

23

**STANDING COMMITTEE
ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

(2008-2009)

FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA

MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS

[Action Taken on the recommendations contained in the Twenty First Report
(14th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Overseas Indian
Affairs for the year 2008-09]

TWENTY THIRD REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

November, 2008/Kartika, 1930 (Saka)

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(14th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Overseas Indian
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Presented to Lok Sabha on 18.12.2008
Laid in Rajya Sabha on 18.12.2008



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI
November, 2008/Kartika, 1930 (Saka)

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE 2008-2009.....	(iii)
INTRODUCTION.....	(iv)
REPORT	
Chapter I Report.....	01
Chapter II Recommendations/Observations that have been accepted by the Government.....	08
Chapter III Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's Replies.....	15
Chapter IV Recommendations/Observations in respect of which Replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration.....	16
Chapter V Recommendations/Observations in respect of which Final Replies of the Government are still awaited.....	18

APPENDICES

I. Minutes of the sitting of the Committee held on 6.11.2008.....	20
II. Analysis of Action Taken by Government on the Recommendations/Observations contained in the 21 st Report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs (14 th Lok Sabha)	22

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2008-2009)

LOK SABHA

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* Prof. S.P. Singh Baghel ceased to be Member of the Committee consequent upon **disqualification for being Member of the Lok Sabha in terms of para 2(1)(b) of the Tenth Schedule to the Constitution w.e.f. 12.9.2008**

** **Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi** ceased to be Member of the Committee consequent upon expiry of his term w.e.f. 25.11.2008

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman, Standing Committee on External Affairs (2008-2009) having been authorized by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, present this 23rd Report (14th Lok Sabha) on Action Taken by Government on the Recommendations contained in the 21st Report (14th Lok Sabha) of the Committee on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs for the year 2008-09.

2. The 21st Report was laid in Rajya Sabha on 15 April, 2008 and presented to Lok Sabha on 16 April, 2008. The Action Taken Replies of the Government on all the recommendations/observations contained in the Report were received on 31 July, 2008.

3. The Committee considered and adopted this Action Taken Report at their sitting held on 06 November, 2008. The Minutes of the sitting of the Committee have been reproduced at Appendix-I to the Report.

4. An analysis of the Action Taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the 21st Report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs (14th Lok Sabha) is given in Appendix-II.

NEW DELHI
14 November, 2008
23 Kartika, 1930 (Saka)

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on External Affairs

CHAPTER – I

REPORT

This Report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs deals with the Action Taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in their Twenty-First Report on Demands for Grants (2008-2009) of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs which was presented to Lok Sabha on 16 April, 2008.

2. The Action taken notes have been received from the Ministry of Overseas Indian 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, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12

Total-10

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

Recommendation No. 13

Total- 01

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

Recommendation No. 4

Total-01

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

Recommendation No. 3

Total-01

3. The Committee desire that final replies to the recommendation/observations for which only interim replies have been given by the government should be furnished within three months of the presentation of this Report.

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

A. Filling up of vacancies in the Ministry

(Recommendation No. 3)

5. The Committee observed with regret that even after three years of the creation of this Ministry, it still did not have its own officers at senior levels who were taken on deputation and for lower staff they had to depend on the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Committee also felt that there was shortage of manpower which was evident from the fact that as against the sanctioned strength of 195 persons, the Ministry was having only 153 persons as on 31 March 2008. It was obvious that it would be difficult for the Ministry to execute various schemes/programmes undertaken by them. The Committee desired that the vacancies in the Ministry should be filled up expeditiously.

6. The Ministry in the action taken reply have stated as under:

“..... the Ministry of Home Affairs for lower staff and the Deptt. of Official Languages for Hindi posts and for some posts on the Ministry of External Affairs. They have been reminded to provide personnel to fill up the vacant posts. The Ministry has also taken up the matter with the Deptt. of Personnel & Training to create a separate cadre of this Ministry for posts, which are currently being filled up from the staff of MHA and MEA. This will enable this Ministry to get the people directly from the DOP&T and the vacancies be filled up.

For the field offices located in the POEs, vacancies circulars have been sent to the various Ministries/Depts. to provide officers on loan basis. It is anticipated that these vacancies will be filled up shortly.

All efforts are being made to fill up the posts so that there is no difficulty for the Ministry to execute various schemes/programmes undertaken by it.”

