

15

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(1998-99)**

TWELFTH LOK SABHA

**MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS
AND EMPLOYMENT
(DEPARTMENT OF WASTELANDS
DEVELOPMENT)**

**DEMANDS FOR GRANTS
(1997-98)**

FIFTEENTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

8-3657R
10.1.

FIFTEENTH REPORT
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(1998-99)

(TWELFTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT
(DEPARTMENT OF WASTELANDS DEVELOPMENT)

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS—1997-98

*[Action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained
in the Ninth Report of the Standing Committee on Urban &
Rural Development (Eleventh Lok Sabha)]*

*Presented to Lok Sabha on 26.2.99
Laid in Rajya Sabha on 26.2.99*



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

February, 1999/Phalguna, 1920 (Saka)

Price : Rs. 13.00

PARLIAMENT LIBRARY
Central Govt. Publications
Acc. No. PC.101253 (5)
Date.....

LC
328.3657

N8.15.1

© 1999 BY LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

Published under Rule 382 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha (Ninth Edition) and Printed by Jainco Art India, 13/10, W.E.A., Saraswati Marg, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110 005.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE 1998-99	(iii)
INTRODUCTION	(v)
CHAPTER I Report	1
CHAPTER II Recommendations that have been accepted by the Government.....	9
CHAPTER III Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies	15
CHAPTER IV Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee	16
CHAPTER V Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited	19

APPENDICES

I. Minutes of the 34th Sitting of the Committee on Urban & Rural Development held on 9.2.99	21
II. Analysis of the action taken by the Government on the recommendation contained in the 9th Report (11th Lok Sabha).....	24

COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
URBAN & RURAL DEVELOPMENT (1998-99)

Shri Kishan Singh Sangwan — *Chairman*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri D.S. Ahire
- *3. Shri Sudip Bandyopadhyay
4. Dr. Shafiqur Rahman Barq
5. Shri Padmanava Behera
6. Shri Sriram Chauhan
7. Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan
8. Shrimati Malti Devi
9. Shri Ramkrushna Suryabhan Gavai
10. Shri Mitha Lal Jain
11. Shri Akbar Ali Khandokar
12. Shri Vinod Khanna
13. Shri Subhash Maharia
14. Shri Bir Singh Mahato
15. Shri Subrata Mukherjee
16. Shrimati Raneer Narah
17. Shri Chandresh Patel
18. Shri Rameshwar Patidar
19. Shrimati Jayanti Patnaik
20. Shri Mullappally Ramachandran
21. Shri Gaddam Ganga Reddy
22. Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy

*Nominated *w.e.f.* 11.6.1998.

23. Shri Ramjidas Rishidev
24. Shri Chatin Singh Samaon
25. Shri Nikhilaranda Sar
26. Shri I.M. Jayaram Shetty
27. Shri Daya Singh Sodhi
28. Shri Vithal Baburao Tupe
29. Dr. Ram Vilas Vedanti
30. Shri K. Venugopal

Rajya Sabha

31. Shrimati Shabana Azmi
32. Shrimati Vyjayantimala Bali
33. Shri Nilotpal Basu
- *34. Shri Jhumuklal Bhendia
- *35. Dr. M.N. Das
36. Shri N.R. Dasari
37. Shri John F. Fernandes
38. Shri C. Apok Jamir
39. Shri Onkar Singh Lakhawat
40. Prof. A. Lakshmisagar
41. Shri Jagdambi Mandal
42. Shri O.S. Manian
43. Dr. Mohan Babu
44. Shri N. Rajendran
45. Shri Suryabhan Patil Vahadane

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri G.C. Malhotra — *Additional Secretary*
2. Shri S.C. Rastogi — *Director*
3. Smt. Sudesh Luthra — *Under Secretary*

INTRODUCTION

1, the Chairman of Standing Committee on Urban & Rural Development (1998-99) having been authorised by the Committee to submit the report on their behalf, present the Fifteenth Report on action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Ninth Report of the Standing Committee on Urban & Rural Development (Eleventh Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants (1997-98) of the Department of Wastelands Development of the Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment.

