

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6408

ANSWERED ON:05.05.2010

ENQUIRY INTO GEAC DECISION

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

- (a) whether some of the members of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) have opposed or dissociated themselves from the decision of the Committee that has given certificate of safety and clearance for commercial production of Bt. Brinjal in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has initiated an enquiry into the decision for granting of clearance accorded by GEAC;
- (d) if so, the outcome thereof;
- (e) whether the Government has taken note of the cases of violations of the Biological Diversity Act of India, 2002;
- (f) if so, the corrective measures proposed to be taken in this regard;
- (g) whether the Government is aware of the allegations that the guidelines under the Bio Diversity Act such as transfer of local biodiversity, import of transgenic material and commercialization of the product did not exist in the international collaborative research effort in the case of Bt. Brinjal; and
- (h) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH)

- (a)to(d)Two Members and one Special Invitee of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) out of seventeen members and two special invitees did not support the decision of the GEAC on Bt brinjal. Bt brinjal event EE-1 has been developed in compliance with the prevailing regulatory procedures and biosafety guidelines. The decision of the GEAC on the safety of Bt brinjal for environmental release is based on
- (i) review by three high level technical Committees namely; the Review Committee on Genetic Manipulations and two Expert Committees constituted by the GEAC in 2006 and 2009;
 - (ii) scientific facts/data generated during 2002-2009; and
 - (iii) international experience with GM crops. Subsequently, based on the views of various stakeholders during the public consultations organized by the Ministry, moratorium has been imposed on commercialization of Bt brinjal until independent scientific studies establish, the safety of the product from the point of view of its long-term impact on human health and environment, including the rich genetic wealth of brinjal existing in our country. The GEAC has been requested to address the concerns for resolving all scientific issues relating to Bt brinjal.
- (e)to(h)The allegations regarding violation of the Biological Diversity Act , 2002 in the context of Bt. brinjal, case are misplaced and unjustified. The import of transgenic material does not fall under the purview of Biological Diversity Act Biological Diversity Act. Guidelines and procedures are in place under this Act for transfer of biological material from India and for international collaborative research.