. The study titled as “A Comprehensive Study of Impacts of Investments in Watersheds Projects” was taken up in 947 completed watersheds spread over 169 districts in 17 States. In all, 444 watersheds under DPAP, 321 under DDP and 182 under IWDP were considered for the study. Fifteen nodal agencies were identified to elicit the needed data from the beneficiaries (@ 75 per watershed) and through FGDs besides PIA and district level officials using six schedules. The components included EPA, HRD activities, training and capacity building, NRM (SMC works, WHSs, plantation) crop demonstration, production systems and use of revolving fund.

As many as 66,680 primary beneficiaries were surveyed in the study, which included 76% SMF and 24% LMF. The nodal agencies provided district-wise summarized data sets under each of the schemes using averages of the data from the SMF and LMF under each watershed and also from the PIAs. NIRD prepared the final report based on the data (scheme-wise and/or State-wise). So the data sets were examined agro-climatologically in there classes *viz.* Hilly humid region (IWDP), Semiarid (DPAP; IWDP) and the Arid (DDP). Accordingly, the final report was prepared. All the data included in the report are averages of a watershed of 500 ha. area. In general, it was found that the performances under IWDP and DPAP were almost similar.

Among the 169 districts, the net sown area was only 15% in hilly humid areas while it was about 45% in other two areas (semiarid and arid regions). Soil erosion was serious in arid region (51%), while it was 21% in humid and 36% in semiarid areas. Groundwater depletion was 100% in arid areas while it was 85% in semi-arid and 23% in hilly humid areas. Low productivity was more in arid (86%) areas as compared to 55% (hilly humid areas) and 68% (semiarid areas).

The increase in Natural Resource Management is as under:—

- On an average of watershed, 42 ha. of cultivable wastelands was brought under plough (47 ha. humid, 50 ha. in semiarid and 19ha in arid).
- An additional area of 26 ha. (35 ha. humid, 27 ha. semiarid and 11 ha. in arid) under rainfed farming and 46 ha. (14 ha humid, 64 ha. in semiarid and 49 ha. in arid) under irrigation were recorded.
- Upto 65 ha. area (93 ha. humid, 45 ha. semiarid and 71 ha. arid) was improved under vegetative cover. Only 50% of the plants had survived. Fodder availability increased from 68% to 82%.
- Out of the 40 soil conservation and water harvesting measures (60 humid, 28 semiarid and 38 arid), 22% were of poor quality. However the soil erosion was reduced by 40%. With these measures, the water retention period in the surface water bodies increased by 3 months.
- Groundwater table increased by 1.2m (1.7m humid, 2.4m semiarid and 0.6m arid).

The increase in the 'Production Systems' has been as under:—

- The cropping intensity (CI) increased from 131 to 139. Perceptible increase was with SMF (129 to 140) in semiarid areas. Presently it was static at 125 in arid and 165 in humid areas. However, with proper training the CI can be increased to 195 in humid areas.
- SMF were more enthusiastic with horticulture by bringing about 23 ha. under horticulture as compared to 7.6 ha. by LMF. The thrust was more visible in humid areas where the area increase was 53 ha.
- As far as crops are concerned, the farmers showed thrust in enhancing the yield of oilseeds and pulses, more so in semiarid regions, the increase being 41% and 33% respectively.

- Even through cereal productivity increased only by 18% in semiarid areas, the enhancement in rice yields in hilly humid areas was 32%. The availability of cereals at HH level increased by 10% with the Project Livestock Enterprises.
- SMF had more livestock than LMF.
- Small ruminants were more in both arid and humid areas.
- There was a quantum jump in bovine population from 201 to 483 per watershed area with the implementation of the project.
- Milk production increased from 742 to 970 liters/annum with SMF while it was from 1122 to 1372 liters/annum with LMF. Overall increase in milk production is by 25.64%. Consequently the adequacy levels moved from 57.3% to 64.8% with SMF and 62.6% to 72.9% with LMF. Maximum gains were observed in semiarid areas.