7. The Committee are unhappy with the Government’s reply and note that even after four years of creation of the Ministry nothing concrete except issuing letters/reminders has been done in this regard. The Committee desire that concerted efforts be made to fill up the vacancies early. They be also informed of the steps taken for creation of separate cadre for the Ministry and the response of DoPT thereto so that programmes/schemes being implemented by the Ministry are not adversely affected for want of staff. They desire to be informed of the action taken in the matter at the earliest.

B. Construction of Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra (PBK)

(Recommendation No. 4)

8. The Committee noted with regret that though a decision to establish Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra (PBK) had been taken four years ago in the year 2004, not much headway had been made on this project so far. Plot for the project was acquired only in May 2006. Subsequently, the Ministry initiated action for inviting proposals for appointing consultants, constitution of Consultancy Evaluation Committee (CEC) etc. After the completion of requisite formalities, an agreement with NBCC was signed on 18.12.2007. However, construction on the project had not yet commenced. The Committee urged that there should be no further delay in this regard and would like to know further details regarding activities and functions of the proposed Kendra.

9. The Ministry in its action taken reply state as under:

“..... It is stated that as the land allotted by the Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation for constructing the PBK, was meant for “Foreign Mission” only, concerted efforts are being made by this Ministry to get the land use of allotted plots changed formally from “Foreign Mission” to “Institutional – Culture & Socio information centre purposes” to achieve the desire objectives.

10. The Committee are unhappy to note from the reply of the Ministry that the landuse of this plot of land allotted to it for construction of PBK more than two years ago is yet to be got changed from ‘Foreign Mission’ to ‘Institutional – Cultural & Socio Information Centre purposes’. This fact was known to the Ministry at that time also. It appears that the Ministry did not make sincere efforts for the last two years to get the landuse changed. This, the Committee find is akin to a situation where the cart is put before the horse thereby hampering further progress in the matter. The Committee feel that all efforts by the Ministry to simultaneously complete all other formalities would come to a naught unless the land use is changed. They, therefore, desire the Ministry to take coordinated and concerted steps to complete the construction of PBK before the commencement of Common Wealth Games in 2010 as assured by them. They would like to be informed of the progress in the matter.

C. Setting up of Overseas Employment Promotion Council

(Recommendation No. 8)

11. The Cabinet had approved setting up of Overseas Employment Promotion Council to serve as a strategic think tank on migration matters and prepare market oriented strategies to enable the Indian workers to

benefit from the job opportunities overseas. The proposal stated that Secretary of the Ministry would be the Chairman of the Council, so that there was an organic link with the Ministry. The Committee suggested that once the Council starts functioning with full fledged activities, the desirability of having a distinguished non-official as the Chairman of the Council should be considered.

12. The action taken reply furnished by the Ministry is as under:

“The recommendation given by the Standing Committee has been taken note of and necessary action will be taken after due consideration in future.”

13. The Committee regret to note that the reply to this recommendation is vague. There is no reference as to whether the Overseas Employment Promotion Council has started functioning. The reply is also silent on the action taken or proposed to be taken on the recommendation of the Committee that the desirability of appointing a distinguished non-official as Chairman of the Council be considered. They caution the Ministry to desist from giving vague replies to their recommendations in future. They desire to be apprised of the action taken in the matter.

D. Bilateral MoUs with labour receiving countries

(Recommendation No. 9)

14. The Committee appreciated the initiative taken by MOIA in implementation of its plan to enter into bilateral MoUs with major labour receiving countries after almost 18 years. The Ministry had signed an MoU with UAE and Kuwait in 2006-07, it had also signed an Additional Protocol with Qatar to supplement the 1985 agreement for protection and welfare of our workers. The MoU with Malaysia had reportedly been finalized and approved by the Cabinet and one round of negotiation had already been held with Oman. Efforts were also reportedly being made to initiate

negotiations with Yemen, Brunei and Saudi Arabia during 2008-09. The Committee hoped that the MOIA would simultaneously strive to enter into such agreements with other major labour receiving countries.

