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**STANDING COMMITTEE
ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

(2005-2006)

FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA

MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS

*(Action Taken on the recommendations contained in the sixth
Report (14th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of
Overseas Indian Affairs for the year 2005-2006)*

NINTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

December, 2005/ Agrahayana, 1927 (Saka)

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON
OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS
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(FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA)

(Action Taken on the recommendations contained in the sixth Report (14th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs for the year 2005-2006)

Presented to Lok Sabha on 15.12.2005
Laid in Rajya Sabha on 15.12.2005



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

December, 2005/ Agrahayana, 1927 (Saka)

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2005-2006)

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* Ceased to be Member of the Committee consequent upon his resignation from his seat from Lok Sabha w.e.f. 10.10.2005.

** Ceased to be Member of the Committee consequent upon his retirement from the membership of Rajya Sabha w.e.f. 21.11.2005.

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman, Standing Committee on External Affairs having been authorised by the Committee to submit the report on their behalf, present this 9th Report (14th Lok Sabha) on action taken by Government on the Recommendations contained in the 6th Report (14th Lok Sabha) of the Committee on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs for the year 2005-2006.

2. The 6th Report was presented to both the Houses of Parliament on 26th April, 2005. The Action Taken Replies of the Government on all the recommendations/observations contained in the Report were received on 5th September, 2005.

3. The Draft Report on the basis of Action Taken Replies was considered and adopted by the Standing Committee on External Affairs (2005-2006) at their sitting held on 12th December, 2005. Minutes of the sitting of the Committee have been reproduced as Appendix-I to the Report.

4. An analysis of the action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the 6th Report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs (14th Lok Sabha) is given in Appendix-II.

NEW DELHI:
Laxminarayan Pandey,

December, 2005/ Agrahayana, 1927 (Saka)

Dr.
Chairman,
Standing Committee on External Affairs

CHAPTER – I

REPORT

This Report of the Committee deals with the Action Taken by Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the 6th Report of Standing Committee on External Affairs on Demands for Grants for the year 2005-2006 in respect of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs. The 6th Report of the Committee was presented to Lok Sabha on 26th April, 2005.

2. Action taken notes have been received from the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs on all the observations/recommendations contained in the report except Recommendation No. 4 on which the final replies of the Government are still awaited. These have been categorized as follows: -

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>(i) Observations/Recommendations, which have been accepted by the Government.</p> <p>Nos. 1, 3, 5, 6, 12 and 13</p> | <p>Total-06
Chapter-II</p> |
| <p>(ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government replies.</p> <p>No. 10</p> | <p>Total-01
Chapter-III</p> |
| <p>(iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration.</p> <p>Nos. 2, 7, 8, 9 and 11</p> | <p>Total-05
Chapter-IV</p> |
| <p>(iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited.</p> <p>Nos. 4</p> | <p>Total-01</p> |

Chapter-V

3. The Committee desire that action taken notes on the recommendations contained in Chapter-I and final action taken notes in respect of the recommendations contained in Chapter-V of this Report may be furnished to them at the earliest and in any case not later than three months of the presentation of the Report.

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

A. Secretariat /Work Allocation

Recommendation No.2

5. During the examination of the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs for the year 2005-2006, the Committee had noted that almost a year after the creation of the Ministry, a full complement of Staff and a full-fledged secretariat was yet to be put in place. While referring the assurance given by the Secretary, Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs during the course of evidence, the Committee had desired that creation of posts in the Ministry should be completed within three months as has been assured by the. They had felt that there was an urgent need to speed up creation of posts particularly in the wake of the new work allocation to the Ministry.

The Committee had also observed that the Overseas Indians had great expectations after the creation of an independent Ministry dealing with the affairs concerning them. The Ministry must, therefore, make all efforts to interact with the Overseas Indian Community and address their concerns which should properly reflect in the vision and objectives of the Ministry. The Committee felt that this will be possible only when a full complement of staff to work in the Ministry is put in place.

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

“With the approval of Cabinet, 63 posts have already been created for the Secretariat of MOIA. Action has been initiated to fill these posts. Proposals to create certain additional posts are under the consideration of the Committee of Secretaries.”

7. The Committee are concerned over the inordinate delay by the Ministry in putting in place a full complement of staff. The Committee also find that the 63 posts that have already been created, are not adequate and a proposal to create certain additional posts is under consideration of the Committee of Secretaries. The Committee understand that the Ministry has come up with a wide range of proposals/programmes for the welfare of the overseas Indians which cannot be taken up unless there is sufficient number of officials to implement them. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should fill up the already created posts without any further delay. Simultaneously, they should expedite the proposal for creation of more posts as per their requirement so that the Ministry can start delivering the goods with a well-established Secretariat.

B. Recruiting Agents/Registration Certificates/Emigration

Recommendation No.7

8. The Committee had learnt that a large number of Recruiting Agents published attractive advertisements stating that they would provide suitable employment to labourers abroad particularly in the Gulf countries and extracted huge sums of money from the aspiring job seekers. After taking them to the

countries of their employment, the problem of such poor job seekers started from the airport itself where it was found that most of them had bogus entries. Further, those labourers were not paid their salary as per the promises made in the advertisements and they were forced to work in most unhygienic and pathetic living conditions. Some of them were even jailed on trumped up charges/petty offences for years together. The Committee were concerned about the plight of these labourers and had felt that the issue needed to be addressed in a focused manner. The Committee had recommended that the Ministry should take up the issue of fraudulent advertisements. They had further desired that the Ministry should also take up cases involving breach of contract entered into between the employer and employees. To deal with the cases involving woman employees who constitute the vulnerable section of the society, the Committee had recommended that woman officers should be designated in the outposts as far as possible.

The Committee had also desired that the Ministry's proposal to streamline emigration by re-engineering the whole process, introducing IT based solutions, bringing in smart cards etc. should be pursued with all the seriousness it deserves.

9. The Ministry in their reply responded as under:

“Semiconductor Complex Ltd. (SCL), Punjab – a Government of India enterprise – has proposed an IT-based solution for emigration clearance. The proposal envisages establishing IT infrastructure at the Office of Protector-General of Emigrants and offices of the Protectors of Emigrants and providing tamper proof “Smart Cards” to the emigrants. The Smart Cards will have adequate data storage capacity to carry personal information of the emigrants and details regarding employer, visa particulars, Recruiting Agent's details, POE office clearance number, insurance details, blood group/allergies etc. Essential security features will also be built into

the Smart Card so that it is tamper proof and cannot be duplicated. The responsibility of providing insurance covers to emigrants will also be undertaken by the SCL. The proposal is being examined in consultation with the Department of Information Technology, Department of Space, Bureau of Immigration and the Integrated Finance Division.