Human Resource Development has been recorded as under:—

- On an average 29 CBOs (9 SHGs, 14 UGs and 6 LGs) were formed per watershed by the PIA.
- WCs were formed as per norms.
- Overall, 8 trainings were conducted with 38 participants including 16 women and 17 SC/ST members.
- In 80% of the cases, DPR was prepared in participatory mode.
- Up to 85% cases women participated in planning as well as execution of works in the project.

Economic effectiveness:—

- There was an overall increase of 54% in the HH income being Rs. 39,355 with SMF and Rs. 80,900 with LMF on an average of watershed area.
- Similarly there was debt reduction to the extent of 38% with SMF and 34% with LMF.
- The average BCR was 2.6 ranging from 1.2 to 4.2.

The draft final Report of NIRD is yet to be accepted by the Department. However, the assessment has been outlined as above.

The above impact assessment studies suggest that the watershed programmes have by and large met its objectives of increasing productivity of rainfed/degraded areas, raising income, and generating employment etc.

To expedite the implementation and completion of ongoing projects under IWDP, DPAP & DDP programmes, no new projects were sanctioned since 2007-08. Also, a policy decision has been taken to complete these ongoing projects by 31.12.2012 except in snow bound areas where a grace period of 3 years has been allowed after the cut-off date. As recommended by the Committee, the department is closely monitoring with the States as given in reply to Para 2.5 above.

[O.M. No. H-11011/3/2012-GC dated 1 August, 2012, Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development)]

Recommendation (Serial No. 10, Para No. 2.10)

The Committee express their happiness over the fact that the Planners have finally acted, though belatedly, upon their specific recommendation for streamlining the process so as to attain the objective of the scheme by its timely implementation. This fact is further strengthened as 26 States/UTs have completed data entry of Record of Rights (RoRs), 16 States have stopped manual issue of RoRs and 21 States have accorded legal sanctity to the computerized copies of RoRs. Besides, 16 States/UTs have placed the RoR data on websites and 18 States/UTs are effecting mutations using computers. The Committee would like the Department to motivate the remaining States to come forward and implement the programme so that its in-built benefits could be reaped by all the citizens of the country.

Reply of the Government

As stated in reply to Para No. 2.9, the Department has taken a number of initiatives to facilitate the implementation of the programme. In this regard, the Department is laying special emphasis on the States/UTs which are lagging behind in the computerization of the land records management.

[O.M. No. H-11011/3/2012-GC dated 1 August, 2012, Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development)]

Recommendation (Serial No. 11, Para No. 2.11)

The Committee have also been informed that for the fiscal year 2012-13, Rs. 150 crore has been allocated for the programme. While co-relating the target of covering 191 Districts during the fiscal year 2012-13 with the availability of funds, the Committee once again emphasise that shortage of funds should not stand in the way of attainment of targets set for the fiscal year 2012-13. Apart from operational and coverage aspects, the Committee would also like to know the status of services *viz.*, issuing of caste certificates, income certificates, domicile certificates etc., being provided to the people in

those States where major portion of the programme has been implemented and operationalised. The Committee would also like to be apprised of actual usage of the programme in planning of various land-based developmental, regulatory and disaster management activities.

Reply of the Government

Various certificates like caste/income/domicile and Record of Right (RoR) etc. are being issued in the States of Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tripura, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan etc. In fact Karnataka is issuing 32 certificates. This has helped the citizens a lot. Even in a small State like Himachal Pradesh, approximately 50,000 certificates are issued per month through the Lok Mitra Kendras established for the purpose. The cadastral maps are being digitized in various States/UTs. On these digitized maps, various GIS layers depicting soil type, water bodies, cropping pattern, electrical lines, roads, elevation from the sea level etc. will be laid. Such integrated information can be used for planning various land based developmental, regulatory and disaster management activities etc. by the States/UTs.