2. The Ninth Report was presented to Lok Sabha on 22nd April, 1997. The replies of the Government to all the recommendations contained in the Report were received on 28th November, 1997. The replies of the Government were examined and the Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their sitting held on 9th February, 1999.

3. An analysis of the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Ninth Report of the Committee (Eleventh Lok Sabha) is given in Appendix-II.

NEW DELHI;
February 20, 1999
Phalgun 1, 1920 (Saka)

KISHAN SINGH SANGWAN,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on
Urban & Rural Development.

CHAPTER I

REPORT

This Report of the Committee on Urban & Rural Development (1998-99) deals with the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in their Ninth Report on Demands for Grants (1997-98) of the Department of Wastelands Development of the Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment which was presented to Lok Sabha on 22nd April, 1997.

2. Action taken notes have been received from the Government in respect of all the 13 recommendations which have been categorised as follows :—

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

Sl. Nos. 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 13.

- (ii) Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue :

Sl. Nos. Nil.

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

Sl. Nos. 2, 5, 10 and 12.

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

Sl. Nos. 3 & 4.

3. The Committee desire that final replies in respect of the recommendations for which only interim replies have been given by the Government should be furnished to the Committee within three months of the presentation of the Report.

4. The Committee will now deal with the action taken by the Government on some of the recommendations in the succeeding paragraphs.

A. Outlay for Ninth Plan for the Department of Wastelands Development

Recommendation (Sl. No. 2)

5. The Committee in their earlier recommendation had observed as under :

“The Committee further note with regret the lesser releases made during the 8th Plan. Out of the approved outlay of Rs. 1165 crore, the allocation made is for Rs. 254.90 crore which is around 22%. Further they note that taking into consideration the total extent of wastelands as 75.5 million hectares in the country as reported by NRSA, the outlay for Rs. 30,200 crore would be required at the proposed rate of Rs. 4,000 per hectare. It is noted that the actual data of wastelands in the country and funds required for the purpose may be even greater as the estimates with regard to wastelands in the country differ. Proposed outlay during the 9th Plan has been given as Rs. 3755.00 crore. Even if the Government agrees to the outlay, as per the calculation made, the country would need another 45 years to develop wastelands. The Committee observe that the picture is not so clear as the Government may agree to 10-20% of the proposed outlay as per the past practice. Further the situation may be more alarming failing to have access to the reliable estimates. Keeping in view the alarming picture as given above it is observed that the country would have to wait for a century to solve the problem of wastelands in the country. In these circumstances they would like to strongly recommend that the proposed outlay of Rs. 3755.00 crore for 9th Plan should be accepted. Further they would also like that the Department should be ready with the perspective action plan to utilize the money meaningfully.”

6. The Ministry in their action taken reply stated as follows :

“Taking into consideration the magnitude of the problem of wastelands in the country the Department of Wastelands Development has projected the requirement of an amount of

Rs. 245 crore during 1997-98 and Rs. 3755 crore during 9th Five Year Plan. However, the Planning Commission has allocated only Rs. 95 crore for 1997-98 and Rs. 467.29 crore for 9th Five Year Plan."

7. The Committee note with concern that inspite of their stressing repeatedly for increasing the outlay of the Department of Wastelands Development, against the projections of the Department for Rs. 3755 crore for 9th Plan only Rs. 467.29 crore have been sanctioned. The Committee reiterate their earlier recommendation that the Department should take up the matter with the Planning Commission and the Committee should be apprised of the outcome of the efforts made by the Department in this regard.

B. Implementation of High Level Committee Report

Recommendations (Sl. Nos. 3 & 4)

8. The Committee had recommended as under :

"It is further found that at present there are various schemes under the Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Environment & Forests for the development of wastelands in the country. It is felt that in the event of so many Ministries/Departments dealing with the same aspect, there is every chance of duplication, delay and misutilisation of scarce resources. They note that High Level Committee (HLC) under the Chairmanship of Shri Mohan Dharia have recommended for creation of a separate Department of Land Resources. The Committee would like to recommend that on the lines of HLC recommendations all the activities relating to development of wastelands should be merged together in a common programme under one Department/Ministry. This endeavour would definitely ensure better coordination and implementation of the programmes."

