

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:233

ANSWERED ON:09.07.2014

DEGRADATION AND DESERTIFICATION OF LAND

Mahadik Shri Dhananjay Bhimrao;Satav Shri Rajeev Shankarrao;Sule Smt. Supriya Sadanand

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India is facing the problem of degradation and desertification of the land besides creation of wasteland, affecting the livelihood of the people;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, along with the States worst affected or likely to be affected by desertification/land degradation;
- (c) whether the Government plans to make the country land degradation neutral by 2030 with a view to maintaining and improving the condition of land resources;
- (d) if so the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken/being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE(SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) & (b) Yes, India is facing the problem of degradation and desertification of the land. As per the Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas of India (2007), the total area undergoing the process of land degradation in India is estimated at 105.48 million hectares, which constitutes 32.07 percentage of India's total land area. The area undergoing desertification is 81.45 million ha, which constitutes 24.78% of country's geographical area (source: Desertification Status Map, Space Application Centre, ISRO 2007).

The states most affected are Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir, Gujarat, and Maharashtra. Details of State wise statistics of desertification & land degradation are placed as Annexure I.

(c) & (d) Yes, the Government will strive towards aspirational goal of making the country land degradation neutral by 2030 with a view to maintaining and improving the condition of land resources. This also has resonance with the final resolution of the Rio+20 outcome document "Future We Want" where the world leaders recognized land degradation as a serious global challenge impeding sustainable development globally and agreed towards an aspirational goal for achieving a land-degradation neutral world.

India submitted its National Action Programme to Combat Desertification (NAP-CD) to the Secretariat of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in 2001; providing an overview of the status of natural resources in the country, the status and impacts of desertification, measures under implementation, and in particular, the initiatives taken for combating desertification. At present, Ministry is formulating its New National Action Programme to Combat Desertification (NNAP-CD) which will be a unique opportunity to strive towards land degradation neutrality

by 2030. The NNAP-CD, currently under preparation, is based on the aspirational goal of land degradation neutrality through coordinated efforts by all concerned Ministries and Departments.

(e) Many of the present schemes and programmes of Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water Resources and Ministry of Panchayati Raj have significant bearing for addressing the Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) challenges. India has for the first time recorded net addition of 3.15 m ha of forest and tree cover from 1995 to 2005. (Forest Survey of India, 2009). The Mission for Green India proposes to address 10 m ha of predominantly degraded lands, over next 10 years, with a view to restore multiple ecosystem services from such land as well as enhance livelihoods of households who depend on these lands. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), an employment guarantee program has considerable focus on land, water and afforestation activities. The Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development has been implementing three area development programmes viz. Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP), Drought Prone Areas Programmes (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP) since 1995-96 on watershed basis. The above three programmes have been integrated into a single modified programme called Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) with effect from 26.02.2009, for development of rainfed/ degraded areas including wastelands. The major activities taken up under IWMP inter alia include ridge area treatment, drainage line treatment, soil and moisture conservation, rain water harvesting, nursery raising, afforestation, horticulture, pasture development etc. So far, 7204 IWMP projects covering an area of 34.26 million ha. have been sanctioned and central

assistance of Rs.8747.45 crore has been released to States.