[O.M. No. H-11011/3/2012-GC dated 1 August, 2012, Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development)]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 13, Para No. 2.13)

The Committee are disappointed to note that even after persistent recommendations of the Committee, there is an increasing trend of outstanding Utilization Certificates (UCs) with the States. For instance, 627 UCs involving an amount of Rs. 766 were outstanding with the States as on 31.12.2010 which further swelled to 640 UCs involving an amount of Rs. 1076.58 crore as on 31.12.2011. The Committee have been informed that the Department has been taking up the issue of liquidation of these outstanding UCs with the State officials during the Steering Committee meetings, Regional Review meetings and also through written correspondence. The Committee express their displeasure at the prevailing situation as it is abundantly clear that the present mechanism for follow-up being practiced by the Department for liquidation of outstanding UCs with the States has not served the intended purpose. They strongly feel that there is urgent need to revisit this mechanism and introduce necessary correctives at the earliest so that the States are persuaded to follow financial discipline and take cogent measures to liquidate the outstanding UCs in a time bound manner and further release of funds from the Department continues unhindered. The concept of incentives to the best performing States could also be thought of on the lines of some of the rural development/ drinking water/sanitation schemes. The Committee, therefore, desire the Department to initiate corrective measures in the matter at the earliest and apprise them of the follow up action taken.

Reply of the Government

One-day conference with State Ministers looking after watershed programmes was organized in Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi on 08.6.2012 under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble MRD *inter alia* to expedite implementation of IWMP and liquidate the unspent balance. In addition, one-day conference with Chief Executive Officers of the State Level Nodal Agencies (SLNAs) was organized on 21.5.2012 at New Delhi under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Land Resources) and the issues of unspent balance and pending utilization certificates were *inter alia* discussed and States have been directed to take necessary steps.

To tackle the issue of unspent balance and pending utilisation certificates, the central assistance release mechanism to States under IWMP has been revised by the Department. The salient features of the revised release mechanism are as below:—

- (i) Central assistance will be released in lump-sum to SLNA on the basis of annual plan of fund requirement furnished by SLNA.
- (ii) The funds will ordinarily be released in two instalments every year. The first instalment will be equivalent to 60% of the estimated annual fund requirement of SLNA including the unspent balance available with the SLNA as on 1st April of the financial year or fund requirement for six months, whichever is less.
- (iii) The next instalment in the year will be released after utilisation of 60% of the funds of first instalment (including unspent balance) and submission of corresponding physical progress, utilisation certificate, Audited Statement of Accounts for the preceding financial year by the SLNA.
- (iv) For effective utilisation of funds already released for ongoing IWMP projects, SLNA is permitted intra and inter transfer of funds from one batch to another.

The issue of pending utilization certificates and unspent balances with the States/UTs is being taken up on priority basis by the Department. Due to the persistent efforts of the Department, the unspent balance under the programme of Computerization of Land Records (CLR) has come down to Rs. 141.63 crore. Similarly, the unspent balance under the programme of Strengthening of Revenue Administration & Updating of Land Records (SRA&ULR) has come down to Rs. 119.49 crore. Further, the States/UTs are being asked regularly to expedite the utilization of the unspent balances available with them and send up-to-date utilization certificates to this Department.

[O.M. No. H-11011/3/2012-GC dated 1 August, 2012, Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development)]

Recommendation (Serial No. 14, Para No. 2.14)