Recommendation (Sl. No. 3)

"The Committee note that the Report of High Level Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri Mohan Dharia presented on 8th December, 1995, as per the written note furnished by the Department, is still under consideration of the Government.

It is observed that more than one year and 4 months have elapsed since the report was presented to the Department but still they could not take any concrete action on the recommendations of the Committee. After evaluating the 8th Plan and before the start of 9th Plan, the Department was expected to comply with the accepted recommendations of the Committee. The first year of 9th Plan has started with the same note as in the 8th Plan. The Committee are annoyed at the attitude of the Department with regard to the implementation of recommendation of HL Committee. They would like to recommend strongly that the recommendations of the HLC should be considered and implemented at the earliest. It is urged that on lines with the recommendations of Mohan Dharia Committee Report, the Department should chalk out an action plan of 10-15 years to develop wastelands in the country."

Recommendation (Sl. No. 4)

9. The Government in their action taken notes have stated as below :

"This is in line with the recommendations of HLC. The recommendations of the Committee are under the consideration of the Government."

ATR to Recommendation (Sl. No. 3)

"Action for the implementation of the recommendations of the High Level Committee would be taken after a decision is taken in the matter by the Government."

ATR to Recommendation (Sl. No. 4)

10. The Committee note that the considered recommendations made in the said report of the High Level Committee (HLC) headed by Shri Mohan Dharia presented to Government on 8th December, 1995, are still under consideration of the Government. They hope that the decision on the recommendations of the HLC would be taken without any further delay and the Committee apprised accordingly. ,

C. Guidelines to Develop Wastelands under the Private Ownership

Recommendation (Sl. No. 5)

11. The Committee had observed as below :

“The Committee note that the Government at present does not have any policy/programme with regard to known various wastelands which is under the ownership or has been leased out to private individuals and also with regard to village/common land which is under the ownership and management of the Government village community. In the written note it has been stated that it is expected that the private landowners will take necessary measures to maintain the productive capability of land at an adequate level and prevent it from any degradation. As regards common wastelands under the ownership management of the Government/village community it has been stated that Panchayati Raj Institute will maintain it. The Committee note that Government does not have some clear-cut guidelines with regard to development of wastelands under the private ownership. They would like that the Government should have some clear-cut guidelines issued to the State Governments to maintain the said category of wastelands.”

12. The Government in their action taken reply have stated :

“The subject of lands including development/maintenance of wastelands falls under the purview of the State Governments. The Land Reform Division of Department of Rural Development is dealing with ceiling on surplus lands. Regarding assessment of Government wastelands for certain activities such as horticulture, plantation of long duration and value addition etc., the Department of Wastelands Development is in touch with the State Governments. The State Governments have been requested to send project for development of village common lands.”

13. While agreeing to the action taken reply furnished by the Department that the subject of development/maintenance of land falls under the jurisdiction of State Government, the Committee feel that guidelines can always be issued to States/UTs by the Central Government and the Central Government should impress upon the State Governments, the need of development of wastelands under the private ownership.

D. Restructuring of the Schemes

Recommendation (Sl. No. 7)

14. The Committee had recommended as under :—

“The Committee note that in two of the schemes *i.e.*

(i) Support to NGOs/VAs

(ii) Investment Promotional Scheme

the performance both physical and financial is very low. The Committee in their 16th Report of 1995-96 and 3rd Report of 1996-97 had recommended to restructure the said schemes. It is noted that the Government have not restructured the schemes in the line with the recommendation of the Committee during the 9th plan. Further the 9th Plan outlay for support to NGOs/VAs has been kept for Rs. 165 crore where as marginal amount of Rs. 1 crore has been provided under Investment Promotional Scheme. The Committee fail to understand as to how the Department would spend Rs. 165 crore under Support to NGOs/VAs Schemes as they do not have any perspective action plan with regard to such schemes. On line with the scheme as exists it is very difficult to utilize the funds allocated as could be seen from the performance of the previous years whereby Rs. 13.75 crore has actually been released out of Rs. 70 crore during the 8th Plan under Support to NGOs/VAs where as under Investment Promotional Scheme out of Rs. 300 crore, Rs. 0.22 crore only could be utilised out of the allocated amount of Rs. 6 crore. The Committee are really disappointed with the way the Department is dealing with their recommendations. They would like to reiterate their earlier recommendation and hope that next year Government would come with new restructure schemes so that the scarce funds given for such schemes are meaningfully utilized.”

