

13

**STANDING COMMITTEE
ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

(2006-2007)

FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(Action Taken on the recommendations contained in the Eleventh Report (14th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the year 2006-2007)

THIRTEENTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

December, 2006/Agrahayana, 1928 (Saka)

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*Presented to Lok Sabha on 18th December, 2006
Laid in Rajya Sabha on 18th December, 2006*



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

December, 2006/Agrahayana, 1928 (Saka)

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2006-2007)

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Dr. Laxminarayan Pandey

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SECRETARIAT

Shri S.K. Sharma	-	Additional Secretary
Shri Devender Singh	-	Director
Shri Ashok Balwani	-	Under Secretary
Shri Lalkithang	-	Committee Officer

* Nominated w.e.f. 3rd December, 2006.

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman, Standing Committee on External Affairs having been authorised by the Committee to submit the report on their behalf, present this 13th Report (14th Lok Sabha) on the Action Taken by Government on the Recommendations contained in the 11th Report (14th Lok Sabha) of the Committee on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the year 2006-2007.

2. The 11th Report was presented to both the Houses of Parliament on 18th May, 2006. The Action Taken Replies of the Government on all the recommendations/observations contained in the Report were received on 28th August, 2006.

3. The Draft Report on the basis of Action Taken Replies was considered and adopted by the Standing Committee on External Affairs (2006-2007) at their sitting held on 14th December, 2006. The minutes of the sitting of the Committee have been reproduced as Appendix-IV to the Report.

4. An analysis of the action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the 11th Report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs (14th Lok Sabha) is given in Appendix-V.

5. For facility of reference and convenience, the observations and recommendations of the Committee have been printed in thick type in the body of the Report and have also been reproduced in consolidated form in Appendix-VI.

NEW DELHI

15th December, 2006/ 24 Agrahayana, 1928 (Saka) Standing Committee on External Affairs

**Dr. Laxminarayan Pandey,
Chairman,**

CHAPTER – I

REPORT

This Report of the Committee deals with the Action Taken by Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the 11th Report of Standing Committee on External Affairs on Demands for Grants for the year 2006-2007 in respect of the Ministry of External Affairs. The 11th Report of the Committee was presented to Lok Sabha on 18th May, 2006.

2. The Action taken notes have been received from the Ministry of External Affairs on all the observations/recommendations contained in the report. These have been categorized as follows: -

(i) Recommendations/Observations, which have been accepted by the Government.

Recommendation Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34 and 36
Recom

**Total-31
Chapter-II**

(ii) Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government replies.

Recommendation Nos. - 29.

**Total-01
Chapter-III**

(iii) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration.

Recommendation Nos. 20, 21, 26 and 35.

**Total-04
Chapter-IV**

(iv) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited.

Recommendation Nos. Nil

**Total-Nil
Chapter-V**

3. The Committee desire that Action Taken Notes on the Recommendations/ Observations contained in Chapter-I of this Report be furnished expeditiously. The Committee further desire that where, in case, it is not possible for the Ministry to implement the recommendations in letter and spirit, the matter should be reported to the Committee with reasons for non-implementation.

4. The Committee will now deal with the action taken by the Government on some of their observations/recommendations.

A. OVERALL BUDGETARY PROPOSALS

Recommendation No. 1 [Para 18]

5. The Committee had noted that the total allocation of the Ministry in the Budget Estimates for 2006 – 2007 was Rs. 3,695.05 crore. Compared to Rs.3928.00 crore in BE 2005 – 2006, it was a reduction of Rs.232.95 crore or 5.93 %. On the other hand, compared to RE of Rs.4182.00 in the year 2005 – 2006, it was a decrease of Rs.486.95 crore or 11.64 %. The Ministry had informed that this reduction was primarily on account of reduced allocation of funds under the Plan Head as a very large and significant project was nearing completion. The non-plan Budget had increased from Rs.3163.00 crore in BE 2005-2006 to Rs.3472.75 crore in BE of 2006-2007, which was an increase of Rs.309.75 crore or 9.79 %. However. Compared to RE of 2005 – 2006 (Rs.3463 crore), the increase was only Rs.9.75 crore or 0.28 %.

The Ministry had also informed that no vital areas were likely to be affected thereby and the Ministry of Finance has informed that sympathetic consideration would be given to any Additionality required in 2006 – 2007. In the meanwhile, the Ministry would prioritize its expenditure plans and work within the available budget and take up the matter of additional funds at RE stage. The Committee were of the view that any kind of decrease in the allocation of funds will certainly impede the Ministry to do justice with their stated objectives and reinforce the positive image of the country abroad. As the global scenario is changing explosively day by day, the

workload of the Ministry is increasing by leaps and bound. The Ministry should be ready by all means to face the challenge of modern age. Therefore, the Committee had recommended that, with the expansion of activities along with India's growing stature, the Budget of the Ministry should be augmented proportionately in order to pursue our foreign policy more effectively in the changing circumstances. The Ministry should ensure that sufficient funds are available as and when required. The Committee had expressed hope that the Ministry of Finance will realize the need of time and provide additional funds as per requirement of MEA at RE 2006-2007 stage to enable them to keep pace with the growth of our stature in foreign affairs.

6. The Ministry in their reply have stated as under:

“Against the projection of Rs. 4,126.75 crore for non-Plan expenditure made by this Ministry for BE 2006-07, budgetary allocation of Rs. 3472.75 crore has been made by Ministry of Finance in BE 2006-07. This shortfall of Rs. 654 crore in allocation has been brought to the notice of Ministry of Finance as the activities of this Ministry, particularly; the “Technical and Economic Cooperation with Other Countries” are likely to be affected if the ceiling of BE 2006-07 is not revised adequately.”

7. The Committee note that the activities of the Ministry, particularly, the “Technical and Economic Cooperation” with other countries is likely to be affected due to shortfall of Rs. 654 crore allocation. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry should ensure that ceiling of BE 2006-2007 is revised adequately at RE 2006-2007 stage so that the technical and economic cooperation with other countries is not affected adversely.

(Recommendation No. 1)

B. ADEVERTISING AND PUBLICITY

Recommendation No. 10 [Para 38]

8. The Ministry had informed the Committee that they were trying to create a Cell called ‘Public Diplomacy’ headed by an Additional Secretary, who will oversee the matter of public involvement/public interest in Indian Foreign Policy. The Ministry had

informed further that there was a requirement for explaining the foreign policy to the Indian audiences. They had not quite formulized it but had drawn up a charter of duties and were awaiting the approval of the Prime Minister, in his capacity as the External Affairs Minister. The idea was to really use this particular unit to do these kinds of outreach activities and also look at the aspect of holding seminars, workshops and specific films that were important in terms of foreign policy. The Committee appreciated the steps been taken and had expressed their feelings that our Foreign Policy must be explained to our own people and it should had happened earlier. The Committee had extended their support for the cause and expressed hope that the Cell should be in position at the earliest. The Committee had also recommended that this work should be done in close coordination with Society for Research and Information System for non-aligned and other countries [RIS] and additional funds may be allocated to RIS for this purpose.

9. The Ministry furnished their reply as under:

“The Public Diplomacy Division of MEA headed by an Additional Secretary has been created and has begun its work. Its mandate includes inter-alia outreach activities inside and outside India, audio visual and print publicity, website, and documentation. The Additional Secretary has begun to reach out to States within India beginning with Punjab and Orissa and it is planned to cover every region of the country. Contacts with think tanks, media persons, and personalities in the opinion/ decision maker category have also been activated. The recommendation of the Committee on co-ordination and cooperation with RIS has been initiated and is being implemented.”

10. The Committee welcome the creation of the Public Diplomacy Division of MEA headed by an Additional Secretary whose mandate includes *inter-alia* outreach activities inside and outside India, audio visual and print publicity, website, and documentation. The Committee note that the Public Diplomacy Division, aiming to cover every region of the country, has begun to reach out to States within India beginning with Punjab and Orissa. The Committee have

been informed that contacts with think tanks, media persons, and personalities in the opinion/ decision maker category have also been activated. The Committee hope that the Public Diplomacy Division will soon extend its outreach activities outside India and also help generate public interest and understanding of Indian Foreign Policy. The Committee recommend that inputs obtained from the activities of the Public Diplomacy Division should invariably be taken into consideration in the Foreign Policy.

(Recommendation No. 2)

C. PASSPORT AND EMIGRATION

Recommendation No. 20 [Para 73]

11. The Committee had noted that 21 Passport Offices were working from rented premises and at that time huge part of allocated Budget under this Head was being paid for their rentals. The Committee had been expressing their concern continuously over the delay in acquisition/construction of own premises for Passport Offices since long but no significant development had been made in this regard. The Committee, therefore, again recommended that all construction projects relating to Passport Offices should be taken up on priority basis and efforts should be made vigorously for the early completion of these projects so that the rental liabilities can be reduced to the barest minimum. The Committee had also recommended that opening of Passport Offices in states of Uttranchal, Chattisgarh and Himachal Pradesh should be carried out at the earliest.

12. The Ministry in their reply have stated as under:

“As directed by the Committee, efforts are continually being made to hasten the construction projects in collaboration with the concerned authorities. Action is at hand to open new Passport Offices at Dehradun (Uttranchal), Raipur (Chattisgarh) and Shimla (Himachal Pradesh) as early as possible.”

13. The Committee are concerned over the time being taken by the Ministry in completion of all their construction projects since most of the projects are lagging behind the time schedule. The Committee would like to be apprised of the efforts being made to hasten the construction projects. The Committee further recommend that new Passport Offices at Dehradun, Raipur and Shimla must be opened by the end of financial year 2006-2007.

(Recommendation No. 3)

Recommendation No. 21 [Para 74]

14. The Committee had noted that the Staff Inspection Unit of the Ministry of Finance has recommended 293 additional posts in various categories and a proposal to create these additional posts had been submitted for approval of the Competent Authorities on 22nd December 2005. The Committee had also noted that Staff Selection Commission had nominated 55 Grade C posts of LDC and 4 Grade C posts of Jr. Hindi Translator for CPO. Out of that, 15 LDCs and 3 Jr Hindi Translators have joined so far. The Committee hope that after creation of 293 posts and nomination of 59 posts by SSC for filling the vacant posts, shortage of staff problem would be eliminated to a large extent. The Committee had recommended that all the necessary formalities of these posts should be completed at the earliest in order to enable the opening of new offices as well as to avoid the out-sourcing.

15. The Ministry in their reply have stated as under:

“The approval for the augmentation of posts is still awaited from the Finance Ministry. The appointment of staff will be made after obtaining the requisite approval.”

16. The Committee do not approve of the reply furnished by the Ministry and hope that the requisite approval for the augmentation of post will be obtained at the earliest considering the fact that staff requirement is based on Staff Inspection Unit (SIU) study and the fact that passport officers bring considerable revenue to the Government. The Committee recommend that

grievances of officers/staff of Passport Offices must be heard with due attention and the Committee should be apprised of the steps taken by CPV Division/Ministry to redress their grievances.