The Committee also regret to note that there have been huge amounts lying unspent in all the programmes being implemented by the Department. In this connection, the Committee note that Rs. 230.61 crore in IWDP, Rs. 220.72 crore in DPAP, Rs. 188.37 crore in DDP, Rs. 2480.99 crore in IWMP and Rs. 500.92 crore in NLRMP have been lying as unspent as on 31.12.2011. The Committee have been informed that central funds are released directly to State Level Nodal Agencies and projects are eligible for claiming 2nd instalment on expenditure of 60% of the first instalment funds. Similarly, projects are eligible for 3rd instalment on expenditure of 75% of the funds released. As per the Guidelines of the programmes, next instalment for the project is released when the unspent balance is less than 50% of the previous instalment released. In view of the acute problem of accumulation of unspent balances, the Committee strongly recommend the Department to devise a practical solution to this perennial problem and make every possible efforts to ensure that the problem is tackled at the earliest lest there could be a situation in the coming years, where the unspent balances would surpass the total budgetary allocation of the Department. The Committee wish to be apprised of the innovative steps taken by the Department in this regard.

Reply of the Government

One-day conference with State Ministers looking after watershed programmes was organized in Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi on 08.6.2012 under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble MRD *inter alia* to expedite implementation of IWMP and liquidate the unspent balance. In addition, one-day conference with Chief Executive Officers of the State Level Nodal Agencies (SLNAs) was organized on 21.5.2012 at New Delhi under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Land Resources) and the issues of unspent balance and pending utilization certificates were *inter alia* discussed and States have been directed to take necessary steps.

To tackle the issue of unspent balance and pending utilisation certificates, the central assistance release mechanism to States under IWMP has been revised by the Department. The salient features of the revised release mechanism are as below:—

- (i) Central assistance will be released in lump-sum to SLNA on the basis of annual plan of fund requirement furnished by SLNA.
- (ii) The funds will ordinarily be released in two instalments every year. The first instalment will be equivalent to 60% of the estimated annual fund requirement of SLNA including the unspent balance available with the SLNA as on 1st April of the financial year or fund requirement for six months, whichever is less.

- (iii) The next instalment in the year will be released after utilisation of 60% of the funds of first instalment (including unspent balance) and submission of corresponding physical progress, utilisation certificate, Audited Statement of Accounts for the preceding financial year by the SLNA.
- (iv) For effective utilisation of funds already released for ongoing IWMP projects, SLNA is permitted intra and inter transfer of funds from one batch to another.

As per the guidelines of the NLRMP, the funds are being released in two instalments to the States/UTs. In the first instalment, 60% of the sanctioned funds are released. On the receipt of the utilization of the 60% of these funds, the balance funds are released in second instalment. All the activities under the programme are proposed to be completed in two years in a district for which funds have been sanctioned. So, a certain amount of unspent balances with the States/UTs will always be reflected in the accounts. Further, the Department has taken a number of initiatives to fast track the implementation of programme and utilization of unspent balances. Some of these steps are as follows:—

- (i) In some States, there was delay in transfer of funds from State to the implementing agency. The Department has prepared guidelines for the establishments of the PMUs in States/UTs. This will facilitate direct transfer of funds by the Central Government to these PMUs.
- (ii) Model Request for Proposal (RFP) and tender documents for various components of the NLRMP have been prepared and circulated to the States/UTs, as a lot of time was spent by each State/UT in finalization of such documents.
- (iii) Some States/UTs were facing difficulties in undertaking the survey/re-survey component of the NLRMP. Major portion of the funds sanctioned to the States/UTs (around 60%) pertain to this component. The States have been given permission to utilize these funds for other components of the NLRMP in the remaining districts.
- (iv) The rates for the survey/re-survey and digitization of the cadastral maps have been revised upwardly as per the suggestions received from various States/UTs.
- (v) The States/UTs and the vendors, who are interested in working with the States in various components of the NLRMP, have been brought on one platform through symposium/technical fair.