Taking into account the vulnerability of women and on the recommendation of the National Commission for Women, instructions were issued on 20.11.2003 to all the Protectors of Emigrants for not granting emigration clearance to women below the age of thirty years intending to go to any foreign country for employment as housemaids/domestic workers. In such cases, the employment contract is required to be mandatorily attested by the concerned Indian Mission.”

10. The Committee are happy to note that SCL, Punjab – a Govt. of India Enterprise has developed an IT-based solution for emigration clearance and it is being examined by the Government. The Committee hope that introduction of such programme will go a long way in solving many of the problems related to emigration. The Committee, therefore, strongly desire that the examination of this programme should be expedited and after approval of the same or revised proposal, an early implementation should be ensured. The Committee are, however, concerned about the silence of the Ministry on the issue of controlling/containing fraudulent advertisements being made/published by a large number of Recruiting Agents and the plight of labourer in the light of such advertisements. The Committee, therefore, reiterate that the Ministry should take up the issue of fraudulent advertisements with the concerned authority and explore ways and means to stop the menace.

C. Problems of Overseas Indians

Recommendation No.8

11. The Committee had appreciated the fact that the Overseas Indians were making a substantial contribution to the Indian economy directly and indirectly by way of remittances, which was to the tune of \$ 14494 millions during 2004-2005 (till 31.12.2004). Overseas Indians were facing numerous problems to invest their savings properly in India. The Committee had desired that the Ministry should designate officers in our Missions who can guide and assist Overseas Indians for proper investment in India.

The Committee were happy to note that the Ministry would be taking up certain new schemes during the course of the current year. The schemes on the anvil would include provision of legal and counseling services to NRI workers in the Gulf, advisory/information services for women marrying Overseas Indians (OIs), scholarships for Overseas Indian student, Pilot Project on “ Tracing the Roots”, commemoration of the departure of the first Pravasi, etc. The Committee had felt that those were very important schemes and should be vigorously pursued by the Ministry. Provision of legal and counseling services to NRI workers in the Gulf was particularly important in view of the fact that most of the labourers there are being ill treated, underpaid, subjected to inhuman working conditions, put up with inadequate medical facilities, denied payment of compensation in case of accident/death. Their employers and the recruiting agents were also cheating them. Many were arrested on false chargers/petty offences and were being jailed for more than 3-4 years without valid reasons. The Committee had, therefore, felt that providing necessary legal help to these labourers was extremely important. The Committee had also felt that some orientation or general awareness has needed to be provided to persons going

abroad. They had also desired that the proposed legal and counseling services should be the top priority with the Ministry and a concrete proposal should be worked out in this regard.

On the issue of false/fraudulent marriage between NRI/PIO grooms and Indian women, the Committee had noted with satisfaction that the Ministry is making lot of efforts to address this issue which had now assumed alarming proportions. As an immediate preventive measure, MOIA was planning to bring out an information booklet within three months to create awareness among prospective brides and their families. The Committee had also noted that the NCW, had prepared a draft report on NRI marriage problems and a draft conventions.

The Committee had, therefore, desired that the Ministry should bring out the information booklet within three months as envisaged, and the recommendation/suggestions contained in the draft report prepared by the NCW should also be given due consideration for implementation and given a legal shape. The Committee had further suggested that the Ministry should try and set up an office or appoint some official in the Ministry having familiarity with the legal systems of other countries rather than just restricting themselves to providing advisory/information services to women marrying Overseas Indians-as many of the victims were not aware of the legal processes abroad, which further compounds the problem.

The Committee had also noted that the main concerns of the NRIs in the Gulf included cheaper air-fares by Indian Airlines and Air India on the India-Gulf Sector, identification and negotiation of release of innocent victims from the prisons abroad and their repatriation and bringing of dead bodies in the event of death from the Gulf to India. The Committee had recommended that the Ministry must take up the issue of cheaper airfares with the Ministry of Civil Aviation to explore the possibilities of starting a budget Airline at the earliest. As for

identification and negotiation of release of prisoners and their repatriation was concerned, the committee had felt that the Indian Missions in respective countries had an immense role to play by way of approaching the host Government for seeking consular access to the detainee and ensuring that the prison conditions are satisfactory and the trials proceed satisfactorily. The Committee had also felt that the Missions should attempt to take up cases for reduction of sentence even if the relatives of the detainees are not making an appeal, in certain cases even the relatives are not aware of the arrest.

With regard to bringing dead bodies of Indians who died abroad back to India, the Committee had appreciated the fact that initiative had already been taken to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with some of the Gulf countries particularly Kuwait, which would enable the Indian Mission to formally take up cases with the concerned Departments there. The Committees had recommended that the Government must also seek to enter into MoUs with other countries as well, so that the problems relating to Indian labourers in the Gulf and also at other places could be formally taken up with the concerned Governments. The Ministry in collaboration with the Embassies should play an effective role in this regard.

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

“The Ministry is in the process of bringing out an information booklet that will highlight the steps to be taken by prospective brides and their families to verify the antecedents of the prospective grooms. The draft of the booklet is being circulated to the State Governments for comments and suggestions, which will be discussed at a one-day all-India Seminar organised for the purpose. The Ministry will also launch an awareness campaign. Thus both preventive as well as curative steps are proposed to be taken.

Under 'Tracing the Roots', a pilot project is being developed with the help of the State Governments of Bihar & U.P. One district each has been identified in these States. The pilot scheme envisages that in these two districts, the State Governments would gear up facilities for accessing revenue records relating to births & deaths, land, etc. Once this is done, an agency will be hired to search the records systematically to cull out the particulars of interested overseas Indians from records available with them such as the immigration pass, etc. The details are being finalized and thereafter the scheme will be publicized to the Missions.

The Ministry is also in the process of developing a scholarship scheme for overseas Indian students. The project is proposed to be entrusted to Ed.CIL on a turnkey basis under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Ed.CIL will be the nodal agency for all matters related to placement and award of scholarship to overseas Indian students.