(Recommendation No. 4)

D. INDIAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS (ICCR)

Recommendation No. 26 [Para 86]

17. The Ministry had informed that the new cultural centres at Beijing, Tehran and Kathmandu will be opened subject to the allocation of requisite additional posts and Budgetary resources. The statutory body of the Council had approved the budget allocation and posts for the centres in Tehran and Kathmandu. Creation of these centres was under consideration and it shall be the Council's endeavour to operationalise these centres in 2006-07. The proposal for an Indian Cultural Centre at Beijing was being processed through diplomatic channels. The Committee expressed hope that exercises in this regard will be completed as early as possible and these centres will be in place by the end of Financial Year 2006-07. The Committee also expressed hope that a suitable property for Cultural Centre in Washington will also be located in the Current Financial Year.

18. The Ministry have informed as under:

“The position regarding opening of Indian Cultural Centres in Beijing, Tehran, Kathmandu and Washington is as follows:

Beijing

Since the Chinese Government is not prepared to give diplomatic status to the proposed Cultural Centre in Beijing, the matter is being processed through the diplomatic channels. The Ministry of External Affairs and the Embassy of India in Beijing are in correspondence with the Chinese Government and the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi to resolve the issue so that the Indian Cultural Centre at Beijing may be opened in the near future.

Tehran

According to the Iranian laws, functioning of independent Cultural Centres of foreign countries is not permitted. Therefore, it has been proposed to the Embassy of India, Tehran to commence with certain basic activities of the Cultural Centre as a part of the Embassy during the current financial year.

Kathmandu

The Indian Mission in Kathmandu has informed the Council that the construction of Cultural Centre as part of Chancery project is expected to begin in the third quarter of the current financial year and the Mission has requested that the PIC Wing of the Mission be allowed to function as 'deemed' Centre until the necessary formalities to open the Cultural Centre in Kathmandu are completed. The proposal is under consideration of ICCR.

Washington

A suitable property for the Cultural Centre in Washington has been identified. The property identified needs some modifications. The matter is, therefore, under active consideration with the Establishment Division of the Ministry of External Affairs."

19. The Committee find that no significant progress has been made so far with regard to the opening of Indian Cultural Centres in Beijing, Tehran, Kathmandu and Washington. The Committee, therefore, reiterate, considering the potential role of cultural diplomacy and India's incredible and diverse cultural heritage, that Ministry should make concerted efforts to open cultural centers at Beijing, Tehran, Kathmandu and Washington by the end of current financial year.

(Recommendation No. 5)

E. CAPITAL SECTION**Recommendation No. 35 [Para 117]**

20. The Ministry had informed that a substantial hike in budgetary allocation under the Head Capital Outlay on Public Works & Housing had been sought in BE 2006-07 based on realistic assessment of progress in various construction projects and

acquisition proposals. As per the ongoing progress of pre-construction activities, a number of construction projects were expected to reach ground-breaking stage in the next financial year. Prominent among these construction projects were Jawaharlal Nehru Bhawan, Indian Embassy Complex in Kathmandu, Muscat, Brasilia, Abuja, Warsaw, Beijing, Kabul and residential project in Islamabad. In addition, projects for redevelopment of property in Singapore and proposal for construction of four apartments in London may also reach construction stage in the next financial year. Additional, sufficient budgetary provision has been sought to meet anticipated expenditure on acquisition proposals, which were likely to be finalized in the next financial year and for expenditure on repair and maintenance of government-owned properties. The Committee, therefore, recommended that sufficient budgetary provision should be made to meet anticipated expenditure on acquisition/construction of these projects and anticipation must be fulfilled. The Ministry should ensure that each project undertaken by the Ministry is completed in a time bound manner.

21. The Ministry in their reply have stated as under:

“The Ministry will continue to ask for sufficient funds to meet the requirement of construction projects and acquisition of properties. These requirements will be formulated keeping in mind the need to ensure that budgetary constraints do not hamper progress in relation to construction projects and acquisition proposals.”

22. The Committee feel that pace of progress of construction projects and acquisition proposals of the Ministry is far from commensurate with the required speed warranted by the stipulated time-schedule for completion of the projects. The Committee desire that they may be apprised regularly about the steps being taken to complete the construction/acquisition projects of the Ministry without further delay. The Committee also desire that progress report regarding Jawahar Lal Nahru Bhavan (Videsh Bhavan) may be furnished to the Committee on a half yearly basis.

(Recommendation No. 6)

CHAPTER- II

OBSRVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation No. 1

The Committee note that the total allocation of the Ministry in the Budget Estimates for 2006 – 2007 is Rs. 3,695.05 crore. Compared to Rs.3928.00 crore in BE 2005 – 2006, this represents a reduction of Rs.232.95 crore or 5.93 %. On the other hand, compared to RE of Rs.4182.00 in the year 2005 – 2006, this marks a decrease of Rs.486.95 crore or 11.64 %. The Ministry has informed that this reduction is primarily on account of reduced allocation of funds under the Plan Head as a very large and significant project is nearing completion. The non – plan Budget has increased from Rs.3163.00 crore in BE 2005 – 2006 to Rs.3472.75 crore in BE of 2006 – 2007, which is an increase of Rs.309.75 crore or 9.79 %. However. Compared to RE of 2005 – 2006 (Rs.3463 crore), the increase is only Rs.9.75 crore or 0.28 %.

The Ministry has also informed that no vital areas are likely to be affected thereby and the Ministry of Finance has informed that sympathetic consideration would be given to any Additionality required in 2006 – 2007. In the meanwhile, the Ministry would prioritize its expenditure plans and work within the available budget and take up the matter of additional funds at RE stage. The Committee are of the view that any kind of decrease in the allocation of funds will certainly impede the Ministry to do justice with their stated objectives and reinforce the positive image of the country abroad. As the global scenario is changing explosively day by day, the work load of the Ministry is increasing by leaps and bound. The Ministry should be ready by all means to face the challenge of modern age. Therefore, the Committee recommend that, with the expansion of activities along with India's growing stature, the Budget of the Ministry should be augmented proportionately in order to pursue our foreign policy more effectively in the changing circumstances. The Ministry should ensure that sufficient funds are available as and when required. The Committee hope that the Ministry of Finance will realize the need of time and provide additional funds as per requirement of MEA at RE 2006-2007 stage to enable them to keep pace with the growth of our stature in foreign affairs.

(Para No.18)

Reply of the Government

Against the projection of Rs. 4,126.75 crore for non-Plan expenditure made by this Ministry for BE 2006-07, budgetary allocation of Rs. 3472.75 crore has been made by Ministry of Finance in BE 2006-07. This shortfall of Rs. 654 crore in allocation has been brought to the notice of Ministry of Finance as the activities of

this Ministry, particularly; the “Technical and Economic Cooperation with Other Countries” are likely to be affected if the ceiling of BE 2006-07 is not revised adequately.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 2

The Committee are happy to note that the Expenditure Monitoring Committee which had been established last year has through frequent reviews maintained a steady and stable pace of expenditure compared to the Ministry’s pattern of expenditure in previous years. The current trend indicates improved budgeting evenly paced expenditure and fuller utilization of allocations. The Committee recommend that the trend of better phasing of expenditure on various projects/schemes should be continued in the years to come and the problem of non utilization/surrender of funds should not be allowed to rise again.

(Para No. 19)

Reply of the Government

Expenditure Monitoring Committee in the Ministry of External Affairs, has evolved an internal monitoring mechanism to regularly review the expenditure pattern of its various spending Divisions and the progress of projects undertaken by them, and ensure utilization of the budgetary provisions by the various Divisions in a suitably phased manner to avoid the occurrence of unspent balance or surrender of funds at the end of the Financial Year.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 3

The Committee express their concern over the huge number of vacant posts in each grade as against sanctioned strength since the past many years. While furnishing many reasons for not filling up the vacant posts on time, the Ministry has submitted that they are actually conscious of the need to ensure that vacancies are filled up at the earliest. However, the posts remain vacant on account of the process involved in filling these posts. Nevertheless, the Ministry has been taking special efforts to reduce the period for which posts are vacant. These include accurate estimation of vacancies and immediate identifying, regular and timely holding of DPCs and diversion of vacancies to other modes whenever feasible. The Committee recommend that all efforts which are required / involved in filling up the vacancies as enumerated by the Ministry should be made seriously to cut short the time being taken presently.

(Para No. 20)

Reply of the Government

Posts are usually filled up either through promotion or direct recruitment. Even in the promotion mode, some of the vacancies are to be filled up on the basis of a

Limited Departmental Examination (LDE). The recruitment process for vacancies to be filled up through a LDE or direct recruitment is conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) or the Staff Selection Commission (SSC), and is usually done only once a year. The inherent structure of this process, and the time frames involved, lead to a number of posts lying vacant at any point in time. This is beyond the control of the Ministry. Nevertheless, Ministry has already placed appropriate indents to ensure early filling up of vacancies for 2006-07.

2. As regards the vacancies to be filled through promotion on the recommendations of the Departmental Promotion Committees (DPC), the Ministry has made all efforts to ensure that these vacancies are filled up at the earliest. The Ministry has already estimated vacancies that are expected to arise during 2006 - 07, and all meetings of the DPC for 2006 - 07 that are conducted by the Ministry have already been held. Some DPC meetings are held by the UPSC, who have been requested to expedite the same. Some backlog reserved vacancies have also been diverted to the direct recruitment mode and indented with the SSC so that these could be filled at the earliest.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 4

The Committee are surprised to note that more than 600 posts have been abolished over the last 5 years, while the Ministry is facing acute shortage of manpower. The Ministry is continuously expressing their inability to further stretch their limited man-power resources to open new Missions/Posts abroad and the urgent need to establish India's presence felt in various locations has remained constrained by personnel and budgetary restrictions. Accordingly, they are left with no options in cases of additional work load. The Committee feel that the creation of posts is a torturous process. The procedure will have to be streamlined otherwise there will be mismatch between the requirements of the modern age and manpower. Therefore, the Committee recommend that the Ministry should make all out efforts to obtain sanction for required posts and fill them immediately, to cope up with the problem as early as possible.