[O.M. No. H-11011/3/2012-GC dated 1 August, 2012, Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development)]

CHAPTER III

RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT
DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE
GOVERNMENT'S REPLIES

—NIL—

CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

Recommendation (Serial No. 9, Para No. 2.9)

The Committee note that the schemes for Computerization of Land Records (CLR) and Strengthening of Revenue Administration & Updating of Land Records (SRA & ULR) were merged into a single scheme in the shape of National Land Records Modernization Programme (NLRMP) and launched in August, 2008. The modified programme aimed at providing computerized copies of Records of Rights (RoRs) with maps, other land-based certificates such as caste certificates, income certificates, domicile certificates etc. The Committee have also been informed that abolition of stamp papers and payment of stamp duty and registration fees through banks, e-linkages to credit facilities, automatic and automated mutations and single window service can also be achieved under the programme. However, the Committee observe that Budget Outlays for the last two fiscals (2010-11 and 2011-12) were always downward at Revised Estimates/Actual Expenditure/Releases stage. This was attributed to procedural delays by various implementing agencies, which lead to timelines being staggered for this scheme till the end of the Twelfth Five Year Plan. Appalled by this shoddy state of affairs, the Committee in their Twenty First Report (2011-12) had recommended that corrective action with regard to implementation of the programme be taken urgently so as to achieve the objectives of the scheme within the shortest possible time. The Committee, therefore, again reiterate their recommendation and follow-up action should be urgently taken thereon in the right earnest so that availability of funds should not come in the way of attainment of objectives of the scheme.

Reply of the Government

The 'land and maintenance of land records' is a State subject under the Constitution. So, the Central Government has a limited role to play for ushering in the system of modern land records management system in the States/UTs. However, policy interventions by the Central Government through schemes like Computerization of Land Records (CLR), Strengthening of Revenue Administration & Updating of Land

Records (SRA&ULR) and National Land Records Modernization Programme (NLRMP) have yielded good results. The availability of the funds has not been a constraint in the implementation of the NLRMP, so far. Funds for 267 districts have been released under the NLRMP up-to 30th June, 2012. The Central Government has taken following initiatives to help in smooth implementation of the programme:—

- (i) Detailed guidelines for implementation of the NLRMP have been prepared and circulated to the States.
- (ii) Management Information System (MIS) has been prepared and put online to facilitate monitoring of the programme.
- (iii) Guidelines for the establishment of the Project Management Unit (PMU) have been prepared and circulated to the States/UTs for better coordination between different Departments and smoother fund flow.
- (iv) Considering the special circumstances prevalent in the North-Eastern States, the funding pattern (Central Share: State Share) for them has been changed from 50:50 (survey/ resurvey and modern record rooms), and 25:75 (computerization of registration) to 90:10.
- (v) Technical fair, symposium and workshops etc. are being organized for experience sharing and guidance of the States/UTs in implementation of the programme.
- (vi) Regional review meetings are being organized to review the implementation of the programme and chalk out the future course of action for each State/UT.
- (vii) Model Request for Proposal (RFP) and tender documents for various components of the NLRMP have been prepared and circulated to the States.

[O.M. No. H-11011/3/2012-GC Dated: 01.08.2012, Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development)]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 17 of Chapter I of the Report)

CHAPTER V

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

Recommendation (Serial No. 1, Para No. 2.1)

The Committee note that during the Eleventh Plan period (2007-12), against the Revised Estimates of Rs. 9194.50 crore received by the Department, Rs. 8983.67 crore has been released under Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) including ongoing liabilities of Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP), Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (as on 15.02.2012). Similarly, for National Land Records Modernization Programme (NLRMP) which was launched during 2008-09, against the Revised Estimates of Rs. 716.40 crore, an expenditure of Rs. 620.19 crore was incurred during the entire Plan. Hence, the expenditure made by the Department for these two flagship programmes during the Eleventh Plan period does not meet the financial target even when the enormity of unspent balances are not taken into account. Keeping in view the significance of these programmes which are handled by the Department, the non-spending of this sum during the entire Plan reflects the poor performance of the Department especially when Rs. 18,074 crore for watershed programme alone was sought by the Department from the Planning Commission for the Eleventh Five Year Plan. Even though the Committee were informed that physical and financial performance during the last couple of years have been satisfactory as compared to earlier years, the utilization of funds and achievement of targets in full measure could have been beneficial for the country in general and rural populace in particular. The Committee, therefore, strongly feel that there should be higher allocation for the flagship programmes provided that the Department is able to properly plan their priorities, strategize and synchronize their work programmes. They, therefore, recommend that the Department should work out a two-pronged strategy i.e., to increase their financial-absorption capacity and thereafter again take up the matter with the Planning Commission for a realistic higher allocation for the Twelfth Five Year Plan.