Air India has already started its budget airlines in the Gulf sector called Air India Express. The flights are being augmented.

As far as consular access and other services are concerned, the Missions do not normally take up release of detainees suo moto on account of local stipulations. In the case of some countries, the principle of reciprocity is applied."

13. The Committee appreciate the fresh initiatives taken by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs with an objective to help the Overseas Indians and hope that these initiatives will help in solving some of the problems being faced by them. The Committee, however, note that most of these proposals/initiatives are still at a very initial stage. The Committee desire

that these schemes should be pursued and followed up vigorously so that they take shape and actually benefit the targeted groups. The Committee also feel that the proposal of bringing out an information booklet that will highlight the precautionary steps to be taken by prospective brides and their families to verify the antecedents of the prospective grooms is long overdue and should be brought out immediately.

The Committee in their earlier recommendation had also raised a wide range of issues relating to the problems faced by the Overseas Indians. However, the Committee regret to note that the Ministry has not responded/addressed to some of these issues, as for instance providing legal and counseling services to NRI workers in the Gulf, arrangement of orientation or general awareness programme for persons going abroad for work, entering into MOU with the Gulf and other countries. The Committee, therefore, reiterate that these issues should be addressed and the Committee may be informed about the steps taken in each case.

D. Pravasi Bhartiya Divas

Recommendation No.9

14. The Committee had noted that Pravasi Bhartiya Divas celebrated every year on 9th January aimed at deepening the engagement between India and its Diaspora through focuses activities across sectors, besides strengthening emotional and cultural bonds. The Ministry had informed the Committee that the focus of the 3rd Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD) 2005 was to carry forward the momentum generated by the earlier two Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBDs), and to enable Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs to have had direct interaction with the Diaspora with a view to involving them in India's Socio-economic development and position MOIA as a single point service provider.

The Committee were also informed that Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBDs) has had positive impact on the relationship of the Indian Government with its diaspora. However, if the profile of the participants in the last three Pravasi Bharatiya Divas was anything to go by, then the preponderance of the dollar Diaspora at the conference led to an impression that the Government was keener only to woo them. The Committee had wanted that the focus should not merely be on boosting investment alone but the Government should help the Overseas Indians to maintain their Indian Cultural identity and address their needs in every possible way. It should be the Ministry's endeavour to assist the Overseas Community to maintain and deepen their strong emotional, cultural bonds with India. The Overseas Community should be viewed as more than mere investors being country's important links with the world community.

The Committee had also recommended that the Ministry should spend the budgetary provision made for Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) on durable benefit programmes-not just on programmes which have good media coverage but which actually gave some tangible benefits to the target group. The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas celebration should also be made more theme specific and content specific. Further, the Committee had wanted the Ministry to assess the impact of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and the extent to which it had been able to meet the objectives set therefor. The Committee had felt that it was extremely important since crores of rupees were being spent on that. As such it should not be allowed to go unproductive.

The Committee had also noted that during the third Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, plenary sessions were held with some of the State Government. However, some of the States were not able to participate as they were apparently required to pay an amount of Rs.10 lakh, as a result of which many States decided to keep themselves away from such sessions. The Committee were of the view that this was an exorbitant amount which acted as a deterrent for those States who would have otherwise participated. The Committee had, therefore, felt that

the Ministry must extend invitation to representatives of every State to make their presentation and woo potential investors without having to pay any fee and the Ministry should ensure that the fee in no way acts as a deterrent for participation. The Committee had found that important because the Ministry could not afford to be seen as preventing the States from availing of opportunities for networking with the potential Overseas Investors.

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

“It has been decided to invite all the States to participate in Pravasi Bharatiya Divas’06. Out of those who respond, a few will be selected for the interactive sessions. The others will be allotted space and encouraged to showcase their States by participating in the exhibition.

In order to further enhance the content of the event, it is proposed to organise a larger number of plenary sessions on specific themes and topics where delegates from all countries take part and also hold preparatory conferences for this purpose, wherever possible.”

16. The Committee find that while conveying the decision of the Ministry to invite all the States to participate in Pravasi Bhartiya Divas 2006, the Ministry has not clarified the position about the payment of participation fee by the States participating in plenary sessions. The Committee are of the view that if States are required to pay participation fee of Rs. Ten Lakh again, then the very purpose of inviting States as potential investment destination will be defeated. The Committee, therefore, are of the firm view that the Ministry should not charge any participation fee from the participating States for the plenary sessions. The Ministry should clarify the position and inform the Committee immediately.

The Ministry has not responded to the recommendation of the Committee that the Ministry should spend the budgetary provision made for Pravasi Bhartiya Divas on durable benefit programmes which could give some tangible benefits to the target group. The Committee had also desired that the Ministry should assess the impact and the extent to which PBDs have been able to meet the objectives set. The Committee find this attitude of ignorance shown by the Ministry as highly deplorable. They, therefore, reiterate that the Ministry should take a decision for utilizing the budgetary provisions on durable benefits programmes after making an assessment about the impact of PBDs and apprise the Committee accordingly.

E. Education/Scholarships

Recommendation No.11

17. The Committee had noted that the Government had decided to reserve one-third of the fifteen per cent supernumerary seats across different disciplines in educational institutions for children of NRIs in the Gulf and/South East Asia at fee applicable to resident Indians. The Committee had, however, regretted to note that many institutions were not implementing the decision. They had, therefore, desired that the decision must be strictly implemented. The Committee had further desired that the Ministry must take up the issue with those universities that refused to implement the Government's decision and also follow up on their endeavor to help Overseas boys and girls to get enrolled in Indian Universities. The amount of Rs.1.5 crore earmarked for this scholarship programme should be utilized in such a way that it actually benefits the children of Indian Diaspora in the Gulf and the Ministry should see to it that the 5% seats earmarked for those students are filled and effectively enforced at least from this academic year onwards.

The Committee had further recommended that the Ministry must explore the possibilities of starting off-shore campuses of Indian institutions in countries with large Diaspora population, and must take up the task of getting the education profile of Diaspora students mapped in a time bound manner.

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

“The Government’s decision to reserve one-third of the fifteen percent supernumerary seats in educational institutions (except medical institutes) for children of NRIs in the Gulf and South East Asia at fees applicable to resident Indians is under-implementation. AICTE has issued guidelines to concerned institutions regarding the same.”