15. The Ministry in their action taken reply stated as under:

“Follow-up action on the provisions of the MoUs signed with UAE, Kuwait and Qatar is being taken through the Joint Working Groups constituted for the purpose. The Agreement with Bahrain was initiated on 25th April, 2008 and a Note for the Cabinet is being finalized in consultation with the concerned Ministries. Second round of negotiations with Oman for finalizing the MoU on Manpower will be held at Muscat on 28th-29th June, 2008. Approval of the Cabinet has been obtained on the Agreement with Malaysia and the Agreement will be signed between the two Governments at mutual convenience, shortly. Even though the Government of Saudi Arabia has not evinced interest in finalizing an Agreement, the matter is being pursued with them for putting in place an institutional mechanism in this regard. Negotiations are also underway with Yemen and Brunei for finalizing a mutually beneficial Agreement. The Ministry is pursuing labour mobility Agreements with South Korea and major labour receiving countries of Europe including Poland, Denmark and Czech Republic with a view to diversify the destination base of Indian workers.”

16. The Committee note that the Second round of negotiations with Oman for finalizing the MoU on Manpower was to be held on 28–29 June, 2008. It is regrettable that though the Ministry furnished the action taken reply on 28 July, 2008, they did not bother to update the Committee of the outcome of the Second round of negotiations held with Oman on 28-29 June, 2008. Similarly, negotiations/agreements were also under-way with other countries like Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Brunei, South Korea and other major labour receiving countries of Europe. The Committee would like to be apprised of the further developments made so far in the context of negotiations held with these countries and time frame, if any, decided to complete negotiations and conclude agreements with such countries.

E. Amendment of Emigration Act, 1983

(Recommendation No. 11)

17. The Committee noted with regret that the bill to amend the Emigration Act, 1983 though conceived in February, 2005, was yet to be introduced in Parliament. The Committee had been repeatedly emphasizing in their successive Reports, the urgent need to amend the Emigration Act. The Committee regretted to note that the amendment bill which was intended to ensure and protect the interest of migrant workers had suffered such a delay. The Committee desired that there should be no further delay and expect that as assured by the Secretary, MOIA, the amendment Bill would be introduced in Parliament in the next session.

18. The action taken reply of the Ministry is as under:

“A revised proposal for amending the Emigration Act, 1983 has been approved by the Cabinet. Further action is being taken.”

19. The Committee regret to observe that the reply to such an important recommendation is couched in too general terms. The reply does not mention when the revised proposal for amendment of Emigration Act 1983 was approved by the Cabinet and the nature of further action required in the matter before the amending Bill is introduced in Parliament. It also does not indicate time frame, if any, required for introduction of the Bill in Parliament. They again reiterate their earlier recommendation that the Bill be introduced in the current session of Parliament without any further delay.

CHAPTER II

RECOMMENDATIONS/ OBSERVATIONS, WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation No. 1

The Committee find that there has been huge shortfall in utilization of budgetary allocation of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs year after year. Though the percentage of shortfall in budgetary utilization has come down considerably over the years, the fact that the shortfall was to the extent of 21 % in 2007-08 indicates that budgetary planning in MOIA needs to be further improved. The under utilization of funds is attributed to lack of planning and proper formulation of the schemes, absence of field level implementation agency and dependence on Indian Missions for activities abroad and State Governments and other agencies domestically. The Committee hope that necessary action will be taken to improve budgetary planning and control in MOIA.

Reply of the Ministry

Advance action has been taken in the current year to ensure that the schemes are approved by the competent authorities. The Standing Finance Committee has already approved Skill Upgradation Scheme, Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children (SPDC) and the scheme to provide legal and financial assistance to women deserted by their overseas Indian spouses. OIFC' action plan has also been approved by the Finance Committee.

The implementation of various schemes is being monitored closely in the Ministry so as to utilize the funds allocated to the Ministry. The budget allocated in the current financial year is expected to be utilized fully.

[OM NO. H-11013/1/2008-P&C, DATED 28.7.2008]

Recommendation No. 2

The Committee observe that though nearly 50 percent (Rs.31.75 Crore) of the total allocation for the current year 2008-09 has been provided under Major Head 2061- "Other Schemes", the Detailed Demands for Grants of MOIA which is required to provide all details, have not provided details of the 'Other Schemes'. The Committee are not convinced of MOIA Secretary's plea that the Detailed Demands for Grants is to be read with the

Outcome Budget where each scheme has been shown in detail. A break-up of the estimates relating to each programme/organization wherever the amount involved is not less than Rs. 10 Lakh and the actual expenditure during the previous year is required to be shown in the Detailed Demands of Grants. The Committee desire the MOIA to present in future all details in the Demands for Grants in terms of the guidelines of the Ministry of Finance.