15. The Government in their action taken note have stated as follows :

“As desired by the Committee the Investment Promotional Scheme is being restructured. The amount of Rs. 1 crore provided under the scheme during 9th Plan is a token provision which can be

enhanced as per requirement after the schemes is restructured. The allocation of Rs. 165 crore for NGO/VA scheme was recommended by the Working Group on 9th Five Year Plan. However, the Planning Commission during plan discussion has allocated Rs. 95.00 crore for all the schemes during 1997-98 out of which an amount of Rs. 4 crore has been kept for implementation of support to NGO/VA Scheme."

16. While appreciating the efforts made by the Department to restructure the Investment Promotional Scheme, the Committee find that the projections of Rs. 165 crore for Support to NGOs/VAs Scheme during the 9th Plan are very unrealistic. Further final allocation of only 4 crore for the said scheme speaks volume of the unrealistic attitude of the Government while preparing the plan proposals. They would like to stress that the Government should take due care to see that they are ready with the perspective action plan before making projections for a scheme so as to ensure meaningful utilisation of the scarce resources.

E. Strategy to Prevent Degradation of Developed Land

Recommendations (Sl. Nos. 10 & 12)

17. The Committee in their earlier recommendations had observed as under :—

"The Committee observe that besides developing the existing wastelands in the country another challenge the country is facing the degradation of developed land. They feel that to stop the developed wasteland to degraded land is the major area of concern. They would like that the Department should have some strategy with regard to having some programme to prevent developed land going into wastelands."

Recommendation (Sl. No. 10)

"The Committee feel that at present there is no mechanism to maintain the developed wasteland by the Department. They note that although it may come under the jurisdiction of State Government yet the role of Central Government to issue certain guidelines cannot be neglected. They would like that Centre should issue some guidelines to maintain the developed wasteland under the respective schemes of the Department."

Recommendation (Sl. No. 12)

18. The Government in their action taken notes for Recommendations at Sl. No. 10 & 12 have replied as follows :—

“For want of maintenance in the post project period the situation of developed land again becoming degraded may take place. Under the Guidelines it has been provided that all assets created should be maintained by the Panchayati Raj Institutions after completion of the project.”

19. The Committee note that although the Government share the concern expressed by the Committee in their recommendation as given above with regard to the degradation of developed land into wastelands if there is no provision for the proper maintenance in the post project period, yet no concrete steps seem to be taken in this regard. While noting that as per the guidelines the maintenance of all assets created, lies with the Panchayats, the Committee find that proper post project maintenance is not being provided. They would like to reiterate their earlier recommendation to have an effective mechanism to maintain the developed wastelands by the Department.

CHAPTER II

RECOMMENDATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation (Sl. No. 1)

The Committee note with concern the non-availability of reliable data with regard to wastelands in the country. There are various estimates ranging from 38.4 million hectares to 187 million hectares of wastelands in the country. The Committee in their 3rd Report on Demands for Grants 1996-97 have recommended that the Department should ascertain the correct information with regard to wastelands in the country. They fail to understand that no initiative has been taken by the Department in this regard. It is noted that the Ninth Plan has started and they are examining the Demands of the 1st year of the 9th Plan. They are at a loss to understand how the Government could fix the future priorities and targets without having some sort of reliable data with the country. In this regard the Committee would like to reiterate their earlier recommendation made in their 3rd Report and would like that earnest action should be initiated to procure the realistic data with regard to wastelands in the country so as to fix future priorities and programme.

