

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2303
ANSWERED ON:08.12.2011
SETTING UP OF WATER QUALITY ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY
Singh Shri Jagada Nand

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a Water Quality Assessment Authority has been set up by the Union Government;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the mandate of the Water Quality Assessment Authority;
- (d) whether there is any prospective scheme to do away with the difference of standard of common drinking water and bottled water;
- (e) if so, the details thereof;
- (f) whether the WQAA maintains the minimum discharge in rivers; and
- (g) if so, the details thereof alongwith the names of the rivers covered?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES & MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI VINCENT H. PALA)

- (a) Water Quality Assessment Authority (WQAA) was constituted on 29th May 2001 by the Union Government vide Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF)'s Order No. 583(E) published in the Gazette of India (Extraordinary) dated 22nd June,2001.
- (b) WQAA is a 16 Member inter-ministerial Authority. Secretary (Environment & Forests), MoEF is the Chairman of WQAA and Joint Secretary (Administration), Ministry of Water Resources is its present Member Secretary. The present composition of WQAA is detailed at Annexure-I.
- (c) The mandate of WQAA is detailed at Annexure-II
- (d) & (e) As per the information received from Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation, drinking water quality standards are specified by Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) which is IS:10500. BIS also has specification for bottled water which is IS: 14543. WQAA has no prospective scheme to do away with the difference of standard of common drinking water and bottled water
- (f) WQAA can exercise the powers under section 5 of EPA Act, 1986 to direct the agencies (government/local bodies/non-governmental) for maintaining minimum discharge for sustenance of aquatic life forms in riverine system of India.
- (g) For implementation of provisions for minimum flows in the rivers, WQAA had constituted a Working Group on minimum flows under the chairmanship of Member (River Management), Central Water Commission in 2003 to advice WQAA on the minimum flows in the rivers to conserve the eco-system. The Working Group in its initial report recommended minimum flow for Himalayan rivers to be not less than 2.5% of 75% dependable annual flow (expressed in cubic meters per second) with one flushing flow during monsoon with a peak not less than 250% of 75% dependable flow. For other rivers, minimum flow in any ten-daily period to be not less than observed ten-daily flow with 99% exceedence.