19. The Committee regret to note that the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has not properly taken up the matter relating to non-implementation of the decision to reserve one-third of the fifteen per cent supernumerary seats across different disciplines in educational institutions for children of NRIs in the Gulf and South East Asia at fees applicable to resident Indians in several Indian institutions/universities. They have simply conveyed the provisions in this regard. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that the Ministry should take up the case on priority basis with the Institutions who are not implementing the provisions in this regard through AICTE and help the overseas students enrolled in Indian Universities who are not getting such benefits.

The Committee are also surprised to note that the Ministry have not found it necessary to respond to their recommendation of exploring the possibilities of starting offshore campuses of Indian Institutions in countries with large Diaspora population and also getting the education profile of Diaspora students mapped in a time-bound manner. The Committee, strongly criticize this type of approach of the Ministry and desire that the Ministry should take initiatives in this direction and inform the Committee about their time-bound programme prepared in this regard.

CHAPTER-II
OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS, WHICH HAVE BEEN
ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Budgetary Proposals

Recommendation No.1

The Committee observe that the total budgetary allocation of the Ministry has been quadrupled this year i.e. a provision of Rs.35 crores has been provided in BE 2005-2006. During BE 2004-2005, the total budgetary allocation of the Ministry was Rs.7 crores which was subsequently increased to Rs.10 crore at the RE stage. The Ministry has informed the Committee that the Actual Expenditure of the Ministry for the year 2004-2005 is likely to be Rs.6.23 crore, which is 62.30 per cent of the total budgetary allocation. The Ministry cited increase in establishment related expenditure as the reason for increase in the allocation in BE 2005-2006.

The Committee note from the Explanatory Memorandum on the Demand for Grants (2005-2006) of the Ministry that a lump sum provision of Rs 5 crore has been made for new schemes that could be approved and taken up by the Ministry during 2005-2006. In the absence of specific schemes the Committee is not a position to analyse the budgetary provisions. The Committee, therefore, recommend to the Ministry to formulate the schemes with proper guidelines, benchmarks and deliverables for the benefit of Indian diaspora as has been submitted by the Ministry in its reply to the committee.

The Committee further recommend that the Ministry should pay focused attention towards ensuring that there are no unspent provisions in further, as has been the case during 2004-2005-when the unspent provisions amounted to almost 40 percent of its total budgetary provisions.

Reply of the Government

The schemes on the anvil include the Internship Programme for Diaspora Youth, advisory/information services for women marrying Overseas Indians, pilot project on “Tracing the Roots”, scholarships for Overseas Indian Students, provision of legal/counseling services to NRI workers in the Gulf, commemoration of the departure of first Pravasi etc. The Ministry also intends to support innovative schemes of State Governments to upgrade the skills of workers, rehabilitate returning workers, etc. These schemes would be finalized with appropriate guidelines and taken up for implementation during the coming years.

The Ministry will make earnest efforts to ensure that the funds allotted in the budget are spent properly and judiciously.

[No. H11013/2/2005-DSK dated 5th September, 2005]

Advertising & Publicity

Recommendation No.3

The Committee note that a provision of Rs.1.5 crore has been made in BE 2005-2006 under the Head ‘Advertising & Publicity’. A provision of Rs.0.10 crore was made under the same Head in 2004-2005. However, the Committee was informed that there were no expenditure on Advertising & Publicity during 2004-2005. The Committee expresses their concern about the non-utilization of funds under this Head and hope that sincere efforts will be made during the current year on the Advertising & Publicity related activities.

The Committee are of the view that given the fact the target group of the Ministry being very specific i.e. the ‘Overseas Indians’ – and the penetration of Internet being very high, the Ministry should undertake publicity and advertisement activities mainly through the Internet as far as possible. This, in

turn, will substantially reduce the expenditure to be incurred on publicity efforts. To this end, the Committee recommends that the Ministry must maintain a detailed database of the entire Indian Diaspora and their Associations and disseminate information to them in a cost effective way.

The Committee are also of the view that Advertising and Publicity efforts should be more focused and in particular undertaken during the events where the NRIs/PIOs participate in large numbers. NRIs and their Associations organize their events on their own such as TANA (Telugu Association of North America), Maharastrians Organisation, Gujaratis Organisation etc. The Ministry can get a very captive audience during such events by putting in least efforts whereas the results achieved thereby can be manifold. The officials of the Indian Embassies should also oblige and facilitate such events and the Ministry must, on its part, try to reach out to them during such events. Similarly at the cultural events like film shows and corporate shows that go out from India attract vast audience of Indian Diaspora. The Ministry can place its cell in position at such events which can facilitate dissemination of the required information to the Overseas Indians.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry is making sincere efforts to utilize the budgetary funds for Advertising and Publicity. It proposes to bring out booklets on matters of interest to Overseas Indians such as investment opportunities, facilities for students in professional institutions, etc. The booklet on Emigration will be revised soon to make it more informative and user-friendly.

The Website of the Ministry is in final stage of development and will be launched in September. Once the Website goes live, direct interaction through the Internet with the Indian Diaspora will be facilitated.

The suggestions given by the Standing Committee are well taken and will be kept in mind while devising the future advertising and publicity strategies.

[No. H11013/2/2005-DSK dated 5th September, 2005]

Contribution/Investment by Overseas Indian

RecommendationNo.5

The Committee note that the Ministry want to position itself as a service provider which can coordinate and liaise on behalf of Overseas Indians with other Ministries and the Government of India. The Committee, however, feel that the Ministry should not end up being merely coordinating Ministry providing only certain services to the Overseas Indians (OIs). Rather, in the considered opinion of the Committee the role of the Ministry essentially involves motivating Overseas Indians to reach out to India by investing in various sectors. The Ministry should take the initiative to see how best to provide necessary information to these people whereby they are able to contribute in the areas/sectors of their choice. The Committee strongly feel that presently the Overseas Indians are so far able to invest only a lower proportion of their resources in India as compared to the Overseas Chinese who have been able to invest in China in a big way. The effort, therefore, of the Ministry should be directed towards replicating some of the success of the Chinese Diaspora, which have contributed immensely to China's economy. For this, the Committee potential Overseas investors to invest in India and more importantly-by offering them good reasons to do so.

