

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2797  
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2011  
DELIMITATION OF AREAS  
Biju Shri P. K.;Sule Supriya

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

- (a) whether the Government has demarcated `Go and No Go Zones` for coal projects in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the criteria adopted in this regard;
- (c) whether the Planning Commission has urged for a careful delimitation of areas in the country in view of overall development perspective;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the remedial steps taken/being taken by the Government in this regard?

**Answer**

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

(a) & (b) The Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF) and the Ministry of Coal (MoC) had jointly undertaken an exercise to overlay the forest cover map on the coal blocks boundaries in respect of 9 coalfields in the country and identified various coal blocks as category 'A' (No-Go areas) and Category 'B' (Go areas). As per the exercise, 449 coal blocks covering about 3,80,000 ha have been categorised as category 'B' out of total number of 602 coal blocks covering about 6,48,750 ha.

The criteria used for characterizing 'A' and 'B' has been based on following parameters:

(i) Gross Forest Cover (GFC) – under this category, the forest is defined as crop having density more than 10%. Anything below this is scrub, which is not included in the forest cover. Any proposed coal block having 30% or more area under forest cover is placed under non-available category, i.e., category 'A' or 'No-Go'.

(ii) Weighted Forest Cover (WFC) – to give appropriate weightage to different qualities of forest, a weightage of 0.85 was given to very dense forests, 0.55 to moderately dense forests and 0.25 to open forests in a coal block for calculating forest cover percentage over the whole block. The cut off for this parameter has been kept as 10%, i.e., if a block has WFC of more 10%, it is in category 'A' or 'No-Go'.

(c) to (e) The Member (Energy), Planning Commission, while reviewing the Policy Guidelines for allotment of alternative coal block to captive allottees, suggested that the issues of 'Go - No Go' areas need to be settled quickly. The entire issue of 'Go - No Go' is before a Group of Ministers (GoM), constituted by the Cabinet Secretariat on 03.02.2011, to consider the environmental and developmental issues relating to coal mining and other developmental projects.