(Para No. 21)

Reply of the Government

The Ministry welcomes the recognition by the Hon'ble Members of the Committee of the shortage of personnel, which has been exacerbated due to the abolitions carried out since 2000. However, given the time frames involved in recruitment to new posts, which is conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) or the Staff Selection Commission (SSC), Ministry is unable to fill newly created posts immediately. Thus, even when new Missions / Posts are set up and new posts created for the same, Ministry has to bear the shortage of posts till such time as the recruitment process is completed by the UPSC/SSC. Nevertheless,

Ministry is making all efforts to ensure that opening of new Missions / Posts is done in a phased manner, with simultaneous creation of new posts. This would ensure that the shortages on account of delay between creation of new posts and their filling up are not exacerbated. In this regard, it may be mentioned that the Government has decided to open 5 new Missions / Posts during 2006 - 07, for which the Ministry has obtained requisite approvals for creation of posts and the process of recruitment to these posts has been initiated.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 5

The Committee note that a major share of the funds allotted to Embassies and Missions is being utilized towards payment of rent, rates & taxes and there has not been much change in terms of overall hired property. In the last three years, some 13 properties have been additionally hired for housing chanceries and residences for the newly opened Consulate General of India in Birgunj and Abuja Office of High Commission of India, Lagos thereby adding to the rental liability of the Government to the tune of nearly 1.2 crore per annum. On the other hand, acquisition of Chancery-cum/Embassy Residence in Ulaanbaatar and Consular General's Residence in Chicago has resulted in an annual saving of around Rs. 58 lakhs on account of rental out flow. The Committee also note that built-up properties acquired in Prague and Panama need renovation. The Ministry informed that action has been initiated for renovating these properties. However, the Committee are not satisfied with the pace of acquisition/purchase of properties at Missions/Posts abroad. Although, some properties have been acquisitioned and some savings have been made but it is not sufficient. The Committee are of the view that work of acquisition/construction to house our Missions/Chanceries could be accelerated with the introduction of some comprehensive plans. Therefore, the Committee recommend that more concrete efforts need to be made to reduce the rental liabilities of the Ministry. At the places, where little work is to be done to get properties in hand, it should be done at the earliest. As for instance, in Prague and Panama where some renovation is needed, the work should be done immediately to make properties useable. The Committee further recommend that the work of acquisition/purchase of properties should be taken up sincerely and all the projects pending with the Ministry since long time must be completed without further delay.

(Para No. 29)

Reply of the Government

With a view to reduce its rental liabilities this Ministry has prepared a five year comprehensive action plan to acquire built up properties and construct our own buildings for residences/offices at high rental and other stations. This action plan envisages purchase of properties in 23 stations in addition to construction of

properties in 23 stations in the next five years upto financial year 2009-10. The above proposal will, however, require adequate budgetary support.

2. The renovation work in the Embassy Residence in Prague is underway and it is scheduled to be completed by December 2007. As for Panama, the consultant and contractor for the renovation of the Embassy Residence have been appointed and the preliminary estimates have also been approved. Additional scope of work for the renovation is under process.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 6

The Committee note that a new division, called Project Division headed by a Joint Secretary had been set-up in the Ministry with effect from 15 February, 2005, to handle exclusively the work relating to the Ministry's proposals for acquisitions of property/construction of projects in India and abroad. The Committee are happy to note that system of regular preparation of an updated status Report for all construction projects has been introduced. For all construction projects, reports are being submitted for the perusal of the Foreign Secretary and the Minister of External Affairs. Further progress in the construction projects and property acquisition proposals is reviewed and monitored through periodical meetings called by Foreign Secretary. The Committee further note that the Ministry recently undertook an exercise to identify high rental stations and priority has been accorded in acquiring properties for Indian Missions in those stations. The Committee hope that the Ministry will now be in better position after setting up of project division and acquisition/construction of property process will be streamlined significantly. The Committee would like to be apprised of updated status report being prepared for construction projects from time to time.

(Para No. 30)

Reply of the Government

As desired by Standing Committee the latest Status Report on construction projects being handled by the Ministry is enclosed herewith as Appendix-I for perusal of Committee.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 7

The Committee note that the mechanism worked out between Ministry and Ministry of Finance now provides for significantly higher allocation for properties or for project work, which would be undertaken in the European zone, American zone or the Asian zone. The Committee also note that as a result of higher delegated power being vested in the MEA the process of approval for properties or for projects will be speeded up. The Committee hope that the mechanism worked out between the

Ministry and Ministry of Finance will enable the Ministry to speedily take up and complete all pending projects on time.

(Para No. 31)

Reply of the Government

The recommendation of the Committee has been noted. All efforts are being made to fully utilize the allocations for construction or acquisition of built-up properties in our missions abroad for which a five years comprehensive action plan has been drawn.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 8

The Committee are happy to note that outstanding issues pertaining to the rental for the Akbar Bhawan has been resolved to the mutual satisfaction with NDMC. The Committee would like to suggest that the Ministry should remain in touch constantly with the concerned authorities to avoid such situation in future.

(Para No. 32)

Reply of the Government

As pointed out by the Committee, the Ministry is maintaining regular contact with all concerned authorities/local bodies for avoiding any situation of misunderstanding in future. As regards Akbar Bhawan, the Ministry has already paid part of the arrears and action is under way for settling the remaining payments.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 9

The Committee note that despite having clear trend of incurring expenditure less than the BE and RE in the year 2004-05 and 2005-06, the projection of BE is again at a higher level for the year 2006-07. Though the Committee has similar view as the Ministry that while allocating the publicity budget, no Mission should feel a crunch in carrying out the vital work of projecting and promoting India on account of non-availability of Budget, but the Committee hope that allocated fund should be utilized properly. Less utilization of fund certainly reflects that the Missions/Posts could not perform their duties as anticipated. The Committee, therefore, recommend that all the Missions should do their best to meet the publicity targets to carry out the vital work of projecting and promoting India globally.

(Para No. 37)

Reply of the Government

The Ministry has conveyed the recommendation of the Standing Committee to all Indian Missions/Posts abroad. The Committee may note that the publicity budgets to the Missions/Posts were allocated only after the receipt of detailed Action Plans.

The Ministry undertakes regular reviews of the publicity activities of the Missions/Posts and advises and directs them, wherever necessary, so that the work of projecting and promoting India globally is carried out effectively and efficiently.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 10

The Ministry informed the Committee that they were trying to create a Cell called 'Public Diplomacy' headed by an Additional Secretary, who will oversee the matter of public involvement/public interest in Indian Foreign Policy. The Ministry informed further that there was a requirement for explaining the foreign policy to the Indian audiences. They have not quite formulated it but have drawn up a charter of duties and awaiting the approval of the Prime Minister, in his capacity as the External Affairs Minister. The idea is to really use this particular unit to do these kinds of outreach activities and also look at the aspect of holding seminars, workshops and specific films which are important in terms of foreign policy. The Committee appreciate the steps being taken and feel that our Foreign Policy must be explained to our own people and it should have happened earlier. The Committee extend their support for the cause and hope that the Cell shall be in position at the earliest. The Committee also recommended that this work should be done in close coordination with Society for Research and Information System for non-aligned and other countries [RIS] and additional funds may be allocated to RIS for this purpose.

(Para No. 38)

Reply of the Government

The Public Diplomacy Division of MEA headed by an Additional Secretary has been created and has begun its work. Its mandate includes inter-alia outreach activities inside and outside India, audio visual and print publicity, website, and documentation. The Additional Secretary has begun to reach out to States within India beginning with Punjab and Orissa and it is planned to cover every region of the country. Contacts with think tanks, media persons, and personalities in the opinion/decision maker category have also been activated. The recommendation of the Committee on co-ordination and cooperation with RIS has been initiated and is being implemented.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 11

The Committee appreciate the work being done by the Ministry to bring about a change in the perception of India and to make the world more aware of the new face of India. The media perception as well as the official realization across the world has changed dramatically in this respect particularly during the last year. Economic changes in India are now being widely recognized. This has come due to a more focused drive to attain the overall objectives of the Government through better

utilization of available funds and linking of budgetary allocations to the Action Plans. The Committee are of the view that momentum should be maintained keeping in view India's perspectives and the country's interests should not be overlooked at any cost.

(Para No. 39)

Reply of the Government

The Ministry is gratified that our efforts in promoting the new face of India and its economic changes have been recognized and are appreciated by the Committee. As recommended, the Ministry has kept up the momentum in line with India's perspective and interests.

The recommendation of the Committee that momentum should be maintained to make the world aware of the new face of India and that country's interests should not be overlooked at any cost has been conveyed to all Missions/Posts. In this context, the Committee would be happy to note that the External Publicity Division has recently undertaken efforts for formulating and coordinating media strategies of 15 key Indian Missions for further improving media perception about India through focused media interventions by these Missions in their respective countries of accreditation.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 12

The Ministry informed that the proposal of panel of advocates for extradition proceedings has been finalized after seeking approval of the Minister of State of Law and Justice. The concern of the Committee to include in the panel of advocates legal experts having proven competence has been duly taken care of. The committee do express their satisfaction over the appointment of legal expert panel for extradition cases and hope that, with the help of these legal experts, extradition cases would be handled vigorously.

(Para No. 42)

Reply of the Government

Yes. It is expected that by enlisting the services of these legal experts, extradition cases would be processed vigorously and expeditiously.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 13

The Committee observed that, keeping in view the impressive increase in the activities of FSI, the amount allocated, is really less. The Committee are convinced with the submission of the Ministry for need of enhanced budgetary allocations for Foreign Service Institute. Implementation of Agreements / MOUs recently signed entail additional expenditure. In spite of this, the institute organizes many programme / courses for which they should have sufficient funds. The Committee, therefore,

recommend that the budgetary allocation for FSI should be augmented suitably so that the institute can meet the desired objectives effectively.

(Para No. 48)

Reply of the Government

Keeping in view the Committee's recommendation, the Foreign Service Institute has prepared a brief on the budgetary requirements to meet its current and future programmes. The Ministry of Finance would be approached at RE stage for augmentation of budgetary allocation for the Institute.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 14

The Committee further desire that the programmes/courses should be organized by Foreign Service Institute (FSI) also for lower level officers for all cadres in the Ministry. Further, as informed to the Committee, the building of FSI is under construction and it will be completed within next few months. It will have good infrastructure and the activities will get expanded when infrastructure is put in place. In this context, the Committee recommend that the remaining work of construction of FSI building should be completed at the earliest so that the activities could be expanded as per the requirement of the Indian Foreign Policy. The Committee would like to suggest that the Governmental schemes such as the National Urban Renewal Mission or the National Rural Mission should be accorded due publicity through FSI.

(Para No. 49)

Reply of the Government

The Foreign Service Institute is implementing the recommendation. It is organizing programme/courses for lower level officers of different cadres in the Ministry. The FSI building is nearly complete and only some finishing work remains before the Institute is shifted and a time frame has been worked out. A broad outline on the expansion of FSI's activities has been formulated. Greater emphasis will be given through training programmes imparted in FSI to the Committee's suggestion on according due publicity to various government schemes.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 15

The Committee find that under the Head "Embassies & Missions" the actual expenditure for the year 2004 was Rs.848.91 crore against the Revised Estimate of Rs.896.27 crore. This clearly indicates that funds allocated under this Head could not be utilized fully in the year 2004 – 2005. The Committee are not convinced at all with the reasons furnished by the Ministry for under utilization of funds as increase in foreign allowance and salary of locally recruited staff in various Missions / Posts did not take place to the extent anticipated or there was a reduction in the number of school going children in some Missions / Posts leading to the lower expenditure. The

Committee, therefore, recommend that effort should be made for optimal utilization of funds to avoid such under spending of funds.