Reply of the Ministry

The Detailed Demands for Grants does not provide details of the break up relating to each programme/organization where the amount involved is less than Rs. 10 lakh. The matter has been taken up with the Ministry of Finance through the Integrated Finance Division for providing separate object Heads for different schemes,/organization in the Demands for Grants of the MOIA as recommended by the Standing Finance Committee so that Budget allocated for the different schemes is reflected separately in the Demands for Grants from next year onwards.

[OM NO. H-11013/1/2008-P&C, DATED 28.7.2008]

Recommendation No. 5

The allocation for Know India Programme (KIP) has been raised from Rs. 65 lakh in 2007-08 to Rs. 1 Cr. in 2008-09. However, according to Outcome Budget, only two Know India Programmes could be arranged against target of three such programmes. Know India Programmes are conducted in partnership with States and partner State Governments are expected to take care of the logistics and transport in their States. The Committee observe that inadequate planning with partner States left little time to host the third Know India Programme. Regrettably, even after passage of three years, the Ministry is claiming that Know India Programme is still an evolving programme. The Committee expect the MOIA to plan in advance, in consultation with partner states and other stakeholders, to ensure successful conduct of Know India Programme in future.

Reply of the Ministry

The following is the schedule proposed for the next three Know India Programmes (KIPs):

	Tentative Period	Partner States	Last date for receipt of nomination in the MOIA
9 th KIP	August-September 08	Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh	30 th June, 2008
10 th KIP	December 08 – January 09	Madhya Pradesh, Haryana	30 th September 2008
11 th KIP	March 2009	Punjab, Orissa	31 st December, 2008

Concurrence of the concerned State governments was sought in early April 2008. State governments of Punjab, Gujarat and U.P, have since conveyed acceptance. Matter is being pursued with other State governments.

Participation to the programmes has been sought through our Missions/Posts in identified countries.

[OM NO. H-11013/1/2008-P&C, DATED 28.7.2008]

Recommendation No. 6

The Committee observe that only 80 scholarships were given during 2007-08 as against 100 slots of scholarship under the Scholarship Scheme for Diaspora Children (SSDC). The MOIA has, however, proposed to prepare a reserve list from the ensuing session to ensure that higher number of scholarships are availed. Further, it is observed that scholarships are also offered by ICCR and other bodies. The Committee, therefore, recommend MOIA to take a holistic and coordinated approach in implementing the programme in consultation with all concerned.

Reply of the Ministry

With a view to let the applicants know about their selection for the Scholarship under SPDC well in advance before they commit themselves for higher studies in other countries, to have enough time to offer the unfilled slots to those in the reserve list and for achieving a better utilization of the Scholarship, it has been decided to complete the process of selection of candidates for SPDC - 2009 by 30th November 2008. Selected applicants would be given one month to send their acceptance.

Thereafter, the unfilled slots would be offered to those next in the merit list, prepared on the basis of a Common Entrance Test conducted by Ed.CIL.

For the grant of Scholarship during 2007-08 under SPDC - 2007, it may be stated that a total of 113 applicants were offered the Scholarship. Only 81 of them, however, accepted it before the start of the academic session. 120 applicants have been offered scholarship under SPDC – 2008 for the academic year 2008-09.

As regards coordinated approach to be followed in implementing the programme, the matter would be taken up with ICCR.

[OM NO. H-11013/1/2008-P&C, DATED 28.7.2008]

Recommendation No. 7

The Committee observe that the Ministry launched the Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre (OIFC), a not-for-profit trust in partnership with CII to serve as a “one stop shop” for all investment and business related services for potential overseas Indian investors. During PBD, 2008, OIFC organized market place in which many one-on-one meetings and presentations were reported to have been organized. The Committee feel that the outcome of the efforts made by OIFC can only be judged if the quantum of real investment flowing into the country is known. According to the Ministry, specific data on investments by overseas Indians is not maintained either by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) which is the Nodal Agency on policy matters relating to foreign direct investments or by the Reserve Bank of India. The Committee would like the MOIA to attempt an appropriate Management Information System to monitor the outcome of the efforts made under the scheme by keeping the profile of NRIs who are in touch with OIFC and matching that with the list of overseas investors.

Reply of the Ministry

The Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre (OIFC) has been requested to maintain a database of the NRIs who are getting in touch with them and seeking information for investment proposals and forward them periodically to the Ministry. The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion has also been requested to issue suitable directions to the RBI to maintain data separately of the NRIs who are investing in India.