Reply of the Government

It is submitted that during 11th Plan (2007-12), against the Revised Estimates of Rs. 9194.50 crore received by the Department, a total of Rs.9240.41 crore was released under Integrated Watershed Management

Programme (IWMP) including ongoing liabilities of Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP), Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (as on 31.3.2012). Due to re-appropriation of funds from other schemes, the released amount is more than Revised Estimates.

The absorption capacity of the funds under IWMP is dependent on the performance of the States in implementation of IWMP. Department has been emphasizing on expediting the implementation of watershed projects in the Steering Committee meetings, Regional Review Meetings, field visits, visit of Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development to States. Recently, one-day conference with Chief Executive Officers of the State Level Nodal Agencies (SLNAs) was organized on 21.5.2012 at New Delhi under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Land Resources). In addition, one-day conference with State Ministers was organized in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on 08.6.2012 under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble MRD to review the implementation of watershed programmes. The issue of expediting implementation and submitting proposals for new projects were discussed and States have been directed to ensure necessary action for the same.

As recommended by the Hon'ble Committee, the issue of higher allocation will be taken up with the Planning Commission based on the actual requirement of funds.

[O.M. No. H-11011/3/2012-GC Dated: 01.08.2012, Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development)]

Recommendation (Serial No. 4, Para No. 2.4)

The Committee find that provisions in the Common Guidelines, 2008 for watershed programmes and the observations of the Parthasarathy Committee have necessitated modifications in the watershed schemes of the Department of Land Resources. Accordingly, DPAP, DDP and IWDP have been integrated and consolidated into a single modified programme called Integrated Watershed Management Programme. The Department also submitted before the Committee that IWMP is a Demand Driven Programme. However, the Committee have experienced that by transforming the programme from 'rights based' to 'demand driven', the responsibilities of the executing/implementing organisation could be conveniently shifted to the beneficiaries. In other words, there would not be any pre-determined targets and, therefore, whatever deliveries are attained by an organisation within a specified time frame are regarded and brought under the category of achievements. The accountability of optimum utilisation of scarce

resources also gets vitiated due to the fact that lower utilisation of funds is often co-related with lower generation of demand. The Committee are constrained to mention that in order to camouflage the administrative inefficiency and/or fundamental conceptual flaw in the schemes, almost every centrally sponsored scheme of the Government are now being transformed to a demand driven approach. The Committee are of considered view that the Integrated Watershed Management Programme would not be able to deliver the desired results if the scheme continue to be operated on demand driven mode. The Committee, therefore, recommend that a quick study should be initiated by the Department to pragmatically analyse the shortcomings of the demand driven approach of IWMP so that timely action for re-transforming the scheme to target-oriented approach may be taken. The Committee urge the Government to take the desired steps and apprise the Committee accordingly.

Reply of the Government

As recommended by the Hon'ble Committee, the Department will assign a study to analyse the advantages and shortcomings of the demand driven approach and the target-oriented approach and to recommend approach suitable for IWMP.

