

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:582

ANSWERED ON:26.11.2012

BAN ON TRIALS OF GM CROPS

Das Gupta Shri Gurudas;Lingam Shri P.

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a Technical Experts Committee (TEC) appointed by the Supreme Court of India has recommended a ban on all field trials of Genetically Modified (GM) crops in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the reaction of the Government thereto; and
- (d) the steps taken/being taken by the Government in this regard ?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN)

(a) & (b) A Technical Expert Committee (TEC) was constituted vide Hon'ble Supreme Court Order dated 10.5.2012 in Writ Petition (Civil) No. 260/2005 in the matter of Aruna Rodrigues & Others vs Union of India & Others to address issues related to genetically modified (GM) crop field trials. The TEC has submitted its interim report on 9.10.2012. TEC has recommended (i) 10-year moratorium on field trials of Bt food crops used for human consumption on the basis of review of Bt cotton and Bt brinjal biosafety data; (ii) Ban on field trials of herbicide tolerant (HT) crops till an independent committee of experts has examined the potential impact of the HT technology including livelihood issues; and (iii) Ban on GM crop field trials in the centers of origin and centers of diversity. The other key recommendations of the TEC include need assessment, strengthening and restructuring of the current regulatory system, reassessment of the biosafety data on Bt cotton and other data that is generated by all field trials; ensuring there is no conflict of interest; a ban on outsourcing or subcontracting field trials; designation of sites for field trials, and requirement of preliminary bio-safety tests etc; as a prerequisite to all GM crop field trials.

(c) & (d) The Union of India is of the view that the interim report is scientifically flawed; does not address the terms of reference (TOR) and has not only exceeded the mandate assigned to TEC but are also outside the scope of the Writ Petition itself and therefore cannot be accepted. A Joint Affidavit in this regard has been filed by the Agriculture Ministry on behalf of Union of India. The Hon'ble Supreme Court vide Order dated 9.11.2012 has directed the TEC to consider the objections filed by all respondents, interested parties and the Union of India and submit its report within six weeks. The matter is subjudice.

Further steps will be taken after the final decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court.