The Committee are also of the view that the Ministry should either allow Overseas Indians to make direct investment in India of their own choice in whichever field of activity they want, or the Ministry could take the initiative in due consultation with the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of External Affairs and the Planning Commission and float a bond or a fund as such, for the infrastructure development and other high priority areas/sectors. Those Overseas Indians who do not have direct contact to invest in private industry should be persuaded or motivated to contribute to this general fund, which may be utilized for infrastructure development in the country. For this kind of direct and indirect

investment, the Ministry could provide effective and reliable arrangements in place. The Committee suggest that this process could be started forthwith in at least a few countries, where there're substantial numbers of Indians. The Ministry should see that its representative is stationed in such countries at the earliest possible, so that the Overseas Indians are able to know that there is someone whom they could try and sort out their problems. Such representative in turn should motivate and guide the Overseas Indians as to where and how they could invest.

The Committee also note that the Ministry intend to set up an Investment Promotion unit of Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs with a partner and promote state specific investments campaigns abroad. The Committee recommend that the Ministry must pursue the proposals in right earnest. Similarly, the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 1976 should be amended to facilitate Overseas donors in are as such as education, health, and philanthropy.

Reply of the Government

The point about the Ministry being a facilitator for investment by overseas Indians was made in the light of the fact that approvals for such investments would either be granted by RBI under the automatic route or by the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB), of which the Ministry is now a member.

Various suggestions of the Committee on how the Ministry could pro-actively encourage greater investments by overseas Indians would be given the fullest consideration in drawing up the Ministry's strategy and plan of action in this regard.

The observations of the Committee about the Chinese Diaspora are valid. The Ministry plans to commission an authoritative study of the Chinese Diaspora,

its development and involvement in investment. The terms of references of the study are being worked out.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is in the process of finalising a new Act to manage and regulate foreign contributions. The Ministry has made several suggestions with a view to liberalise the process of granting approvals for cases involving contributions by overseas Indians. The matter is before a Group of Ministers.

[No. H11013/2/2005-DSK dated 5th September, 2005]

Overseas Indian Citizenship (OIC)

Recommendation No.6

On the issue of Overseas Indian Citizenship (OIC), the Committee note that Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has circulated a draft Cabinet note containing proposals to amend the Citizenship Act, 1955, and Ministry of Home Affairs is awaiting clearance of the Ministry of Law & Justice to bring the matter before the Cabinet. The Committee also note that MHA has further consulted the Ministries and agencies concerned and finalized the simplified application form/procedures. Revised Rules incorporating these are again being cleared by Ministry of Law & Justice and could be notified shortly. Pending this, acceptance of applications and registration of OIC has been put on hold. The process would get restarted once the new rules are notified and put on its Website.

The Overseas Indian Citizenship issue being a credible and an emotional issue, the Committee are of the view that it should be addressed urgently with all the seriousness it deserves. The proposal to amend the citizenship Act 1955 should be speeded up by getting clearance of the Ministry of Law & Justice so that the matter is brought before the Cabinet with out any further delay to this effect. The Committee desire that the process should be simplified and registration process be started at least in respect of the 16 countries where it has already been notified by June 2005. The Committee therefore recommend that

the Ministry should enlarge the scope beyond these 16 countries and take necessary steps towards amending the Citizenship Act and bringing it before Parliament as early as possible. Also the revised rules should be notified immediately and put on the Website of the Ministry within the next three months.

The Committee appreciate the intention of the Ministry to offer benefits of the voting rights of Overseas Indian Community and recommend that the Ministry must codify the benefits that would accrue to Overseas Citizens. The Committee want that the Ministry must seriously consider and explore the feasibility of extending benefits such as voting rights to Overseas Citizens as India is one of the few democracies that denies the voting rights to its own expatriate citizens. The Committee feel that a Government that seek the allegiance, support and money of its Diaspora should also be willing to be accountable to it.

The Committee also desire that the question of physical character of the dual citizenship document must also be settled soon. The Committee are of the view that, a smart card is the most forward looking one, though it would mean working out the technical specifications, identifying the necessary hardware and ensuring of machine readability at the entry and exit points. However, for now, the Government should settle for a paper document and switch over to the smart card option, after the necessary infrastructure is ready with them in due course of time.

Reply of the Government

In the recent Monsoon session, Parliament has passed the Bill to further amend the Citizenship Act, 1955 to enable Overseas Indian Citizenship (OIC) being granted to all persons of Indian Origin (who were citizens of India or eligible to become citizens of India on 26 January 1950 and are citizens of the countries (except Pakistan and Bangladesh) which allow dual citizenship. As per the Act and the Rules framed thereunder, an OIC Card and a life long visa on

their passports will be given to OICs. The scheme is expected to be operational in about two months.

Separately, the Ministry is taking up with the Ministry of Law & Justice the proposal to grant voting rights to NRIs.

[No. H11013/2/2005-DSK dated 5th September, 2005]

Resource tapping

Recommendation No.12

The Committee are aware that the Ministry is specially seeking interaction with and tapping the expertise of Overseas Indians in fields such as Education, Health, Science & Technology, Culture, Tourism, Youth Affairs, etc.

The Committee desire that sincere efforts should be made to tap the expertise of Overseas Indians in these fields and the efforts should be focused to understand as to how India can gain from their expertise. The Ministry should also seek to collaborate with scientists from NASA in the US, as also experts in fields like Meteorology from countries with excellent disaster management systems. Further, the Committee feel that Science & Technology is a productive area, where scientific talent and technological skills of Overseas Indians could join up in collaborative research ventures in India. In other vital areas such as knowledge – based technologies, IT and biotechnology, the expertise of the Overseas Indians can be quite valuable in achieving the goal of making India a knowledge super power. The Committee also recommend that the procedures guiding Medical Council of India (MCI) which come in the way for entry of Overseas Medical professionals to come and work in India, be simplified. The Committee are certain that, this in turn, could offer a key to resolving the socio-economic problems of poverty and development of the country. The Committee

would, therefore, advise the Ministry to approach Overseas Indian experts with open mind and be receptive to their creative thinking.