[OM NO. H-11013/1/2008-P&C, DATED 28.7.2008]

Recommendation No. 8

The Cabinet has reportedly approved setting up of Overseas Employment Promotion Council to serve as a strategic think tank on migration matters and prepare market oriented strategies to enable the Indian workers to benefit from the job opportunities overseas. The present proposal is stated to be that Secretary of the Ministry will be the Chairman of the Council, so that there is an organic link with the Ministry. The Committee suggest that once the Council starts functioning with full fledged activities, the desirability of having a distinguished non-official as the Chairman of the Council should be considered.

Reply of the Ministry

The recommendation given by the Standing Committee has been taken note of and necessary action will be taken after due consideration in future.

[OM NO. H-11013/1/2008-P&C, DATED 28.7.2008]

Recommendation No. 9

The Committee appreciate the initiative taken by MOIA in implementation of its plan to enter into bilateral MoUs with major labour receiving countries after almost 18 years. The Ministry has signed an MoU with UAE and Kuwait in 2006-07, it has also signed an Additional Protocol with Qatar to supplement the 1985 agreement for protection and welfare of our workers. The MoU with Malaysia has reportedly been finalized and approved by the Cabinet and one round of negotiation has already been held with Oman. Efforts are also reportedly being made to initiate negotiations with Yemen, Brunei and Saudi Arabia during 2008-09. The Committee hope that the MOIA will simultaneously strive to enter into such agreements with other major labour receiving countries.

Reply of the Ministry

Follow-up action on the provisions of the MoUs signed with UAE, Kuwait and Qatar is being taken through the Joint Working Groups constituted for the purpose. The Agreement with Bahrain was initialed on 25th April, 2008 and a Note for the Cabinet is being finalized in consultation with the concerned Ministries. Second round of negotiations with Oman for finalizing the MoU on Manpower will be held at Muscat on 28th-29th June, 2008. Approval of the Cabinet has been obtained on the Agreement with Malaysia and the Agreement will be signed between the two Governments at mutual convenience, shortly. Even though the Government of Saudi

Arabia has not evinced interest in finalizing an Agreement, the matter is being pursued with them for putting in place an institutional mechanism in this regard. Negotiations are also underway with Yemen and Brunei for finalizing a mutually beneficial Agreement. The Ministry is pursuing labour mobility Agreements with South Korea and major labour receiving countries of Europe including Poland, Denmark and Czech Republic with a view to diversify the destination base of Indian workers.

[OM NO. H-11013/1/2008-P&C, DATED 28.7.2008]

Recommendation No. 10

The Pre-departure Orientation and Skill Upgradation Scheme which has been re-designed is reportedly awaiting formal approval by the Finance Ministry. The Committee desire that the matter should be taken up with the Ministry of Finance for speedy clearance of the scheme and MOIA should ensure its expeditious implementation.

Reply of the Ministry

The Standing Finance Committee has since approved the scheme for Skill Upgradation and Pre-departure Orientation. The scheme will be implemented during the current financial year.

[OM NO. H-11013/1/2008-P&C, DATED 28.7.2008]

Recommendation No. 11

The Committee regret to note that the bill to amend the Emigration Act, 1983 though conceived in February, 2005, is yet to be introduced in Parliament. The Committee have been repeatedly emphasizing in their successive Reports, the urgent need to amend the Emigration Act. The Committee regret to note that the amendment bill which is intended to ensure and protect the interest of migrant workers has suffered such a delay. The Committee desire that there should be no further delay and expect that as assured by the Secretary, MOIA, the amendment Bill will be introduced in Parliament in the next session.

Reply of the Ministry

A revised proposal for amending the Emigration Act, 1983 has been approved by the Cabinet. Further action is being taken.

[OM NO. H-11013/1/2008-P&C, DATED 28.7.2008]

Recommendation No. 12

The Committee understand that the essential requirements for emigration clearance are not uniformly being implemented as per the provisions of Emigration Act by all Protector of Emigrants (POEs) especially by the POE office, Mumbai. POEs are reportedly entertaining Service Agents on behalf of Recruiting Agents (RSs). This differential interpretation of procedures provides scope for corruption in POEs and a nexus between RAs and POEs. The Committee desire MOPIA to take urgent and effective steps to stem the rot creeping into the system. They also desire that clear directions be issued to POEs for uniform application of provisions of Emigration Act.