Reply of the Government

Realising the importance of identification of wastelands on scientific basis, the Department of Wastelands Development (DoWD) has commissioned study on preparation of district level mapping of wastelands in collaboration with National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA). Department of Space, Hyderabad. So far the mapping of Wastelands of 241 districts have been completed. The NRSA has been asked to complete the mapping for the remaining districts by the end of March, 1998. Once the district level mapping of wastelands covering the entire country is made available by NRSA, the Department would be in a better position to process various categories of wastelands and prioritize for future programme.

[Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment (Department of Wastelands Development), O.M. No. G. 33011/12/97-Coord., Dated 28.10.97]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 6)

The Committee note that the performance of various schemes launched by the Department is not quite satisfactory. Under IWDP which is the biggest scheme of the Department as per the written note of the Department funds for treatment of only 2,84,000 ha. of wastelands have been released. Further, the Department has not the data with regard to actual area developed by these projects. So far as Technology Development Extension and Training Schemes and Investment Promotional Schemes and Wastelands Development Task Force are concerned, the expenditure out of the marginal outlay for these schemes is very nominal. The Committee would like the explanation of the Government in this regard. They would also like that financial allocation under IWDP should further be strengthened considering it as the biggest scheme of the Department. The Committee note with concern that the present financial allocation would not be sufficient rather than the Department should monitor the implementation of the respective schemes of the Department. They note with regret that the Department do not have actual data with regard to actual area developed under various projects under IWDP. They would like that the Department should regularly monitor the performance of the schemes and the data should be given in the Performance Budget of the Department. They hope that the recommendation of the Committee would be considered and data be provided in the Performance Budget of next year *i.e.* 1998-99.

Reply of the Government

The information on actual area developed in various States under IWDP Scheme has been collected from the DRDAs. According to the information furnished by DRDAs, an area of 2,34,722 ha. has been developed till August, 1997. The information regarding actual area developed under various schemes will be included in the performance Budget of the Department in the next year *i.e.* 1998-99.

[Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment (Department of Wastelands Development), O.M. No. G. 33011/12/97-Coord., Dated 28.10.97]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 7)

The Committee note that in two of the schemes *i.e.*

- (i) Support to NGOs/VAs
- (ii) Investment Promotional Scheme

The performance both physical and financial is very low. The Committee in their 16th report of 1995-96 and 3rd Report of 1996-97 had recommended to restructure the said schemes. It is noted that the Government have not restructured the schemes in line with the recommendation of the Committee during the 9th plan. Further the 9th Plan outlay for support to NGOs/VAs has been kept for Rs. 165 crores where as marginal amount of Rs. 1 crore has been provided under Investment Promotional Scheme. The Committee fail to understand as how the Department would spend Rs. 165 crore under support to NGOs/VAs Schemes as they do not have any perspective action plan with regard to such schemes. On line with the scheme as exists it is very difficult to utilize the funds allocated as could be seen from the performance of the previous years where by Rs. 13.75 crore has actually been released out of Rs. 70 crores during the 8th Plan under support to NGOs/VAs where as under Investment Promotional Scheme out of Rs. 300 crore/Rs. 0.22 crores only could be utilised out of the allocated amount of Rs. 6 crore. The Committee are really disappointed with the way the Department is dealing with their recommendations. They would like to reiterate their earlier recommendation and hope that next year Government would come with new restructure schemes so that the scarce funds given for such schemes are meaningfully utilized.

Reply of the Government

As desired by the Committee the Investment Promotional Scheme is being restructured. The amount of Rs. 1 crore provided under the scheme during 9th Plan is a token provision which can be enhanced as per requirement after the schemes is restructured. The allocation of Rs. 165 crore for NGO/VA scheme was recommended by the Working Group on 9th Five Year Plan. However, the Planning Commission during plan discussion has allocated Rs. 95.00 crore for all the schemes during 1997-98 out of which an amount of Rs. 4 crore has been kept for implementation of support to NGOs/VAs Scheme.

[Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment (Department of Wastelands Development), O.M. No. G. 33011/12/97-Coord., Dated 28.10.97]

Comments of the Committee

(Please See Paragraph No. 16 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Sl. No. 8)

The Committee note that monitoring of the projects/schemes of the Department is not quite satisfactory. So far C&AG have not examined any of the schemes and monitoring at present is done by DRDAs. The Committee would like to recommend that the Government should further take effective steps to strengthen the monitoring mechanism to ensure the better implementation of the various schemes.

Reply of the Government

The monitoring mechanism of the projects under various schemes is being strengthened. The evaluation of the projects is being undertaken through independent evaluators appointed by the Department. The services of reputed organisations/NGOs are being taken for monitoring and impact assessment of completed projects.

[Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment (Department of Wastelands Development), O.M. No. G. 33011/12/97-Coord. Dated 28.10.97]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 9)

The Committee feel that in the existing stringency of funds as compared to the herculean task of development of wastelands Government should evolve some policy to attract private agencies for these tasks. The Committee in their 3rd Report on Demands for Grants had recommended to evolve the viability of involving private agencies in this task. They would like to reiterate their earlier recommendation and hope that the Department would examine and present some acceptable mechanism to evolve private agencies in the task of development of wastelands.

Reply of the Government

Land is a state subject, and, therefore, a policy has to be evolved by the State Governments for attracting private entrepreneurs. The

biggest hurdle is the law relating to ceiling of agricultural land holdings. Some States have taken the initiative in the matter of making available the degraded land to private entrepreneurs for development. But so far no worthwhile progress in the matter of leasing of land to private entrepreneurs has been reported. Under the IPS scheme which is being restructured the involvement of private agencies for development of wastelands will be kept in view while finalizing the scheme.

[Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment (Department of Wastelands Development), O.M. No. G. 33011/12/97-Coord., Dated 28.10.97]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 11)

The Committee in their 3rd Report on Demands for Grants had recommended that the performance of NGOs under the scheme of Support to NGOs/VAs stated that Central grant as given should specifically be mentioned in the Performance Budget. They are disappointed to note that Performance Budget 1997-98 does not depict the performance of such NGOs. They would like to reiterate their earlier recommendation and hope that Performance Budget 1998-99 would be having such desired information.

Reply of the Government

The suggestion of the Committee has been noted. The performance of NGOs/VAs under the scheme will be indicated in the performance Budget for 1998-99.

[Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment (Department of Wastelands Development), O.M. No. G. 33011/12/97-Coord., Dated 28.10.97]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 13)

The Committee urge that in order to provide greater accountability and transparency the coordination between voluntary organization and various implementing District Agencies should be developed.

Reply of the Government

Under the support to NGOs/VAs scheme the projects are approved only after concerned DRDA has furnished the pre-appraisal report in respect of the proposal. DRDAs have also been requested to coordinate the implementation of the projects by the NGOs and provide necessary technical help wherever necessary.

[Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment (Department of Wastelands Development), O.M. No. G. 33011/12/97-Coord., Dated 28.10.97]

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 (Sl. No. 2)

The Committee further note with regret the lesser releases made during the 8th Plan. Out of the approved outlay of Rs. 1165 crore, the allocation made is for Rs. 254.90 crore which is around 22%. Further they note that taking into consideration the total extent of wastelands as 75.5 million hectares in the country as reported by NRSA, the outlay for Rs. 30,200 crore would be required at the proposed rate of Rs. 4,000 per hectare. It is noted that the actual data of wastelands in the country and funds required for the purpose may be even greater as the estimates with regard to wastelands in the country differ. Proposed outlay during the 9th Plan has been given as Rs. 3755.00 crore. Even if the Government agrees to the outlay, as per the calculation made, the country would need another 45 years to develop wastelands. The Committee observe that the picture is not so clear as the Government may agree to 10-20% of the proposed outlay as per the past practice. Further the situation may be more alarming failing to have access to the reliable estimates. Keeping in view the alarming picture as given above it is observed that the country would have to wait for a century to solve the problem of wastelands in the country. In these circumstances they would like to strongly recommend that the proposed outlay of Rs. 3755.00 crore for 9th Plan should be accepted. Further they would also like that the Department should be ready with the perspective action plan to utilize the money meaningfully.