Reply of the Government

The matter allowing PIO doctors to practice in India has already been taken up with Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. The Citizenship Act, 1955 as recently amended by Parliament empowers the Ministry to notify, under Sec. 7 (B), benefits to be enjoyed by Overseas Citizens of India, notwithstanding any provision in any other Act. The Ministry proposes such notifications, which, inter alia, will allow PIO doctors to take the Foreign Medical Graduate Examination so as to practice in India. Similar will be the case with other professionals such as architects, nurses, chartered accountants etc.

[No. H11013/2/2005-DSK dated 5th September, 2005]

Proposed Agenda

Recommendation No.13

The Committee note that the Ministry has come out with an agenda having 32 specific items which are proposed to be taken up in the coming year. The proposed agenda has been classified into four broad functional areas, which includes services to Diaspora, Emigration, Social service and investment/financial/economic services. The Committee appreciates the proposals of the Ministry and are convinced that these services, if delivered, would definitely go a long way in establishing stronger emotional and economic bonds with our Diaspora. The Committees recommend that the proposed agenda be discussed with the stakeholders immediately and finalized for implementation during the current year itself. The Committee would also like to suggest the Ministry to pursue its agenda vigorously and in a focused manner

and inform the Committee periodically about the steps taken/bottlenecks faced/progress made in the direction of realizing the 32 items contained in the agenda.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry would pursue the various items included in the agenda and try and achieve tangible progress within the current financial year.

[No. H11013/2/2005-DSK dated 5th September, 2005]

CHAPTER-III**OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE
COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE
GOVERNMENT REPLIES****Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra****Recommendation No.10**

With regard to the construction of Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra, the Committee note that Ministry of Urban Development has confirmed the allotment of plots No. 15A & 15B in Chanakyapuri in favour of Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs for construction of Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra. Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has since deposited a sum of Rs.31.83 lakh in favour of DL & DO of Ministry of Urban Development towards the premium and other charges in respect of the plots. The Committee also note that Ministry of Urban Development also agreed to earmark another Plot No. 15D measuring 3024 sq. for Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra, which is being pursued with MUD.

The committee, however, regret to note that the plots are yet to be handed over to MOIA and Plot No. 15 D is also yet to be allotted to MOIA. The Committee are of the view that, following the confirmation by MUD on the allotment of Plot 15A & B to MOIA there should not have been any difficulties in handing over of the plots by the Ministry of External Affairs.

Accordingly, the Committee would recommend that the Ministry should immediately take possession of the plots from MEA and should vigorously pursue with Ministry of Urban Development to get Plot No.15D allotted in its favour. The Ministry should also get Cabinet approval for the institutional/construction format of the Kendra. The amount of Rs.3 crore earmarked in BE 2005-2006 towards

the proposed Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra should be utilized for payment of premium for Plot No. 15D.

The Committee desire that all formalities pertaining to possession of all the land required for construction of Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra should be completed within a time frame, and the whole process of designs, the institutional format, obtaining necessary clearance of statutory authorities, inviting bids and awarding of contract for the building should be completed by the end of 2005. The Committee feel that this is important so as to avoid time and cost overruns, and the Ministry should ensure that the Kendra becomes functional within the time limit set by them i.e. within 3-4 years. In the meantime, the possibility of alternative accommodation including taking possession of the space in Akbar Bhavan to be vacated by FSI may be explored. The Committee further desire that they may be apprised from time to time about the progress made in this regard.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry is vigorously pursuing with Ministry of Urban Development to get Plot No.15D allotted in its favour. Only with the allocation of this plot, will the uncertainty over the final shape of the available land will come to an end. Once the plots are allotted, further action such as taking physical possession, obtaining necessary clearance of statutory authorities, drawing up designs, inviting bids and awarding of contract for the building will be taken in a time bound manner.

[No. H11013/2/2005-DSK dated 5th September, 2005]

CHAPTER-IV

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

Secretariat /Work Allocation

Recommendation No.2

The Committee note that almost a year after the creation of the Ministry, a full complement of Staff and a full-fledged secretariat is yet to be put in place. Creation of posts in the Ministry should be completed within three months as has been assured by the Secretary, Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs during the course of evidence. There is an urgent need to speed up creation of posts particularly in the wake of the new work allocation to the Ministry.

The Overseas Indians have great expectations after the creation of an independent Ministry dealing with the affairs concerning them. The Ministry must, therefore, make all efforts to interact with the Overseas Indian Community and address their concerns which should properly reflect in the vision and objectives of the Ministry. The Committee feel that this will be possible only when a full complement of staff to work in the Ministry is put in place.

Reply of the Government

With the approval of Cabinet, 63 posts have already been created for the Secretariat of MOIA. Action has been initiated to fill these posts. Proposals to create certain additional posts are under the consideration of the Committee of Secretaries.

[No. H11013/2/2005-DSK dated 5th September, 2005]

Recruiting Agents/Registration Certificates/Emigration

Recommendation No.7

The Committee learn that a large number of Recruiting Agents publish attractive advertisements stating that they would provide suitable employment to labourers abroad particularly in the Gulf countries and extract huge sums of money from the aspiring job seekers. After taking them to the countries of their employment, the problem of such poor job seekers starts from the airport itself where it is found that most of them have bogus entries. Further, these labourers are not paid their salary as per the promises made in the advertisements and they are forced to work in most unhygienic and pathetic living conditions. Some of them are even jailed on trumped up charges/petty offences for years together. The Committee are concerned about the plight of these labourers and feel that the issue needs to be addressed in a focused manner. The Committee recommend that the Ministry should take up the issue of fraudulent advertisements. The Ministry should also take up cases involving breach of contract entered into between the employer and employees. To deal with the cases involving woman employees who constitute the vulnerable section of the society, woman officers should be designated in the outposts as far as possible.

The Committee also desire that the Ministry's proposal to streamline emigration by re-engineering the whole process, introducing IT based solutions, bringing in smart cards etc. should be pursued with all the seriousness it deserves.

Reply of the Government

Semiconductor Complex Ltd. (SCL), Punjab – a Government of India enterprise – has proposed an IT-based solution for emigration clearance. The proposal envisages establishing IT infrastructure at the Office of Protector-General of Emigrants and offices of the Protectors of Emigrants and providing

tamper proof “Smart Cards” to the emigrants. The Smart Cards will have adequate data storage capacity to carry personal information of the emigrants and details regarding employer, visa particulars, Recruiting Agent’s details, POE office clearance number, insurance details, blood group/allergies etc. Essential security features will also be built into the Smart Card so that it is tamper proof and cannot be duplicated. The responsibility of providing insurance covers to emigrants will also be undertaken by the SCL. The proposal is being examined in consultation with the Department of Information Technology, Department of Space, Bureau of Immigration and the Integrated Finance Division.