Reply of the Ministry

With due deference to the recommendations of the Committee suitable instructions has been issued to all the POEs to adhere to the provisions of the Emigration Act, 1983 and the Rules framed thereunder in letter and spirit, besides uniformly complying with all the instructions issued by the Ministry from time to time.

[OM NO. H-11013/1/2008-P&C, DATED 28.7.2008

CHAPTER III

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

Recommendation No. 13

The Committee in their Sixteenth Report on Demands for Grants of the Ministry for the year 2007-08 had recommended that there should be a mechanism for taking effective preventive measures and other steps to check corruption in the emigration offices and to improve the emigration process while making it more transparent. The MOIA in their Action Taken Replies had informed that the posts of POE at Delhi, Mumbai & Chennai had been upgraded to the level of Deputy Secretary/Director while those at Thiruvananthapuram and Hyderabad had been upgraded to the level of Under Secretary in order to ensure better supervision, control and greater accountability. However, it appears that the posts in the remaining POE offices have not been upgraded so far. The recent case of CBI raid in the office of POE, Chandigarh has brought out the rampant corruption in the emigration office. The Committee desire that the posts in the remaining offices of POE may also be considered for upgradation to an appropriate level to check such cases of corruption. The Committee would like to be informed of the action taken in this regard.

Reply of the Ministry

The proposal for Upgradation of the posts to the level of Under Secretary in the offices of POE at Kolkata, Chandigarh and Cochin is being taken up with the Ministry of Finance so as to check the cases of corruption.

[OM NO. H-11013/1/2008-P&C, DATED 28.7.2008]

CHAPTER IV

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

Recommendation No. 4

The Committee regret to note that though a decision to establish Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra (PBK) had been taken four years ago in the year 2004, not much headway has been made on this project so far. Plot for the project was acquired only in May 2006. Subsequently, the Ministry initiated action for inviting proposals for appointing consultants, constitution of Consultancy Evaluation Committee (CEC) etc. After the completion of requisite formalities, an agreement with NBCC was signed on 18.12.2007. However, construction on the project has not yet commenced. The Committee express their concern over the slow pace of progress of the project and recommend that the concerted efforts be made to adhere to time bound programme prepared for its implementation and completion of the project by the end of the year 2010 as assured by the Secretary during the evidence. The Committee urge that there should be no further delay in this regard and would like to know further details regarding activities and functions of the proposed Kendra.

Reply of the Ministry

With a view to ensuring timely completion of the Project, the Ministry has formed a Steering Committee for effective monitoring of its progress. It is stated that as the land allotted by the Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation for constructing the PBK, was meant for "Foreign Mission" only, concerted efforts are being made by this Ministry to get the land use of allotted plots changed formally from "Foreign Mission" to "Institutional – Culture & Socio information centre purposes" to achieve the desired objectives. Simultaneously, appropriate action for preparation of municipal drawings of the PBK has been taken and the drawings of the building have since been submitted to the N.D.M.C. for scrutiny/approval. As per the procedure, after approval of the drawings by the NDMC, these are also to be approved by Delhi Fire Service and Delhi Urban Arts Commission. Pending approval of the drawings by the local authorities, NBCC, the Consultant and the Project Manager of the PBK, have been advised to take parallel steps for completing documentation and other requisite formalities. They have also been advised to prepare the draft Detailed Project Report (DPR) of the PBK. It will be the endeavour of the Ministry to complete the project before the ensuing Commonwealth Games.

The activities and functions of the proposed Kendra would be briefly as under:

The Kendra would symbolize the common aspirations of all members of the Diaspora to maintain their cultural identity and civilizational ethos and also their fervent desire to pass on this rich legacy to their coming generations. It would house an institution, which would encourage the spirit of camaraderie among all the children of Mother India.

The Kendra would become the focal point for interactions between India and the Diaspora and would also, in course of time, become the hub of various activities aimed at creating pride in the achievements of India and the Diaspora.

It would serve as an ideal forum to facilitate harnessing extraordinary talent pool among 20 million strong Indian Diaspora for accelerating our development process.