(Para No. 53)

Reply of the Government

Expenditure Monitoring Committee in the Ministry of External Affairs has initiated steps to monitor the expenditure pattern of Missions and Posts abroad to avoid the occurrence of unspent balances or surrender of funds at the end of the Financial Year.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 16

The Committee notes that at present there are 23 ongoing and pending projects related to Embassies and Missions abroad. Many of them are pending since long due to various reasons. The Committee has been recommending repeatedly for early completion of these projects but it is not getting momentum anyway and remained in the same state as before. The Committee fully understands that there are different procedures for acquiring properties in different countries and all projects cannot be completed/materialized with similar procedure. But taking 25-30 years in construction of a Chancery/Embassy building is beyond the wisdom while plots for construction were available except in one or two cases. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry should reintegrate their efforts by reviewing and proper monitoring the projects with new energy. Now that the Joint Secretary (Projects) is in position for this specific task, the pace of work must be accelerated for completion of these projects at the earliest. The Committee further recommends that a target date should be fixed for each project and all possible efforts should be made to complete the project within that target date.

(Para No. 54)

Reply of the Government

As submitted earlier, a new Projects Division has been created for better coordination, implementation and monitoring of ongoing construction projects and acquisition of properties in our missions abroad, which has yielded positive results. The target date for completion of each project has been fixed and reflected in our status report also under submission to Committee as Appendix – II.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 17

The Committee note that the proposed allocation in BE 2006 – 2007 is Rs.147.98 crore with an increase of Rs.7.43 crore vis a vis BE 2005 – 2006. In real term, the allocated amount under this Head is Rs.10.76 crore lower than the amount allocated at RE 2005 – 2006. The Ministry informed that the allocation in BE 2006 – 2007 has been made on the basis of funds available for the overall Budget of the

Ministry. The Committee also note that the estimated cost of projects to be undertaken with the provisions under this Head is Rs.156.40 crore and have similar view as the Ministry that the projects proposed to be undertaken during the year 2006 – 2007 cannot be satisfactorily taken up with the BE of Rs.147.98 crore due to increase in expenses as stated. Therefore, the Committee recommend that the amount allocated in BE 2006 – 2007 should be increased suitably under this Head at the RE stage.

(Para 70)

Reply of the Government

Ministry of Finance would be approached at RE stage for augmentation of budgetary allocation under the head "Passport and Emigration".

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 18

The Ministry informed the Committee that the allocation in 2004-2005 could not be fully utilized as anticipated increase in staff strength, increase in rentals, payments of ground rent etc did not materialise. The Committee are of the view that if fund was available then, it could have been utilised for other necessary activities under this Head. On the one side, the Ministry is taking plea for shortage of funds and on the other side, available funds are not being utilized properly. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry should make efforts for maximum utilisation of allocated funds and ensure that funds are fully utilised till the end of financial year, if necessary, by re-allocation of fund.

(Para No. 71)

Reply of the Government

The esteemed Committee's recommendation is duly noted.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 19

The Committee note that the District Passport Cells (DPCs) have not been opened in all districts of the country. So far, 463 DPCs are functioning in the country. The Ministry has informed that they have taken up the matter at high level by writing to the Chief Ministers of the States to open DPCs in their States. As a result, Uttranchal State has opened 12 DPCs in February 2005 and Rajasthan has opened 9 DPCs in June 2005. A new DPC has been opened in Pitampura, Delhi in January 2006. As at present Delhi has three centres and fourth one will be opened shortly. The Ministry informed that idea is to form as many centres as possible so that the overcrowding at the Passport Offices could be avoided. The Committee appreciates the efforts being made by the Ministry in this regard and hope that DPCs in all the districts of the country will be in place at the earliest. The Committee recommend that

wide publicity on local TV, Radio and in newspapers should be made at regular intervals about the functioning of these DPCs so that awareness is created at large.

(Para No. 72)

Reply of the Government

The Ministry will implement the recommendation of the Committee by giving wide publicity on local TV, radio and newspapers at regular intervals about the functioning of DPCs. As a matter of fact, all Passport Officers in the country have been instructed to do the needful in this regard.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 22

The Ministry informed that delay in issue of the Passports is basically due to delayed Police Verification Report. At present the Ministry has a system called 'local identity system' in which the Police verifies whether or not the applicant resides at the address furnished in the application form. Sometimes, circumstances compel applicant to change his residence after submitting his application for passport, so the verifying officer makes remarks that applicant does not reside at his address or address is false and he is, therefore, not eligible to get a passport. Most of the other countries do not follow this practice. They follow an 'identity based passport issuing system' in which as long as the identity of the applicant is established, it does not really matter where he is residing. Realizing the advantages of this system, the Ministry is trying to convince the Home Ministry and their own agencies to try and shift to an 'identity-based system' in which only identity of applicant will have to be established.

The Committee are of the view that the existing local identity system is really not advantageous and only proof of identity should be the basis for issuing a passport. The Committee feel that shifting to 'identity based system' will considerably help to avoid delays in issuance of passport. However, the Committee recommend that pros and cons of this system should be examined carefully before its adoption. All precautions should be taken during the change in process. No decision should be taken in a hurry.

(Para No. 75)

Reply of the Government

As part of an on-going process to simplify and expedite the Police Verification System, a number of proposals are presently under consideration to move towards an identity-based verification system so as to avoid delays in issuance of passports. All precautions are being taken and pros and cons of the system will be taken into consideration before its adoption.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 23

The Ministry also informed that on the issue of backlog of passport applications, they have taken a variety of measures including pendency clearance drive in Delhi, Jaipur and Trivandrum and also planning major drive in Ghaziabad very soon where there is a pendency problem, to accelerate the clearance of backlog. The Committee recommend that such pendency clearance drive should be undertaken in all the Passport Offices where the pendency is much higher.

(Para No. 76)

Reply of the Government

The recommendations of the Committee will be carried out while undertaking the pendency clearance drives in the future.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

H. INDIAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS

Recommendation No. 24

The Committee note that the budgetary allocation for Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) is the same as it was in RE 2005 – 2006. The Ministry informed that the allocation of funds to ICCR is usually not commensurate with the projected demands made by the Council and due to this reason, the Council has to curtail its activities within the limits of allocated funds. The Ministry also stated that they have been constrained by the paucity of funds, yet they have tried hard to provide allocations for wider role of cultural diplomacy. The Committee also note that the ICCR is engaged in a wide range of activities going beyond the exchange of cultural troupes, execution of scholarships, operation of cultural centers and opening of new cultural centers to provide greater outreach facility etc. The Committee are concerned to note that the Council has to curtail its activities due to paucity of funds. The Committee, therefore, recommend that substantial additional fund should be provided to ICCR to achieve their mandated objectives successfully.

(Para No. 84)

Reply of the Government

The Ministry of Finance would be approached at the RE stage for augmentation of budgetary allocation to ICCR, if needed.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 25

The Committee note that with regard to the constitution of Advisory Committee for regional centres the Ministry is giving same reply since last few years that action has been initiated but the Advisory Committees have not been constituted so far except for 2 Regional Offices. The Committee are of the view that functioning of Regional Offices are being impeded inordinately without Advisory Committees. The Committee, therefore, recommended that Advisory Committees for remaining 7 Regional Offices should be constituted without any further delay.

(Para No. 85)

Reply of the Government

The Advisory Committees for all the Regional Offices have been constituted in June-July, 2006.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 27

The Committee note that the various Ministries such as Human Resource Development, External Affairs, Overseas Indian Affairs etc. are providing scholarships in their own capacity and working in compartments. The ICCR too is providing scholarships for foreign scholars. The Committee are of the view that all these Ministries/Agencies should coordinate together and form a "Joint Committee" for execution of scholarship. The Committee feel that by forming a Joint Committee, the disbursement of scholarships will be much more effective and purposeful. The Committee, therefore, would like to suggest that a joint Coordination Committee with representatives of each Ministry should be formed for more purposeful and effective execution of scholarship schemes. The Committee hope that Ministry of External Affairs will take initiative towards the formation of a Joint Coordination Committee.

(Para No. 87)

Reply of the Government

The Ministry of External Affairs will take up this matter with the other concerned Ministries to set up a Joint Coordination Committee for more effective utilization of the available scholarships.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 28

The Ministry informed that the fund allocated in BE 2006-07 would not be sufficient for all the activities of the Indian Council for World Affairs (ICWA). The Ministry has also informed during the course of evidence in connection with examination of demands for grants 2006-2007 that "Governing Body" of ICWA has been constituted. The Hon'ble Vice- President has signed the order and ICWA will now work according to its plan. The Committee hope that after constitution of the

Governing Body, working of ICWA will get anticipated pace and certainly achieve its objectives placed at the time of its formation. The Committee would like to suggest that allocated fund for ICWA should be enhanced appropriately at the RE stage.

(Para No. 92)

Reply of the Government

The Indian Council of World Affairs [ICWA] is working actively to achieve its objectives. A list of the activities carried out in the last few months is enclosed at Appendix-III.

2. The rules pertaining to the functioning of the Governing Body of the Indian Council of World Affairs [ICWA] are under preparation. The first meeting of the Governing Body will be convened as soon as the draft of the proposed rules has been prepared.

3. Budgetary allocation of Rs.2.25 crore has been made in BE 2006-07 for ICWA. If needed, Ministry of Finance would be approached at RE stage for augmentation of the budgetary allocation.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 30

The Committee note that Rs.1432.79 crore was allocated under this Head in BE 2005 - 2006 and Rs.1274.65 crore has been allocated in BE 2006 – 2007, which works out to a decrease of 12.47 %. The Ministry informed that the reduction is primarily on account of lower requirement in the Plan allocation because major item of expenditure viz. Tala – Hydro – Electric project is nearing completion. The allocation for non – plan expenditure is based on requirement as presently perceived and also based on overall allocation available to the Ministry. The Committee feel that allocated fund will not be adequate to meet the needs for the ongoing projects and some new ones, which have been announced from time to time at highest level, but hope that the Ministry would be able to arrange for expanded nature of their commitment at RE 2006 – 2007 stage particularly in view of the enhanced requirement of funds for reconstruction of Nepal.

(Para No. 98)

Reply of the Government

Aid to Nepal

Against the proposed expenditure of Rs. 129.25 crores for BE 2006-2007, budgetary allocation of only Rs. 65 crores has been made in BE 2006-2007.

2. In the context of recent developments in Nepal, GOI has announced significant economic assistance to Nepal during the official visit of H.E. Mr. G.P.