[O.M. No. H-11011/3/2012-GC Dated: 01.08.2012, Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development)]

Recommendation (Serial No. 12, Para No. 2.12)

The Committee are perturbed to note that there is inordinate delay in finalization of bio-fuels programme which was started way back in April, 2003 followed by in-principle approval of demonstration phase by taking up 3 lakh hectare plantations on bio-diesel producing non-edible oilseeds species (Jatropha and Pongamia) on degraded forest land and waste land. However, thereafter, the entire programme has been engulfed in a prolonged debate on the issue of viability or non-viability of the programme amongst the Department of Land Resources, Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), Group of Ministers (GoM) and The Energy Research Institute (TERI). The outcome of this long debate has not only consumed a decade of uncertainty on the issue, but also the entire programme is shrouded in mystery. The Committee also note that for the fiscal year 2012-13, no funds have been allocated for bio-fuels programme as the decision on the future of the programme has been pending for long. The Department has informed that the assessment report submitted by TERI is so negative that there is no scope for going in for further

demonstration of Jatropha plantation in the country. It has further been informed that it is now for the Union Cabinet to take a decision in the matter. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Department should place the matter before the Union Cabinet at the earliest for taking a conscious decision on continuance or otherwise of bio-fuels programme.

Reply of the Government

On the basis of the recommendations contained in the assessment study report from TERI, experts views and experiences of other organizations, the matter is being placed before the Cabinet seeking its directions on continuance or otherwise of Bio-fuels Programme. The decision of the Cabinet will be intimated to the Committee.

[O.M. No. H-11011/3/2012-GC Dated: 01.08.2012, Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development)]

NEW DELHI;
14 December, 2012
23 Agrahayana, 1934 (Saka)

SUMITRA MAHAJAN,
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on
Rural Development.

APPENDIX I

COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT (2012-2013)

EXTRACTS OF THE MINUTES OF THE FOURTH SITTING OF
THE COMMITTEE HELD ON FRIDAY, THE 14TH DECEMBER, 2012

The Committee sat from 1000 hrs. to 1050 hrs. in Committee Room
No. 62, First Floor, Parliament House, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shrimati Sumitra Mahajan — *Chairperson*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Maheshwar Hazari
3. Shri Anantha Venkatarami Reddy
4. Dr. Sanjay Singh
5. Smt. Supriya Sule
6. Smt. Annu Tandon
7. Smt. Usha Verma
8. Shri Madhu Goud Yaskhi

Rajya Sabha

9. Shri Mahendra Singh Mahra
10. Dr. Chandan Mitra
11. Shri C.P. Narayanan
12. Shri Mohan Singh
13. Prof. Saif-ud-Din Soz

SECRETARIAT

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| 1. Shri Brahm Dutt | — | <i>Joint Secretary</i> |
| 2. Smt. Veena Sharma | — | <i>Director</i> |
| 3. Shri A.K. Shah | — | <i>Additional Director</i> |
| 4. Smt. Meenakshi Sharma | — | <i>Deputy Secretary</i> |

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the members to the sitting of the Committee convened for consideration of Memoranda containing draft Reports of the Committee on action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in four Reports on Demands for Grants (2012-13).

3. The Committee then took up for consideration the following draft Action Taken Reports:-

- (i) *** *** *** *** ***
- (ii) Draft Report on Action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Twenty-Eighth Report on Demands for Grants (2012-13) of the Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Land Resources);
- (iii) *** *** *** *** ***
- (iv) *** *** *** *** ***

4. Draft Reports were taken up *seriatum*. After detailed discussions, the Committee adopted the Reports with minor modifications. The Committee then authorized the Chairperson to finalize the aforesaid Reports and present the same to the Parliament.

5. *** *** *** *** ***

The Committee then adjourned.

***Relevant portions of the Minutes not related to the subject have been kept separately.

APPENDIX II

[Vide Introduction of Report]

ANALYSIS OF THE ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE TWENTY- EIGHTH REPORT (15TH LOK SABHA) OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

I. Total number of recommendations:	14
II. Recommendations that have been accepted by the Government:	
Serial Nos. 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13 and 14	
Total:	10
Percentage:	71.43%
III. Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies:	
Total:	00
Percentage:	00%
IV. Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee:	
Serial No. 9	
Total:	01
Percentage:	7.14%
V. Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited:	
Serial Nos. 1, 4 and 12	
Total:	03
Percentage:	21.43%