The proposed Kendra would have permanent exhibition illustrating the history of the Diapsora in various parts of the world. It would house a well-stocked library with a wide-ranging collection of diasporic books and audio-visual materials. The proposed Kendra would be developed into a Centre for diasporic studies where it would run short-term courses and orientation programmes for the youth of the Indian Diaspora, thus ensuring that future generation of PIOs remains connected to India.

The Kendra would also provide facilities for comparative study of major Diasporas.

It would provide facilities for cultural interaction among Diaspora artistes and facilitate interaction with eminent Indian artistes.

The presence of Diaspora is an important factor in our bilateral relationship with countries of their settlement. The Kendra would provide informal channels of communication, which would help in promoting understanding of issues of vital concern to India. In nutshell, the proposed Kendra would make useful contribution in promoting our national interest.

[OM NO. H-11013/1/2008-P&C, DATED 28.7.2008]

CHAPTER V

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

Recommendation No. 3

The Committee regret to observe that even three years after the creation of this Ministry, it still does not have its own officers at senior levels who are taken on deputation and for lower staff they have to depend on the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Committee also feel that there is shortage of manpower which is evident from the fact that as against the sanctioned strength of 195 persons, the Ministry is having only 153 persons as on 31 March 2008. It is obvious that it would be difficult for the Ministry to execute various schemes/programmes undertaken by them. The Committee desire that the vacancies in the Ministry should be filled up expeditiously.

Reply of the Ministry

MOIA have to depend on the Ministry of Home Affairs for lower staff and the Deptt. of Official Languages for Hindi posts and for some posts on the Ministry of External Affairs. They have been reminded to provide personnel to fill up the vacant posts. The Ministry has also taken up the matter with the Deptt. of Personnel & Training to create a separate cadre of this Ministry for posts, which are currently being filled up from the staff of MHA and MEA. This will enable this Ministry to get the people directly from the DOP&T and the vacancies be filled up.

For the field offices located in the POEs, vacancies circulars have been sent to the various Ministries/Depts. to provide officers on loan basis. It is anticipated that these vacancies will be filled up shortly.

All efforts are being made to fill up the posts so that there is no difficulty for the Ministry to execute various schemes/programmes undertaken by it.

[OM NO. H-11013/1/2008-P&C, DATED 28.7.2008]

NEW DELHI
14 November, 2008
23 Kartika, 1930 (Saka)

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on External Affairs

Appendix-I

MINUTES OF THE SEVENTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS HELD ON 6TH NOVEMBER, 2008

The Committee sat from 1500 hrs. to 1540 hrs. in Committee Room No. 63, Parliament House, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Dr. Laxminarayan Pandey – Chairman

MEMBERS LOK SABHA

2. Shri Narayan Chandra Borkatakya
3. Shri Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa
4. Shri S.K. Kharventhan
5. Shri Mukeem Mohammad
6. Shri Somabhai G. Patel
7. Dr. Sebastian Paul
8. Dr. (Col.) Dhani Ram Shandil
9. Shri Madhu Goud Yashki

RAJYA SABHA

10. Shri Bhubaneshwar Kalita
11. Dr. Mahendra Prasad
12. Shri Bharatkumar B. Raut
13. Dr. Karan Singh
14. Dr. (Smt.) Kapila Vatsyayan

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri U.S. Saxena - Joint Secretary
2. Shri R.K. Jain - Director
3. Shri P.V.L.N. Murthy - Deputy Secretary
4. Shri Hoti Lal - Deputy Secretary-II

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

3. XXX XXX XXX XXX

4. The Committee then took up for consideration the Memorandum No. 3 and the draft Report on Action Taken by Govt. on the recommendations contained in the 21st Report (14th Lok Sabha) of the Committee on Demands for Grants (2008-2009) of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs. The Chairman invited the Members to offer their suggestions, if any, for incorporation in the draft Report. The Members suggested some minor modifications.

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

The Committee then adjourned.

XXX Minutes in respect of other Report kept separately.

Appendix -II

(Vide Para 4 of Introduction of Report)

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

		13
(i)	Total Number of Recommendations	
(ii)	Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by the Government.	
	Recommendation Nos. 1, 2,5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12	
		Total-10
		Percentage: 76.92%
(iii)	Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government replies.	
	Recommendation No. 13	
		Total-01
		Percentage:7.96
		%
(iv)	Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration.	
	Recommendation No. 4	
		Total-01
		Percentage: 7.96%
(v)	Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited.	
	Recommendation No. 3	
		Total-01
		Percentage: 7.96%