Koirala, PM of Nepal to India from June 6-9, 2006. This inter alia includes, immediate one-time grant of Rs. 100 crore to the budget of Government of Nepal, a concessional Line of Credit of US \$ 100 million for the execution of infrastructure development projects, enhancement of 'Aid to Nepal' budget for the current financial year from Rs. 65 crore to Rs. 150 crore, doubling the number of scholarships, waiver of outstanding dues owed by the Government of Nepal to Government of India on account of defence purchases, rescheduling of dues of Nepal Oil Corporation owed to Indian Oil Corporation and immediate supply of 25,000 MT of fertilizers to Nepal at subsidized prices.

3. MEA's Internal Finance Division (IFD) has been asked to approach the Ministry of Finance either at the supplementary or RE stage for augmentation of the allocation to fulfill the commitment of GOI for providing economic aid to Nepal. In pursuance of decisions taken above, IFD Division, MEA has done internal re-appropriation to provide Rs. 100 crores while Department of Economic Affairs has agreed 'in principle' to extend US \$ 100 million soft Line of Credit (LOC) to Nepal through the Exim Bank. The modalities of disbursement of LOC are yet to be finalized. The government is in the process of arranging supplies of 25,000 MT of fertilizers to Nepal at subsidized price which would entail a subsidy burden of around Rs. 17 crores. This expenditure would be met from the 'Aid to Nepal' budget.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 31

The Committee note that currently three projects in Bhutan are being funded from plan allocation viz. Tala Hydro-electric Project [1020MW], Dungsum Cement Plant Project and the Punatsangchu Hydro-electric Project. All other Government of Indian assistance Programmes in Bhutan are catered to in the non-plan allocation. The Tala Hydro-electric Project as per current schedule is expected to be commissioned by September 2006. Surplus power [approximately 1020MW] will be supplied to India as per the rates mutually agreed by both sides. Dungsum Cement Plant Project was in the state of suspension due to Indian Insurgent Groups (IIGs), now is going to be revived as the security situation has improved after the military operations against the Indian Insurgent Group conducted by Bhutan. Detailed Project Report (DPR) of Punatsangchu Hydro-electric Project is currently under preparation by Water and Power Consultancy services limited. This is likely to be 900 – 1000 MW project which will be taken up after finalisation of DPR. The Committee hope that Ministry will continue their excellent performance as shown earlier in Bhutan and all these projects must be beneficial in order to firm the relations between two countries.

(Para No. 101)

Reply of the Government

The demand for Non Plan Aid to Bhutan was Rs. 464 crores and Plan demand was 223.70 crores for the Year 2006-07. However, Non Plan grant of Rs. 397.21 and Plan grant of Rs. 222.30 crores have been made in BE 2006-07 under the Head of

Account "Aid to Bhutan". Our Internal Finance Division would be requested to approach the Ministry of Finance for augmentation of Budgetary Allocations, if needed for the ongoing projects in Bhutan.

2. India's relations with Bhutan are mutually beneficial and based on deep-rooted trust and friendship. Bhutan is already supplying power to India from Hydro-electric plants jointly developed by India and Bhutan. The first turbines of Tala Hydro-electric Project (1020 MW) have become functional and the project would be operational by October 2006. Draft Detailed Project Report by Water and Power Consultancy Services Limited for Punatsangchu-I Hydro-electric Project has been received and is under consideration and work has commenced on the Dungsom Cement Plant Project. India-Bhutan relations are entering a new phase with intense multi-faceted co-operation including the Hydro-electricity sector.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 32

The Committee observed that 2862 slots under Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) and 698 slots under Special Commonwealth Assistance for Africa Programme (SCAAP) were allotted in 2005-2006, but only 1033 and 381 trainees availed the slots respectively. The Ministry informed that the figure of utilization mentioned i.e. 1033 for ITEC and 381 for SCAAP i.e. total of 1414 were those of candidates, who had actually joined their courses as on 19th January 2006 and not for entire 2005-06. As on 10th March 2006, the total number of trainees who have actually joined their courses has reached 2911 (i.e. 2353 under ITEC and 558 under SCAAP). This is 81.1% utilization of the total 3560 slots allotted for 2005-06. This is all an all time high record, executing the figures for the year 2004-05 i.e. 2421 by 490 or an increase by 20.24%. In fact, MEA had received and processed over 3862 applications and had given approvals in order to have full utilization. The Committee are happy to note the improvement made regarding utilization of slots in last financial year and hope that in current financial year, the allotted slots will be fully utilized. Notwithstanding, the Committee recommend to ensure that all allotted slots are fully utilized in Financial Year 2006-07.

(Para No. 105)

Reply of the Government

Further to the "Status of Implementation Report on the recommendations contained in the 7th Report [14th Lok Sabha]" made to the Committee in March 2006, it may be mentioned that as on 31st March 2006, a total number of 2975 foreign trainees have done/attended training courses under ITEC/SCAAP for the financial year 2005-06. This is an all time high record for ITEC/SCAAP training programme.

2. The Ministry of External Affairs [TC Division] has already finalized re-empowerment of Indian institutions and details of the courses have been sent to all the Missions in/accredited to 156 ITEC partner countries. Moreover the information

has been posted on the ITEC website of the MEA. The ITEC/SCAAP Training Programme Booklet is being printed and the same will be sent to all the Missions abroad. Indian Missions abroad have been directed to send nominations even beyond the allotted number of slots for different countries, so that full utilization of the training slots could be made by substituting those trainees who are unable to come to India at the last minute, by allocating the slots to those who are on standby.

3. The information about ITEC/SCAAP civilian training programme is also being shared with the foreign missions based in India, so that they can also coordinate with their respective governments for better utilization of ITEC/SCAAP training slots.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 33

The Committee observed that during the year 2004-05 actual expenditure under the Head "Multilateral Economic Relations" was Rs. 00.79 crores only. Allocation at BE 2005-06 stage was 1.90 crore and it was enhanced at RE2005-2006 stage to Rs. 12.9 crore. Now in BE 2006-07, the allocation has been almost doubled to Rs. 25.00 crore. The Ministry has informed that Prime Minister had announced additional contribution of US\$ 2.5 billion to the Indian Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) cooperation fund. Thus Rs. 12.9 crore was tentatively allocated at RE 2005-2006 stage under the Head 'MER Programme'. Again, the Prime Minister announced a contribution of US\$ 5 million to the ASEAN-India cooperation fund in December 2005. Therefore, Rs. 25 crores has been allocated under this Head in BE 2006-2007. The Committee are convinced with the reasons submitted for such increase in BE 2006-2007 by the Ministry and express that commitments made at various multilateral meetings may be fulfilled in order to elevate our multilateral diplomacy.

(Para No. 108)

Reply of the Government

The recommendation has been noted and efforts are being made to fulfill the commitments made at various multilateral meetings.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 34

The Committee note that India has offered to set up a South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation [SAARC] center for disaster management [SCDM] in New Delhi. The Ministry informed that the center would provide a mechanism for sharing information on disaster management amongst SAARC countries and also benefit from best practices prevailing in the region and beyond. This Centre would be located within the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), New Delhi, an institution of international standard, and can function as a resource base for data and Regional Training Center in SAARC for Disaster Management. India would be in a position to share IT and GIS-based technologies. The Committee feel that such

responsibilities must be taken by the Government of India keeping in view its additional relevance and urgency in the wake of the recent tsunami tragedy and earthquake, which caused massive loss of life, displacement of persons and loss of property and infrastructure. Therefore, the Committee appreciates the commitment made by the Ministry.

(Para No. 109)

Reply of the Government

A meeting of experts took place during 1 – 2nd June 2006 in New Delhi to finalize the modalities for setting up of the SAARC Center for Disaster Management; a concept paper has been finalized. The meeting also decided to change the name of the Center to 'SAARC Disaster Management Center' in line with the nomenclature of other existing SAARC regional centers. The Council of Ministers Meeting held during 1-2nd August 2006 in Dhaka has approved the concept paper and subsequently the First Governing Board Meeting of the Center would be held to finalize the Budget and the work plan for the Center.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 36

The Committee have similar view as expressed by CAG in their performance audit that “the entire system of property management by MEA was made by delays both in acquisition and property construction resulting in a recurring expenditure of Rs.11.80 crore annually on rentals blocking of Rs.18.81 crore in capitals and increase building costs.” Though the Ministry submitted that after setting up of a Projects Division under Joint Secretary(Projects) has significantly improved monitoring of construction projects in India and abroad as well as has resulted in expeditious processing of R&M proposals of GOI-owned properties and proposals for acquisition of properties in India and abroad. As a consequence, Ministry has been able to fully utilize the budgetary allocation of Rs. 66.41 crores under Capital Outlay for the Financial Year 2005-06 and also had to seek an additionally of Rs. 42 crores in the Second Batch of Supplementary Demand for Grants. The Committee are not convinced with the explanation presented by the Ministry and hope that more vigorous effort will be made in regard to acquisition/construction of projects abroad and within the country.

The Ministry must realize that there is inordinate delay in many projects as in Brasilia project, second diplomatic enclave project etc. Even if the Committee acknowledge the fact that the Ministry was required to deal with several external factors while handling construction/acquisition projects abroad over which the Ministry has no control, they are of the view that the Second Diplomatic Enclave project within India, the Ministry failed here also as the project could not materialize over the years. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry should make fresh endeavour and prepare a time schedule for each project to ensure their completion without any further delay.

(Para No. 118)

Reply of the Government

The time schedule for completion of various construction/re-development projects or acquisition of properties has been reviewed and revised after accounting for various factors which could affect the progress of these projects. The projects are being taken up in a manner to ensure timely completion and the progress on projects in India is being monitored through regular site meetings, constant liaison with other Government Departments and local bodies and processing of related issues in the Ministry in a time bound manner. Similarly, our missions monitor and report regularly on various construction projects and acquisition proposals abroad.

2. Ministry of External Affairs has laid importance to the establishment of a Second Diplomatic Enclave so as to allot suitable land to those Diplomatic Missions which desire to build their Chancery/Embassy Residence here. The matter is being pursued actively by the Ministry.

3. The Ministry had conveyed its agreement for land south of Vasant Vihar [Vasant Kunj, Phase-II] in February 1991 for the project but the same could not materialise.

4. Again, in March 1992, the Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation proposed to accommodate the second diplomatic enclave in a new area being developed at Papan Kalan [Dwarka]. The proposal was not found suitable for a number of reasons e.g. proximity to the airport, distance from the existing diplomatic enclave and security considerations. In September 2000, the Ministry of Urban Development offered some land in Rangpuri but it was also not found acceptable after a visit to the site. The approach road to it from the Mahipalpur side was far too congested and the site itself was not free from encumbrances. With further requests from diplomatic Missions, the requirement of land swelled to 75 acres.

5. The plot of land for the Second Diplomatic Enclave had to be selected carefully keeping in view its access, availability of utility services and security as also acceptability for foreign missions who will eventually have to pay the assessed value of the land for acquisition. This matter had been raised by this Ministry at the level of Committee of Secretaries and a request for allotment of suitable land for this purpose had been made at the level of Minister for External Affairs to the Minister for Urban Development.