Reply of the Government

Taking into consideration the magnitude of the problem of wastelands in the country the DoWD has projected the requirement of an amount of Rs. 245 crore during 1997-98 and Rs. 3755 crore during

9th Five Year Plan. However, the Planning Commission has allocated only Rs. 95 crore for 1997-98 and Rs. 467.29 crore for 9th Five Year Plan.

[Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment (Department of Wastelands Development), O.M. No. G. 33011/12/97-Coord., Dated 28.10.97]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 7 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Sl. No. 5)

The Committee note that the Government at present does not have any policy/programme with regard to known various wastelands which is under the ownership or has been leased out to private individuals and also with regard to village common land which is under the ownership management of the Government village community. In the written note it has been stated that it is expected that the private landowners will take necessary measures to maintain the productive capability of land at an adequate level and prevent it from any degradation. As regards common wastelands under the ownership management of the Government/village community it has been stated that Panchayati Raj Institute will maintain it. The Committee note that Government does not have some clear-cut guidelines with regard to development of wastelands under the private ownership. They would like that the Government should have some clear-cut guidelines issued to the State Governments to maintain the said category of wastelands.

Reply of the Government

The subject of lands including development/maintenance of wastelands falls under the purview of the State Governments. The Land Reform Division of Department of Rural Development is dealing with ceiling on surplus lands. Regarding assessment of Government wastelands for certain activities such as horticulture, plantation of long duration and value addition etc., the Department of Wastelands Development is in touch with the State Governments. The State

Governments have been requested to send project for development of village common lands.

[Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment (Department of Wastelands Development), O.M. No. G. 33011/12/97-Coord., Dated 28.10.97]

Comments of the Committee

(Please *see* Paragraph No. 13 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Sl. No. 10)

The Committee observe that besides developing the existing wastelands in the country another challenge the country is facing the degradation of developed land. They feel that to stop the developed wasteland to degraded land is the major area of concern. They would like that the Department should have some strategy with regard to having some programme to prevent developed land going into wastelands.

Recommendation (Sl. No. 12)

The Committee feel that at present there is no mechanism to maintain the developed wasteland by the Department. They note that although it may come under the jurisdiction of State Government yet the role of Central Government to issue certain guidelines cannot be neglected. They would like that Centre should issue some guidelines to maintain the developed wasteland under the respective schemes of the Department.

Reply of the Government

Reply 4.10 & 4.12 : For want of maintenance in the post project period the situation of developed land again becoming degraded may take place. Under the Guidelines it has been provided that all assets created should be maintained by the Panchayati Raj Institutions after completion of the project.

[Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment (Department of Wastelands Development), O.M. No. G. 33011/12/97-Coord., Dated 28.10.97]

Comments of the Committee

(Please *see* Paragraph No. 19 of Chapter I of the Report)

CHAPTER V

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

Recommendation (Sl. No. 3)

It is further found that at present there are various schemes under the Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Environment & Forests for the development of wastelands in the country. It is felt that in the event of so many Ministries/ Departments dealing with the same aspect, there is every chance of duplication, delay and misutilisation of scarce resources. They note that High Level Committee (HLC) under the Chairmanship of Shri Mohan Dharia have recommended for creation of a separate Department of Land Resources. The Committee would like to recommend that on the lines of HLC recommendations all the activities relating to development of wastelands should be merged together in a common programme under one Department/Ministry. This endeavour would definitely ensure better coordination and implementation of the programmes.

Reply of the Government

This is in line with the recommendations of HLC. The recommendations of the Committee are under the consideration of the Government.

[Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment (Department of Wastelands Development), O.M. No. G. 33011/12/97-Coord., Dated 28.10.97]

Comments of the Committee

(Please *see* Paragraph No. 10 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Sl. No. 4)

The Committee note that the Report of High Level Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri Mohan Dharia has been presented on

8th December, 1995 as per written note furnished by the Department it is still under consideration of the Government. It is observed that more than one year and 4 months have elapsed since the report was presented to the Department but still they could not take any concrete action on the recommendations of the Committee. After evaluating the 8th Plan and before the start of 9th Plan, the Department was expected to comply with the accepted recommendations of the Committee. The first year of 9th Plan has started with the same note as in the 8th Plan. The Committee are annoyed at the attitude of the Department with regard to the implementation of recommendation of HLC Committee. They would like to recommend strongly that the recommendations of the HLC should be considered and implemented at the earliest. It is urged that on lines with the recommendations of Mohan Dharia Committee Report, the Department should chalk out an action plan of 10-15 years to develop wastelands in the country.

Reply of the Government

Action for the implementation of the recommendations of the High Level Committee would be taken after a decision is taken in the matter by the Government.

[Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment (Department of Wastelands Development), O.M. No. G.-33011/12/97-Coord., Dated 28.10.97]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 10 of Chapter I of the Report)

NEW DELHI;
February 20, 1999
 Phalguna 1, 1920 (Saka)

KISHAN SINGH SANGWAN,
 Chairman,
 Standing Committee on
 Urban & Rural Development.

APPENDIX I

COMMITTEE ON URBAN & RURAL DEVELOPMENT (1998-99)

EXTRACTS OF MINUTES OF THE 34TH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON URBAN & RURAL DEVELOPMENT HELD ON TUESDAY, THE 9TH FEBRUARY, 1999 IN COMMITTEE ROOM 'C' PARLIAMENT HOUSE ANNEXE, NEW DELHI.

The Committee sat from 15.00 hrs. to 15.50 hrs.

PRESENT

Shri Kishan Singh Sangwan — *Chairman*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Dr. Shafiqur Rahman Barq
3. Shri Sriram Chauhan
4. Shri Ramkrushna Suryabhan Gavai
5. Shri Mitha Lal Jain
6. Shri Subhash Maharia
7. Shri Bir Singh Mahato
8. Smt. Ranee Narah
9. Shri Rameshwar Patidar
10. Shri Mullappally Ramachandran
11. Shri Gaddam Ganga Reddy
12. Shri Chatin Singh Samaon
13. Shri Nikhulananda Sar
14. Shri I.M. Jayaram Shetty

15. Shri Daya Singh Sodhi

16. Dr. Ram Vilas Vedanti

17. Shri K. Venugopal

०

Rajya Sabha

18. Shri Nilotpal Basu

19. Shri Jhumuklal Bhendia

20. Dr. Manmath Nath Das

21. Shri N.R. Dasari

22. Shri John F. Fernandes

23. Shri C. Apok Jamir

24. Shri Onkar Singh Lakhawat

25. Prof. A. Lakshmisagar

26. Shri Jagdambi Mandal

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri S.C. Rastogi — *Director*

2. Smt. Sudesh Luthra — *Under Secretary*

०

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

Consideration of draft Action Taken Reports

3. The Committee considered the following Memoranda regarding draft Action Taken Reports :—

(i) **** **** ****

(ii) **** **** ****

(iii) Memorandum No. 12 regarding Action Taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the

9th Report (Eleventh Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants (1997-98) of the Department of Wastelands Development (Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment).

- (iv) **** **** ****
- (v) **** **** ****

4. The Committee, then authorised the Chairman, to finalise the said Reports on the basis of factual verification from the concerned Ministries/Departments and present the same to Parliament.

The Committee then adjourned.

APPENDIX II

(Vide Para 3 of the Introduction)

ANALYSIS OF THE ACTION TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE NINTH REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (11TH LOK SABHA)

I. Total Number of Recommendations	13
II. Recommendations that have been accepted by the Government	
Sl. Nos. 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 13	7
Percentage to the total recommendations	53.85%
III. Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies	
Sl. No. —NIL—	NIL
Percentage to the total recommendations	NIL
IV. Recommendations in respect of which replies of that Government have not been accepted by the Committee	
Sl. Nos. 2, 5, 10 and 12	4
Percentage to the total recommendations	30.77%
V. Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited	
Sl. Nos. 3 and 4	2
Percentage to the total recommendations	15.38%