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Title: Need for proper implementation of Western Ghats Development Programme in Dindigul Parliamentary Constituency in Tamil Nadu.

SHRI M. UDHAYAKUMAR (DINDIGUL): Hon. Madam Speaker, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to raise the issue of effective implementation of Western Ghats Development Programme (WGDP) in my Dindigul constituency.

Western Ghats Development Programme (WGDP) is being implemented in Dindigul constituency to conserve the forest area of the Western Ghats. Fire prevention works, soil and moisture conservation works, anti-poaching measures and solar fencing are some of the major activities being carried out under this scheme. In Dindigul, Madurai and Theni districts, the scheme has been implemented through the Tamil Nadu Watershed Development Agency fund in the past.

To strengthen biodiversity conservation as well as undertaking tree plantation outside the forest areas to increase tree cover, the Tamil Nadu Forest Department under our hon. Chief Minister Puratchi Thalaivi Amma has implemented the Japan International Cooperation Agency assisted an externally aided project named "Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Conservation and Greening Project." The loan agreement between the Government of India and the Government of Japan has been signed. The project is to be implemented from 2011-12 to 2018-19 with an outlay of Rs. 686 crore through creation of a Project Management Unit sanctioned by the Government.

Raising teak plantations on river *padugai* lands is aimed at creating timber resources in the State by planting teak on the canal banks and on river *padugai* lands to increase tree cover outside the reserve forests and to prevent soil erosion in canal and river banks. The proposal to raise teak plantations on canal and river banks and *padugais* of Dindigul, Madurai, Sivaganga and other districts is going to be implemented at a total cost of Rs. 35.31 crore over a period of six years, that is, from 2008-09 to 2013-14 covering an area of 20,700 hectares. I would request the Government to extend this scheme for another six years.

Hill Area Development Programme is being implemented only in the forest areas of Nilgiris district for conservation. Soil and moisture conservation works, fencing the forests, fire prevention measures, anti-poaching measures and improving wildlife habitats are being carried out under this scheme. I urge the Environment and Forest Minister to extend this scheme in Dindigul district also.

The Thirteenth Finance Commission has recommended an amount of Rs. 142.48 crore for Tamil Nadu towards grants-in-aid for forests for the period 2010-11 to 2014-15 for development of forests and preservation of forest wealth. I request that adequate financial assistance be extended to the Government of Tamil Nadu in the financial year 2015-16 to implement the Western Ghats Development in an effective manner. Thank you.