

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1044
ANSWERED ON:25.11.2009
DECOMMISSIONING OF DAMS
Gandhi Smt. Maneka Sanjay

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India presently has 74 dams and 32 are under-construction while 318 dams are in the planning stage, whereas worldwide there is a trend away from dams with over 500 dams being decommissioned;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the steps the Government is taking to explore and develop more environment friendly measures to solve the water crisis?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) As per the "National Register of Large Dams - 2009" compiled by Central Water Commission, there are 4710 completed dams and 390 dams are under construction. As per the report titled "Dams and Development – A New Framework for Decision Making" of the World Commission on Dams, nearly 500 dams, mainly relatively old, small dams have been decommissioned in many countries, especially in the United States. The report further states that "dam removals without proper studies and mitigation actions cause public concerns and environmental problems. These include negative impacts on downstream aquatic life due to a sudden flush of the sediments accumulated in the reservoir.

(c) The National Water Policy has laid due emphasis on preservation of quality of environment and ecological balance. The policy states that in the planning, implementation and operation of a project, the preservation of the quality of environment and the ecological balance should be a primary consideration. The Policy further states that the adverse impact on the environment, if any, should be minimized and should be offset by adequate compensatory measures and that the project should, nevertheless, be sustainable. Emphasis is laid on sustainable development of major, medium and minor (both surface and ground water) projects along with restoration of traditional water harvesting measures. Further the National Water Policy has laid due importance to the management of the resources with active participation and involvement of the stakeholders at all levels V planning, development as well as management.