6. Redevelopment plan of the area surrounded by Netaji Nagar, R.K. Puram, Moti Bagh, Shanti Path and Safdarjung Railway Station was considered for Second Diplomatic Enclave and, vide its communication (No. L-II-9(76)/04/105 dated 27.4.04), the Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation informed this Ministry that the proposal for "establishment of a Second Diplomatic Enclave at the area surrounded by Netaji Nagar, Moti Bagh, R.K. Puram, Shanti Path and Safdarjung Railway Station has been under active consideration of this office in

consultation with CPWD” and that this proposal would require “change of land use from Residential and Partly Govt. Offices to Partly Diplomatic Enclave and Partly Residential which is under process and further development in this regard shall be intimated in due course of time.”

7. Foreign Secretary then wrote to Secretary, Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation in August 2004 and requested that the 34 years old pending matter may be finalised early.

8. In this connection it may be mentioned that the decision on the allotment of land for the Second Diplomatic Enclave rests entirely with the Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation, as it is the sole decision making authority in this regard. The Ministry of External Affairs, despite its best intentions of meeting the requirements of the diplomatic missions in New Delhi can only recommend allotment of land to the missions, after the land has been granted for the purpose by the land owning agency.

9. The matter was then taken up at the level of the Ministers with the External Affairs Minister writing to his counterpart in the Ministry of Urban Development stressing the urgency to identify land for the Second Diplomatic Enclave. Minister for Parliamentary Affairs & Urban Development had replied that he was having the matter looked into.

10. Secretary, Ministry of Urban Development subsequently indicated that the option of the Second Diplomatic Enclave at Sarojini Nagar would be difficult in view of the lack of space as well as the requirement to change the land use from “residential and partly government offices to partly diplomatic enclave and partly residential”. He suggested that they would be willing to give up to one hundred acres in Dwarka.

11. Subsequently, in June 2005, the then Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Urban Development wrote to the then External Affairs Minister that, “it would be difficult to locate a large chunk of area at a Central location for development of a Second Diplomatic Enclave. The area near Netaji Nagar and Moti Bagh has been proposed for development of higher categories of accommodation for senior officers, judges and Ministers in view of acute shortage of accommodation in higher categories at present. Dwarka, which is a new planned sub-city, seems to be an ideal location for development of a Second Diplomatic Enclave. The possibility of locating suitable area in Dwarka can be considered by DDA jointly with Ministry of External Affairs”.

12. Following the Hon’ble Minister’s suggestion, discussions are going on with the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) for development of a Second Diplomatic Enclave in Dwarka. The DDA has informed that Sectors 27, 28 and 29 are being developed for the proposed Second Diplomatic Enclave. According to DDA, the development of the site would take approximately one year. Chief of Protocol has again sent a reminder to Vice Chairman DDA in this regard impressing upon him the urgency of the matter and suggesting organization of a site visit by the Heads of Foreign Missions in Delhi.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

CHAPTER- III

OBSRVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT REPLIES

Recommendation No. 29

The Ministry informed that the draft advocacy paper to present India's case with regard to introducing Hindi in United Nations Organisation (UNO) has been prepared. The paper was discussed in the follow up committee on World Hindi Conference held on 8th June 2005, under the Chairmanship of Minister of State for External Affairs. The views of non-official members were invited and are awaited. They are reminded to expedite their views. The Committee are of the view that efforts to make Hindi an official language of the UN should be expedited and comprehensive efforts be made to convince the General Assembly of UN to amend Rule 51 of its Rules and Procedure.

(Para No. 95)

Reply of the Government

The Ministry has been engaged in addressing the issue of introducing Hindi in the UN. MOS (AS) had on 1st June 2006, chaired a meeting on the World Hindi Conference, which inter alia also discussed introducing Hindi in the United Nations.

2. The Permanent Mission of India in New York has been asked to provide its latest assessment especially regarding the financial implications as well as the procedures which will require to be fulfilled for the possible recognition of Hindi as one of the official languages of the UN.

3. The assessment has been received. The financial implications at a very minimum would entail a cost of US\$ 14.21 million per year. This is based on the decision of the United Nations General Assembly in 1973 to include Arabic as a working and official language of General Assembly and adding an inflation component of 2-3% per annum on a compounded basis. The actual cost is likely to be considerably higher since infrastructural changes would also need to be made in all conference halls to provide for an additional interpreter's booth.

4. Further, while the question of financial implications is an important one, it is not the only factor in decision making. The procedure for getting any language recognised as an official language of the UN involves obtaining approval of the General Assembly to amend Rule 51 (specifying the official and working languages) of the Rules of Procedure. Such a proposal has to be approved by a majority in the General Assembly (96 members). In 1973, when the General Assembly approved the inclusion of Arabic among the official and working languages of the General

Assembly, it did so recognising that Arabic was the language of 19 members of the United Nations. It was also the working language of specialised agencies such as UNESCO, FAO, WHO and the ILO. It was the official and working language of the OAU.

5. Notwithstanding the fact that Hindi is spoken in many countries of the world, recognition of it as an official language of other countries as well as official language in some of the specialised agencies and regional/sub-regional groupings is a factor which is to be considered for recognition in the UN. No special weightage is given by the UN for population, size of the country or its Gross Domestic Product(the basic principle of the UN is the sovereign equality of all nations, whether big or small). Due to the above-mentioned reasons, Japan and Germany who are the second and third largest contributors of the regular budget of the UN and who also have a strong policy and preference for using their own language have not pressed for inclusion of their respective languages for inclusion as official language of the UN.

6. All the above factors are being taken into account before deciding on how to proceed further on the subject.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

CHAPTER- IV

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE AND REQUIRE REITERATION

Recommendation No. 20

The Committee note that 21 Passport Offices are working from rented premises and at present huge part of allocated Budget under this Head is being paid for their rentals. The Committee has been expressing their concern continuously over the delay in acquisition/construction of own premises for Passport Offices since long but no significant development has been made in this regard. The Committee, therefore, again recommend that all construction projects relating to Passport Offices should be taken up on priority basis and efforts should be made vigorously for the early completion of these projects so that the rental liabilities can be reduced to the barest minimum. The Committee also recommend that opening of Passport Offices in states of Uttranchal, Chattisgarh and Himachal Pradesh should be carried out at the earliest.

(Para No. 73)

Reply of the Government

As directed by the Committee, efforts are continually being made to hasten the construction projects in collaboration with the concerned authorities. Action is at hand to open new Passport Offices at Dehradun (Uttranchal), Raipur (Chattisgarh) and Shimla (Himachal Pradesh) as early as possible.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 21

The Committee note that the Staff Inspection Unit of the Ministry of Finance has recommended 293 additional posts in various categories and a proposal to create these additional posts has been submitted for approval of the Competent Authorities on 22nd December 2005. The Committee also note that Staff Selection Commission has nominated 55 Grade C posts of LDC and 4 Grade C posts of Jr. Hindi Translator for CPO. Out of that, 15 LDCs and 3 Jr Hindi Translators have joined so far. The Committee hope that after creation of 293 posts and nomination of 59 posts by SSC for filling the vacant posts, shortage of staff problem would be eliminated to a large extent. The Committee recommend that all the necessary formalities of these posts should be completed at the earliest in order to enable the opening of new offices as well as to avoid the out-sourcing.

(Para No. 74)

Reply of the Government

The approval for the augmentation of posts is still awaited from the Finance Ministry. The appointment of staff will be made after obtaining the requisite approval.
(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 26

The Ministry informed that the new cultural centres at Beijing, Tehran and Kathmandu will be opened subject to the allocation of requisite additional posts and Budgetary resources. The statutory body of the Council has approved the budget allocation and posts for the centres in Tehran and Kathmandu. Creation of these centres is under consideration and it shall be the Council's endeavour to operationalise these centres in 2006-07. The proposal for an Indian Cultural Centre at Beijing is being processed through diplomatic channels. The Committee hope that exercises in this regard will be completed as early as possible and these centres will be in place by the end of Financial Year 2006-07. The Committee also hope that a suitable property for Cultural Centre in Washington will also be located in the Current Financial Year.

(Para No. 86)

Reply of the Government

The position regarding opening of Indian Cultural Centres in Beijing, Tehran, Kathmandu and Washington is as follows:

Beijing

Since the Chinese Government is not prepared to give diplomatic status to the proposed Cultural Centre in Beijing, the matter is being processed through the diplomatic channels. The Ministry of External Affairs and the Embassy of India in Beijing are in correspondence with the Chinese Government and the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi to resolve the issue so that the Indian Cultural Centre at Beijing may be opened in the near future.

Tehran

According to the Iranian laws, functioning of independent Cultural Centres of foreign countries is not permitted. Therefore, it has been proposed to the Embassy of India, Tehran to commence with certain basic activities of the Cultural Centre as a part of the Embassy during the current financial year.

Kathmandu

The Indian Mission in Kathmandu has informed the Council that the construction of Cultural Centre as part of Chancery project is expected to begin in the third quarter of the current financial year and the Mission has requested that the PIC Wing of the Mission be allowed to function as 'deemed' Centre until the necessary

formalities to open the Cultural Centre in Kathmandu are completed. The proposal is under consideration of ICCR.

Washington

A suitable property for the Cultural Centre in Washington has been identified. The property identified needs some modifications. The matter is, therefore, under active consideration with the Establishment Division of the Ministry of External Affairs.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

Recommendation No. 35

The Ministry informed that a substantial hike in budgetary allocation under the Head Capital Outlay on Public Works & Housing has been sought in BE 2006-07 based on realistic assessment of progress in various construction projects and acquisition proposals. As per the ongoing progress of pre-construction activities, a number of construction projects are expected to reach ground-breaking stage in the next financial year. Prominent among these construction projects are Jawaharlal Nehru Bhawan, Indian Embassy Complex in Kathmandu, Muscat, Brasilia, Abuja, Warsaw, Beijing, Kabul and residential project in Islamabad. In addition, projects for redevelopment of property in Singapore and proposal for construction of four apartments in London may also reach construction stage in the next financial year. Additional, sufficient budgetary provision has been sought to meet anticipated expenditure on acquisition proposals, which are likely to be finalized in the next financial year and for expenditure on repair and maintenance of government-owned properties. The Committee, therefore, recommend that sufficient budgetary provision should be made to meet anticipated expenditure on acquisition/construction of these projects and anticipation must be fulfilled. The Ministry should ensure that each project undertaken by the Ministry is completed in a time bound manner.

(Para No. 117)

Reply of the Government

The Ministry will continue to ask for sufficient funds to meet the requirement of construction projects and acquisition of properties. These requirements will be formulated keeping in mind the need to ensure that budgetary constraints do not hamper progress in relation to construction projects and acquisition proposals.

