

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:588
ANSWERED ON:26.11.2012
WESTERN GHATS ECOLOGY AUTHORITY
Antony Shri Anto;Panda Shri Baijayant

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

- (a) whether the Government has received any proposal to set up Western Ghats & Ecology Authority (WGEA) in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, and the response of the Government thereto;
- (c) whether the Government has received complaints from any State Government, including Kerala, regarding the setting up of WGEA;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

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

(a) (b) (c) (d) & (e) The Ministry of Environment & Forests had constituted the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) under the Chairmanship of Prof Madhav Gadgil on 4th March 2010 to, inter alia, (i) demarcate ecologically sensitive areas in Western Ghats, (ii) recommend measures for management of these ecologically sensitive areas, (iii) recommend measures for preservation, conservation and rejuvenation of this environmentally sensitive and ecologically significant region and (iv) recommend modalities for the establishment Western Ghats Ecology Authority under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. The Panel has since submitted its report to the Ministry and the Ministry has initiated further consultations on the same.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests initiated a formal consultative process with the concerned State Governments and Central Ministries by seeking their comments/views on the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) report. In response to that detailed comments have been received from State Governments of Kerala, Goa and Maharashtra but not from the three other states concerned. All states who replied objected strongly to the Madhav Gadgil Report on the ground that it will affect development in the states.

The Ministry has since constituted a High Level Working Group under the Chairmanship of Dr. K Kasturirangan, Member, Planning Commission vide office order dated 17.8.2012 to inter alia examine the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel Report in a holistic and multidisciplinary fashion keeping in view the comments received from the concerned State Governments/Central Ministries/Stakeholders and other related important aspects such as preservation of precious biodiversity, needs and aspirations of the local and indigenous people, sustainable development and environmental integrity of the region, climate change and constitutional implications of centre-state relations and to recommend further course of action to the Government with respect to the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel Report.