

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4740
ANSWERED ON:08.12.2010
POLICY FOR GM CROPS
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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India, as signatory to Cartagena protocol, has any policy framework to guide decisions with regard to crops for which we are the Centre of Origin/Diversity, when it comes to GM crops/foods ;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Supreme Court appointee had recommended a moratorium on GM crops trials and cultivation until the regulatory and biosafety regime is strengthened and streamlined as per the framework he proposed; and
- (d) if so, the action taken by the Government to follow Supreme Court recommendations/directions ?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) India is a Party to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB). While there is no specific policy framework for release of GM Crops in the centre of origin/diversity, decisions on release of GM crops are guided by the 'Rules for the Manufacture, Use/Import/Export and Storage of Hazardous Micro Organisms (HMOs) / Genetically Engineered Organisms (GMOs) or Cells, 1989 notified under the provisions of the 'Environment (Protection) Act', 1986; Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act, 2001; Report of the Task Force on Agriculture Biotechnology, 2004; National Environment Policy, 2006; National Biotechnology Development Strategy, 2007; National Policy for Farmers, 2007; National Biodiversity Action Plan, 2008; and Article 15, 16 and Annex-III of the CPB pertaining to risk assessment and management of living modified organism. The application of Genetic Use Restriction Technologies (GURTs) or terminator technologies in GM crops is prohibited and import of GURTs based products is also banned in the country.

(c) P.M. Bhargava appointed by the Supreme Court as an 'observer' to the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee has called for moratorium on GM crop trials and cultivation until an independent regulatory mechanism is put in place. However, there is no proposal to ban field trials as it forms an integral part of research and development. Any restraint on the field trials would have severe implication on the research and development of agriculture biotechnology which is not in the national interest. The moot point is to ensure these activities are carried out in a safe and scientific manner.

(d) The Hon'ble Supreme Court has not issued any direction to the Government to enforce a moratorium on field trials and cultivation of GM crops.