(No.AA/125/Parl/49/2006 dated August 23, 2006)

CHAPTER-V

**OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL
REPLIES OF GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED**

NIL

NEW DELHI:

15th December, 2006/ 24 Agrahayana, 1928 (Saka)

**Dr. Laxminarayan Pandey,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on External Affairs**

Appendix - I

**Ministry of External Affairs
(Projects Division)**

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Construction Projects Abroad

Note: A Standard Project Construction Schedule is attached explaining the different phases of the project for clarifying the completion schedules of the various projects.

No	Station	Project	Plot	Physical Progress	Financial Progress	Budgetary Provision	Completion schedule
1.	Kabul, Afghanistan	Construction of Chancery and Residences	Plot measuring 19,184 sqm (approx 5 acres).	In 1987 development of the project was entrusted to CPWD. However, project could not be implemented due to situation in Afghanistan. In 2002 it was decided to revive the project. CNE approved the proposal on 9.9.2005 for an amount of Rs.60.03 crores.	CNE has approved an amount of Rs. 60.03 crores for the project. Administrative approval of EAM and Finance Minister has been obtained.	A provision of Rs. 15 crores has been made in BE 2006-2007.	It is in the Phase IV of the attached Standard Project Construction Schedule. The expected date of completion is December 2008.
2.	Kathmandu, Nepal	Construction of Chancery and Residences	The present Indian Embassy complex extends over 45.79 acres.	It is proposed to demolish and reconstruct the Chancery, residential buildings and other structures on the Indian Embassy campus, which are presently in a dilapidated condition. Only the HC's residence will be retained. Officials living in rented houses outside the campus will be accommodated within the new complex.	Financial approval of Cabinet obtained for Rs 125.36 crores.	Provision of Rs. 10 crores has been kept in BE 2006-2007.	It is in the Phase IV of the attached Standard Project Construction Schedule. The expected date of completion is December 2009.

				M/s. Akshaya Jain and Raka Chakravorty are the architects for the project selected through competition.			
3.	Beijing, China	Construction of Chancery and Residences	Plot measuring 13,500 sqm acquired in 1989.	M/s Raj Rewal Associates has been appointed as architect-consultant selected through competition. Local body approvals are being processed in Beijing.	Financial approval of CNE was obtained for an expenditure of Rs. 49.59 crores on the project.	A provision of Rs. 8 crores has been kept in BE 2006-07.	It is in the Phase IV of the attached Standard Project Construction Schedule. The expected date of completion is June 2008.
4.	Muscat, Oman	Construction of Chancery and Embassy Residence	12,600 sqm plot acquired from the Government of Oman on reciprocal basis in December 1991 on 99 year lease.	M/s Babbar & Babbar is the Architect-Consultants for the project selected through competition. After CNE's approval of the revised estimates, the project was awarded for implementation in June 2006.	CNE approved the project for Rs.XXXX crores.	A provision of Rs.8 crores has been kept in BE 2006-2007.	It is in the Phase V of the attached Standard Project Construction Schedule. The construction is in progress and the expected date of completion is July 2007.
5.	Singapore	Redevelopment of Embassy Residence and Construction of two residences.	2-storey Heritage building on 3.3 acres land purchased in 1948.	M/s. Shing Design Atelier, Singapore is the architect for the project selected through competition.	Project approved at a cost of Rs.25.29 crores.	A provision of Rs. 6 crores has been kept in BE 2006-2007.	It is in the Phase IV of the attached Standard Project Construction Schedule. The expected date of completion is September 2007.
6.	Abuja, Nigeria	Construction of Chancery and Embassy Residence.	GOI owns two plots of land measuring	The capital of Nigeria was shifted from Lagos to Abuja in December, 1991.	It has been decided to split the project into 2 phases - first	Provision of Rs.5 crores kept in BE	It is in the Phase IV of the attached Standard

			4,144 sq. meters and 13,248 sq. meters.	All diplomatic missions are accordingly required to function from the new capital. M/s. C.P. Kukreja Associates are the architects for the project selected through competition.	the Chancery building and then the Embassy Residence on the smaller plot. Total cost for the 1 st phase of the project, estimated at Rs 13.87 crores, has been approved.	2006-2007.	Project Construction Schedule. The expected date of completion is September 2007.
7.	Warsaw, Poland	Construction of Chancery and Residences.	Plot of 9,657 sqm was purchased in 1988 at a cost of Rs.1.21 crores.	M/s Sachdeva Eggleston are the architects for the project selected through competition.	Project approved by CNE at a cost of Euro 5.64 million or Rs. 33.78 crores..	A provision of Rs. 5 crores has been kept in the BE 2006-2007.	It is in the Phase IV of the attached Standard Project Construction Schedule. The expected date of completion is December 2008.
8.	London	Construction of 6 residences in 8 South Audley Street	Property acquired in 1949 on 99 year lease.	The property is being redeveloped by constructing an Annexe with 6 apartments for HCI officials. M/s Axis Mason are the architects for the project selected through competition.	Project has been approved for Pounds 3.51 million (Rs 30 crores).	A provision of Rs. 5 crores has been kept in BE 2006-2007.	It is in the Phase IV of the attached Standard Project Construction Schedule. The expected date of completion is May 2008.
9.	Tashkent, Uzbekistan	Construction of Chancery, Embassy Residence and staff residences	Plot of 10,000 sqm acquired in 1989 under an agreement with USSR. Matter got linked to reciprocal allotment. In 1998	Mr. Romi Khosla Design Studios (M/s Grup India) selected as architects through competition.	CNE has approved the project for Rs.31 crores.	A provision of Rs. 1.5 crores has been kept in BE 2006-2007.	It is in the Phase IV of the attached Standard Project Construction Schedule. The expected date of completion is March 2009.

			Uzbekistan was allotted 10,000 sqm in New Delhi on reciprocal basis. Physical possession of plot measuring 93.5 m x 107 m taken in April 2004.				
10	Brasilia, Brazil	Chancery, Embassy Residence and Officers Residences	A plot of 25,000 sqm was gifted by the Government of Brazil.	M/s. Paulo Henrique Paranhos were selected as architects through competition.	The total estimated cost of the project is Rs 37.5 crores).	Provision of Rs.1 crore has been kept in BE 2006-2007.	It is in the Phase III of the attached Standard Project Construction Schedule. The expected date of completion is August 2009.
11	Bangkok, Thailand	Construction of Embassy Residence and Cultural Centre.	Plot measuring 4,524 sqm at Soi 25, Sukhumvit, was purchased by GOI in 1974 at a cost of Baht 5.08 million (then eqvt to Rs. 25.4 lakhs) for construction of Embassy Residence	In 2005, it was decided to construct Embassy Residence and Cultural Centre. M/s. SJA of Bangkok has been selected as architects through competition and the Ministry is in the process of finalizing the consultancy agreement.	The consultant will draw up the estimates .		It is in the Phase II of the attached Standard Project Construction Schedule. The expected date of completion is December 2009.
12	Islama-	Construction	A plot of	M/s Sachdev	Financial	A	It is in the

	bad, Pakistan	of Residences.	10.75 acres was purchased in 1962 and additional area of 2.57 acres was acquired in 2003 when the plot was amalgamated. We have already constructed our Chancery on a portion of the plot measuring 3.5 acres.	Eggleston were appointed as consultants.	approval from CNE was obtained in May 1993 for Rs. 21 crores. However, project could not take off due to political reasons. It was revived in August 2003. Consultant was asked to draw up revised design and cost estimates. <i>Preliminary</i> estimates prepared by the consultant have been vetted and approved by IFD. Estimated cost of boundary wall of Rs.1.81 crore has been approved by IFD.	provision of Rs. 1 crore has been kept in BE 2006-07.	Phase III of the attached Standard Project Construction Schedule. The expected date of completion is January 2010.
13	Kyiv, Ukraine	Demolition and reconstruction of residences.	Built up property on a plot of 5255 sqm purchased for Chancery in 1995 at USD 800,000.	It was decided to build staff flats after demolition of the existing structure. M/s Arcom were selected as consultants through competition. The lease of the land has become an issue which is in the process of being resolved by engaging a government agency.			The project schedule will be clear soon after the issue of lease is resolved.
14	Bahrain	Construction of Chancery, Embassy Residence	Plot measuring 7,599 sqm at No. 9	Five architectural companies have been short-listed for design competition.	Plot has been purchased at a cost of Rs. 4,77,59,930.		It is in the Phase I of the attached Standard

		and staff residences.	Seef District purchased in February 2005.				Project Construction Schedule. The expected date of completion is May 2010
15	Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania	Construction of Chancery	Plot of 2,120 sqm acquired in 1999 on reciprocal basis.	M/s Covell Mathews Partnership Ltd, were selected as consultants through competition..	The preliminary estimates have since been received from the Mission and are under examination.		It is in the Phase I of the attached Standard Project Construction Schedule. The expected date of completion is May 2010
16	Dhaka, Bangladesh	Construction of Chancery and Residences.	Two plots measuring 12 bighas and 2.5 bighas were acquired in 1993 and 2000.	On the basis of a design competition, M/s Bose Brothers were selected as architect/ consultant for the project.	The concept is being finalized for subsequent preparation of cost estimates.		It is in the Phase II of the attached Standard Project Construction Schedule. The expected date of completion is May 2010
17	Doha, Qatar	Construction of Chancery and Embassy Residence	Original plot allotted in 1977 measuring 5,005 sqm. This was taken back and new plot has been allotted recently. The site	M/s Rajendra Kumar & Associates were appointed consultant through competition.			It is in the Phase II of the attached Standard Project Construction Schedule. The expected date of completion is March 2010

			infrastructure t is expected to be ready by end-November 2006.				
18	Geneva, Switzerland	Renovation of PR's Residence	Purchased in 1989 for Swiss Frank 6.3 million.	Mr. Gerard Kessler was appointed consultant through competition. The renovation work was awarded in June 2005.	The project cost is SF 2.72 million (Rs. 9.74 crores) .	A provision of Rs. 5 crores has been kept in BE 2006-2007.	It is in the Phase V of the attached Standard Project Construction Schedule. The expected date of completion is October 2006.
19	Moscow, Russia	Construction of 93 Residences and School	Plot measuring 57,870 sqm allotted to the Government of India in Moscow as per Inter-Governmental Agreement of 1989 between India and then USSR.	M/s. Consulting Engineering Services were appointed consultants through competition . However, no progress could be made as the Russian authorities took back the allotted plot of land and proposed an alternative plot of land. However, they have not been able to identify a plot of land to our satisfaction so far. The last discussions on this issue took place in Moscow in June 2006 and the matter is being pursued.			Soon after the plot is allotted, the project will take about 46 months for completion thereafter.
20	Parama-	Construction	10,000	It was decided in	The selected		It is in the

	ribo, Surinam	of Indian Cultural Centre.	sqm gifted by Govt. of Surinam in 1998.	2004 to take up this project. The architects have been short-listed. Their design proposals are under evaluation.	architect will prepare estimates.		Phase I of the attached Standard Project Construction Schedule. The expected date of completion is March 2010.
21	Port Louis, Mauritius	Construction of Chancery complex.	Initial plot in Bell Village offered in 2000 by the Mauritian government free of cost on 99 year lease was withdrawn . A new plot measuring 9,497 sqm in Ebene Triangle, Cyber city offered on same terms has been accepted in December 2004.	The architects have been short-listed. Their design proposals are awaited by September 2006.	The selected architect will prepare estimates.		It is in the Phase I of the attached Standard Project Construction Schedule. The expected date of completion is May 2010.