Taking into account the vulnerability of women and on their commendation of the National Commission for Women, instructions were issued on 20.11.2003 to all the Protectors of Emigrants for not granting emigration clearance to women below the age of thirty years intending to go to any foreign country for employment as housemaids/domestic workers. In such cases, the employment contract is required to be mandatorily attested by the concerned Indian Mission.

[No. H11013/2/2005-DSK dated 5th September, 2005]

Problems of Overseas Indians

Recommendation No.8

The Committee appreciate that the Overseas Indians make a substantial contribution to the Indian economy directly and indirectly by way of remittances, which was to the tune of \$ 14494 millions during 2004-2005 (till 31.12.2004). Overseas Indians are facing numerous problems to invest their savings properly in India. The Ministry should designate officers in our Missions who can guide and assist Overseas Indians for proper investment in India.

The Committee are happy to note that the Ministry will be taking up certain new schemes during the course of the current year. The schemes on the anvil include provision of legal and counseling services to NRI workers in the Gulf,

advisory/information services for women marrying Overseas Indians (OIs), scholarships for Overseas Indian student, Pilot Project on “ Tracing the Roots”, commemoration of the departure of the first Pravasi, etc. The Committee feel that these are very important schemes and should be vigorously pursued by the Ministry. Provision of legal and counseling services to NRI workers in the Gulf is particularly important in view of the fact that most of the labourers there are being ill treated, underpaid, subjected to inhuman working conditions, put up with inadequate medical facilities, denied payment of compensation in case of accident/death. Their employers and the recruiting agents are also cheating them. Many are arrested on false chargers/petty offences and are being jailed for more than 3-4 years without valid reasons. The Committee, therefore, feel that providing necessary legal help to these labourers is extremely important. The Committee also feel that some orientation or general awareness needs to be provide to persons going abroad. They also desire that the proposed legal and counseling services should be the top priority with the Ministry and a concrete proposal should be worked out in this regard.

On the issue of false/fraudulent marriage between NRI/PIO grooms and Indian women, the Committee note with satisfaction that the Ministry is making lot of efforts to address this issue which has now assumed alarming proportions. As an immediate preventive measure, MOIA is planning to bring out an information booklet within three months to create awareness among prospective brides and their families. The Committee also note that the NCW, has prepared a draft report on NRI marriage problems and a draft conventions.

The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should bring out the information booklet within three months as envisaged, and the recommendation/suggestions contained in the draft report prepared by the NCW should also be given due consideration for implementation and given a legal shape. The Committee further suggest that the Ministry should try and set up an office or appoint some official in the Ministry who is familiar with the legal systems of other countries rather than just restricting themselves to providing advisory/information services to women marrying Overseas Indians-as many of

the victims are not aware of the legal processes abroad, which further compounds the problem.

The Committee also note that the main concerns of the NRIs in the Gulf include cheaper airfares by Indian Airlines and Air India on the India-Gulf Sector, identification and negotiation of release of innocent victims from the prisons abroad and their repatriation and bringing of dead bodies in the event of death from the Gulf to India. The Committee recommend that the Ministry must take up the issue of cheaper airfares with the Ministry of Civil Aviation to explore the possibilities of starting a budget Airline at the earliest. As for identification and negotiation of release of prisoners and their repatriation is concerned, the committee feel that the Indian Missions in respective countries have an immense role to play by way of approaching the host Government for seeking consular access to the detainee and ensuring that the prison conditions are satisfactory and the trials proceed satisfactorily. The Committee also feel that the Missions should attempt to take up cases for reduction of sentence even if the relatives of the detainees are not making an appeal, in certain cases even the relatives are not aware of the arrest.

With regard to bringing dead bodies of Indians who die abroad back to India, the Committee appreciate that initiative have already been taken to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with some of the Gulf countries particularly Kuwait, which will enable the Indian Mission to formally take up cases with the concerned Departments there. The committees recommend that the Government must also seek to enter into MoUs with other countries as well, so that the problems relating to Indian labourers in the Gulf and also at other places can be formally taken up with the concerned Governments. The Ministry in collaboration with the Embassies should play an effective role in this regard.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry is in the process of bringing out an information booklet that will highlight the steps to be taken by prospective brides and their families to verify the antecedents of the prospective grooms. The draft of the booklet is

being circulated to the State Governments for comments and suggestions, which will be discussed at a one-day all-India Seminar organised for the purpose. The Ministry will also launch an awareness campaign. Thus both preventive as well as curative steps are proposed to be taken.

Under 'Tracing the Roots', a pilot project is being developed with the help of the State Governments of Bihar & U.P. One district each has been identified in these States. The pilot scheme envisages that in these two districts, the State Governments would gear up facilities for accessing revenue records relating to births & deaths, land, etc. Once this is done, an agency will be hired to search the records systematically to cull out the particulars of interested overseas Indians from records available with them such as the immigration pass, etc. The details are being finalized and thereafter the scheme will be publicized to the Missions.

The Ministry is also in the process of developing a scholarship scheme for overseas Indian students. The project is proposed to be entrusted to Ed.CIL on a turnkey basis under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Ed.CIL will be the nodal agency for all matters related to placement and award of scholarship to overseas Indian students.

Air India has already started its budget airlines in the Gulf sector called Air India Express. The flights are being augmented.

As far as consular access and other services are concerned, the Missions do not normally take up release of detainees suo moto on account of local stipulations. In the case of some countries, the principle of reciprocity is applied.

[No. H11013/2/2005-DSK dated 5th September, 2005]

Pravasi Bhartiya Divas

Recommendation No.9

The Committee note that Pravasi Bhartiya Divas celebrated every year on 9th January aims at deepening the engagement between India and its Diaspora through focuses activities across sectors, besides strengthening emotional and cultural bonds. The Ministry informed the Committee that the focus of the 3rd Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD) 2005 was to carry forward the momentum generated by the earlier two Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBDs), and to enable Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs to have direct interaction with the Diaspora with a view to involving them in India's Socio-economic development and position MOIA as a single point service provider.