22	Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago	Construction of Cultural Centre	5 acres donated free of cost by local govt. in 1994 on 99 year lease.	<p>M/s Vikab Engineering Consultants, were appointed consultants through competition.</p> <p>Though estimates submitted were for Rs. 15.51 crores, the CNE approved the proposal for a cost not exceeding Rs 12 crores.</p> <p>The project could not progress due to some internal problems within the appointed consultancy firm. These have been resolved now.</p> <p>The Consultant has given two options, the first to reduce the scope of work to limit the expenditure to Rs 12 crores or to enhance the budget to Rs 21 crores. This is under examination. by him had to be cancelled as Mission had started the process without prior approval of Ministry). Consultant trying to resolve matter failing which he may engage new architect.</p>	CNE approved the project in May 2003 at a cost not exceeding Rs. 12 crore.		<p>It is in the Phase IV of the attached Standard Project Construction Schedule.</p> <p>The expected date of completion is December 2008.</p>
23	Tokyo, Japan	Redevelopment of 5 GOI owned properties in Tokyo, including Chancery,		M/s Plants Associates were appointed consultants through competition in 2005. The Consultant has sent preliminary		A provision of Rs.1.5 crores has been kept in BE 2006-	It is in the Phase III of the attached Standard Project Construction Schedule.

		Embassy Residence and officers residences of 1950 vintage.		estimates with different options. A final decision on the options will be taken during the visit of a high-level team of MEA and MOF in the coming weeks.		2007.	The expected date of completion is April 2009.
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**INDIAN COUNCIL OF WORLD AFFAIRS
SAPRU HOUSE, NEW DELHI**

LIST OF EVENTS HELD AT ICWA DURING THE PERIOD 1ST MAY– 8TH AUGUST, 2006

May 2006

1. 1st May Reception to Commemorate the 51st Anniversary of the Inauguration of Sapru House
2. 9th May Interactive Session between Polish Foreign Office Delegation and Indian Council of World Affairs
3. 17th May Talk by **H. E. Mr. Mohamed Nasheed, Minister of Information of the Republic of Maldives** on “Maldives: A Nation in Transition”
4. 20th May Foreign Affairs Discussion Group Meeting on “Nepal: The Next Steps”
Lead Speaker: Maj. Gen. Ashok Mehta (Retd.)
5. 23rd May Foreign Secretary’s Meeting with French Diplomats
6. 23rd May Talk by **H.E. MR. ALCIDES RONDON, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Venezuela** on “Recent Developments in Latin America and their Implications for Regional and Global Politics”
7. 24th May The Fourth “Africa Day” Lecture: “**India and Africa – Yesterday and Tomorrow**” by **SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR**, Hon’ble Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports and Panchayati Raj

June 2006

8. 3rd June Foreign Affairs Discussion Group Meeting on “**Recent Developments in India–Pakistan Relations**”; Lead Speaker: Shri Siddhartha Varadraj, Deputy Editor, *The Hindu*
9. 3rd June Special screening of the documentary film, “*The Unfinished Revolution*” Directed by Suhas Borker, Executive Director, Citizens First Television News. [*A documentary film on the Non-Aligned Movement which traces the evolution of NAM from Belgrade (1961) to Durban (1998) and examines the validity and relevance of the movement for the future.*]
10. 12th June Foreign Affairs Discussion Group Meeting on “**Emerging Strategic Architecture in South-East Asia**”; Lead Speaker: Shri A.N. Ram, Former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs
11. 16th June ‘**SOWETO DAY**’ Screening of ‘**SARAFINA-THE SOUND OF FREEDOM**’ to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the Students’ Uprising in South Africa

12. 17th June Foreign Affairs Discussion Group on: “**Recent Developments Pertaining to Iran: Regional and Global Implications**” Lead Speaker: **Shri M. Hamid Ansari**, former Indian Ambassador to the UAE, Afghanistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia, and Permanent Representative to the United Nations
13. 23rd June Valedictory Function for The Indian Foreign Service 2004 **Batch and Award of the B.K. Sanyal Memorial Medals**
14. 27th June Foreign Affairs Discussion Group on “**Africa in the Post Cold War World: The Challenge of Nation Building, Peace & Development**”; Lead Speaker: **Dr. Greg Mills**, Director, The Brenthurst Foundation, Johannesburg

July 2006

15. 1st July “Afghanistan: Foreign Policy, Regional Relations & Future Perspectives” — Lecture by **H.E. Dr. Rangin Dadfar Spanta, Foreign Minister of Afghanistan**
16. 27th July **The 2nd Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru Memorial Lecture** by **Shri M.J. Akbar**, Editor-in-Chief, THE *ASIAN AGE* on “The Clash of Civilisations’ Revisited: Implications of the Global War on Terror and the Demonisation of the Other”

[Talk by the Iranian Foreign Minister scheduled for 20th July was cancelled on the previous day.]

August 2006

17. 8th August (i) “Tajikistan and the Vision of Central Asia”
Address by **H.E.Mr. Emomali Sharifovich Rahmonov**
President of the Republic of Tajikistan
- (ii) International Seminar on “India and Tajikistan in International International Affairs” including presentations by Minister of Energy and Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan

OCCASIONAL PAPERS/ MONOGRAPHS COMMISSIONED

- (i) IT and IT-related services: Building partnerships in Asia to expand and upgrade domestic capacities;
[**Note:** *Report being prepared in association with the Department of Information Technology, Government of India—to be released in early September, 2006.*]

- (ii) Implications of the Globalisation of the Indian Gas Economy for the Power, Industry and Transport Sectors and for Domestic Usage.
[**Note:** *A Joint ICWA-FICCI Project—to be released in late September, 2006.*]

**MINUTES OF THE NINTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS HELD ON 14TH DECEMBER, 2006**

The Committee sat from 1515 hrs. to 1700 hrs.

PRESENT

Dr. Laxminarayan Pandey – Chairman

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Narayan Chandra Borkataky
3. Shri Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu
4. Shri Vanlalzawma

Rajya Sabha

5. Shri Jana Krishnamurthy K.
6. Smt. Jaya Bachchan
7. Shri S.M. Laljan Basha
8. Dr. Mahendra Prasad
9. Shri Arjun Kumar Sengupta
10. Smt. Shobhana Bhartia

Secretariat

1. Shri S.K. Sharma - Additional Secretary
2. Shri Devender Singh - Director
3. Shri Ashok Balwani - Under Secretary

2. At the outset, the Chairman welcomed Members to the sitting of the Committee.

3. XXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX

4. The Committee then took up for consideration the draft 13th Report on Action Taken on the recommendations contained in the 11th Report (14th Lok Sabha) of the Committee on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the year 2006-2007. The Chairman invited the Members to offer their suggestions, if any, for incorporation in the draft Report.

5. The committee then adopted the draft Report and authorized the Chairman to finalize the Action Taken Report and present the same to Parliament.

6. XXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX

The Committee then adjourned.

(Vide Introduction of Report)

**ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT ON THE ELEVENTH
REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(14TH LOK SABHA)**

I.	Total Number of Recommendations	36
(i)	Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by the Government.	
	Recommendation Nos.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11,12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34 and 36	
		Total-31 86.12%
(ii)	Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government replies.	
	Recommendation Nos. - 29	
		Total-01 2.77%
(iii)	Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration.	
	Recommendation Nos. 20, 21, 26 and 35.	
		Total-04 11.11%
(iv)	Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited.	
	Recommendation Nos. Nil	
	Total	NIL
	Percentage	NIL

Appendix-VI

STATEMENT OF OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Sl. No.	Para No.	Ministry	Observations/Recommendations
1.	7	External Affairs	The Committee note that the activities of the Ministry, particularly, the “Technical and Economic Cooperation” with other countries is likely to be affected due to shortfall of Rs. 654 crore allocation. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry should ensure that ceiling of BE 2006-2007 is revised adequately at RE 2006-2007 stage so that the technical and economic cooperation with other countries is not affected adversely.
2.	10	External Affairs	The Committee welcome the creation of the Public Diplomacy Division of MEA headed by an Additional Secretary whose mandate includes <i>inter-alia</i> outreach activities inside and outside India, audio visual and print publicity, website, and documentation. The Committee note that the Public Diplomacy Division, aiming to cover every region of the country, has begun to reach out to States within India beginning with Punjab and Orissa. The Committee have been informed that contacts with think tanks, media persons, and personalities in the opinion/ decision maker category have also been activated. The Committee hope that the Public Diplomacy Division will soon extend its outreach activities outside India and also help generate public interest and understanding of Indian Foreign Policy. The Committee recommend that inputs obtained from the activities of the Public Diplomacy Division should invariably be taken into consideration in the Foreign Policy.
3.	13	External Affairs	The Committee are concerned over the time being taken by the Ministry in completion of all their construction projects since most of the projects are lagging behind the time schedule. The Committee would like to be apprised of the efforts being made to hasten the construction projects. The Committee further recommend that new Passport Offices at Dehradun, Raipur and Shimla must be opened by the end of financial year 2006-2007.

4.	16	External Affairs	The Committee do not approve of the reply furnished by the Ministry and hope that the requisite approval for the augmentation of post will be obtained at the earliest considering the fact that staff requirement is based on Staff Inspection Unit (SIU) study and the fact that passport officers bring considerable revenue to the Government. The Committee recommend that grievances of officers/staff of Passport Offices must be heard with due attention and the Committee should be apprised of the steps taken by CPV Division/Ministry to redress their grievances.
5.	19	External Affairs	The Committee find that no significant progress has been made so far with regard to the opening of Indian Cultural Centres in Beijing, Tehran, Kathmandu and Washington. The Committee, therefore, reiterate, considering the potential role of cultural diplomacy and India's incredible and diverse cultural heritage, that Ministry should make concerted efforts to open cultural centers at Beijing, Tehran, Kathmandu and Washington by the end of current financial year.
6.	22	External Affairs	The Committee feel that pace of progress of construction projects and acquisition proposals of the Ministry is far from commensurate with the required speed warranted by the stipulated time-schedule for completion of the projects. The Committee desire that they may be apprised regularly about the steps being taken to complete the construction/acquisition projects of the Ministry without further delay. The Committee also desire that progress report regarding Jawahar Lal Nahru Bhavan (Videsh Bhavan) may be furnished to the Committee on a half yearly basis.