The Committee were also informed that Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBDs) has had positive impact on the relationship of the Indian Government with its diaspora. However, if the profile of the participants in the last three Pravasi Bharatiya Divas was anything to go by, then the preponderance of the dollar Diaspora at the dollar Diaspora at the conference led to an impression that the Government was keener only to woo them. The Committee want that the focus should not merely be on boosting investment alone but the Government should help the Overseas Indians to maintain their Indian Cultural identity and address their needs in every possible way. It should be the Ministry's endeavour to assist the Overseas Community to maintain and deepen their strong emotional, cultural bonds with India. The Overseas Community should be viewed as more than mere investors. They are the country's important links with the world community.

The Committee also recommend that the Ministry should spend the budgetary provision made for Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) on durable benefit programmes-not just on programmes which have good media coverage but which actually give some tangible benefits to the target group. The Pravasi

Bharatiya Divas celebration should also be made more theme specific and content specific. Further, the Committee would want the Ministry to assess the impact of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and the extent to which it has been able to meet the objectives set therefore. This is extremely important since crores of rupees are being spent on it. As such it should not be allowed to go unproductive.

The Committee also note that during the third Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, plenary sessions were held with some of the State Government. However, some of the States could not participate as they were apparently required to pay an amount of Rs.10 lakh, as a result of which many States decided to keep themselves away from such sessions. The Committee are of the view that this is an exorbitant amount which acts as a deterrent for those States who would have otherwise participated. The Committee, therefore, feel that the Ministry must extend invitation to representatives of every States to make their presentation and woo potential investors without having to pay any fee and the Ministry should ensure that the fee in no way acts as a deterrent for participation. This is important because the Ministry cannot afford to be seen as preventing the States from availing of opportunities for networking with the potential Overseas Investors.

Reply of the Government

It has been decided to invite all the States to participate in Pravasi Bharatiya Divas'06. Out of those who respond, a few will be selected for the interactive sessions. The others will be allotted space and encouraged to showcase their States by participating in the exhibition.

In order to further enhance the content of the event, it is proposed to organise a larger number of plenary sessions on specific themes and topics where delegates from all countries take part and also hold preparatory conferences for this purpose, wherever possible.

[No. H11013/2/2005-DSK dated 5th September, 2005]

Education/Scholarships

Recommendation No.11

The Committee note that the Government have decided to reserve one-third of the fifteen per cent supernumerary seats across different disciplines in educational institutions for children of NRIs in the Gulf and/South East Asia at fee applicable to resident Indians. The Committee, however, regret to note that many institutions were not implementing the decision. They, therefore, desire that the decision must be strictly implement. The Committee further desire that the Ministry must take up the issue with those universities that refused to implement the Government's decision and also follow up on their endeavor to help Overseas boys and girls to get enrolled in Indian Universities. The amount of Rs.1.5 crore earmarked for this scholarship programme should be utilized in such a way that it actually benefits the children of Indian Diaspora in the Gulf and the Ministry should see to it that the 5% seats earmarked for those students are filled and effectively enforced at least from this academic year onwards.

The Committee further recommend that the Ministry must explore the possibilities of starting off-shore campuses of Indian institutions in countries with large Diaspora population, and must take up the tsk of getting the education profile of Diaspora students mapped in a time bound manner.

Reply of the Government

The Government's decision to reserve one-third of the fifteen percent supernumerary seats in educational institutions (except medical institutes) for children of NRIs in the Gulf and South East Asia at fees applicable to resident Indians is under implementation. AICTE has issued guidelines to concerned institutions regarding the same.

[No. H11013/2/2005-DSK dated 5th September, 2005]

CHAPTER-V

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

Overseas Post

Recommendation No.4

The Committee note that the Ministry intends to create posts overseas, where the staff would be positioned who would be able to directly interact with the Overseas Indian Community. The Committee also note that the staff, would work under the administrative control of Indian Ambassadors and High Commissioners, but functionally, in terms of content of their work, they would report to the Ministry. The Ministry has given itself a time frame of six months for the creation of Posts abroad.

The Committee appreciates the intention of the Ministry to create Posts abroad as this would allow them to directly interact with Overseas Indians and provide guidance and counseling to them-in coordination with the work being done by the Missions. However, the Committee would desire that the Ministry should create Overseas Posts initially in those countries only where there are substantial numbers of Indian Diaspora and in those countries from where the Diaspora population are contributing heavily to India as remittances. The Committee feel that this was a much-felt need to help the Overseas Indians, as there have not so far been any reciprocal gesture from the Government side. There is a real need to convince them that India is all for them. The Committee further suggest that such Overseas Posts should be managed by persons who are well versed in economics, investments and law. The Committee desire that the Out Posts should be created within the time frame of next six months set out by the Ministry in this regard.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Finance have agreed in principle for the creation of 60 overseas posts under MOIA. Details of the break up of these posts between India- and local-based posts, encadring the India-based posts and the phasing of the creation of posts are being worked out to be placed before the Committee of Secretaries.

Every effort would be made to create the posts within a time frame of six months.

[No. H11013/2/2005-DSK dated 5th September, 2005]

NEW DELHI;

December, 2005/Agrahayana, 1927 (Saka)

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

4. After that, the Committee took up for consideration the draft 9th Action Taken Report on the recommendations contained in the 6th Report (14th Lok Sabha) of the Committee on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs for the year 2005-2006. The Chairman invited the Members to offer their suggestions, if any, for incorporation in the draft Report. Members did not suggest any point.
5. The Committee desired that modifications suggested by the Members be suitably incorporated in the body of the Report.
6. The Committee then adopted the draft Action Taken Reports and authorized the Chairman to finalise the Action Taken Reports and present the same to Parliament.

The Committee then adjourned.

Appendix II*(Vide Introduction of Report)***ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT ON THE SIXTH
REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(14TH LOK SABHA)**

I.	Total Number of Recommendations	13
II.	Observations/Recommendations, which have been accepted by the Government.	
	Nos. 1, 3, 5, 6, 12 and 13	
	Total	06
	Percentage	46.16%
III.	Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government replies.	
	No. 10	
	Total	01
	Percentage	7.69%
IV.	Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration.	
	Nos. 2, 7, 8, 9 and 11	
	Total	05
	Percentage	38.46%
V.	Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited.	
	Nos. 4	
	Total	01
	Percentage	7.69%