

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1456
ANSWERED ON:03.12.2012
STATUS OF `WORLD HERITAGE`
Raghavendra Shri B. Y.

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

- (a) whether the Western Ghats sites are declared as `World Heritage` in the country;
- (b) if so, whether some States have raised objections in this regard;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

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

(a) Yes, Sir. The World Heritage Committee has inscribed the Western Ghats on the World Heritage List during July, 2012. 39 Sites in the Western Ghats situated in the States of Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra have been included in the UNESCO World Heritage List the details of which are at Annexure – I.

(b) & (c) The Government of Karnataka had requested this Ministry for deletion of Pushpagiri Wildlife Sanctuary, Brahmagiri Wildlife Sanctuary, Talacauvery Wildlife Sanctuary, Padinalknad Reserve Forests, Kudremukh National Park, Someshwara Wildlife Sanctuary, Someshwara Reserve Forests Agumbe Reserve Forests and Balahalli Reserve forests from the list of 'World Heritage Sites', and for withdrawing the nomination submitted to UNESCO in respect of these sites. In its response, the Government of India has clarified to the Government of Karnataka that the State Government of Karnataka was kept informed at each stage, viz., identification of the 39 sites and submission of the proposal to UNESCO. It has further been clarified to the State Government that the designation of Western Ghats sites of Karnataka as World Heritage Site is to give due recognition to the efforts of the local communities and the State Government of Karnataka in protecting and saving these pristine landscapes, and is in no way intended or expected to affect the implementation of our State policies or legislative framework. The UNESCO- World Heritage Convention gives due respect to the sovereignty of the State on whose territory the heritage site is situated, without prejudicing the property rights determined by the respective national legislations. The State Government has also been assured that the proposed sites will receive the co-operation of the international community, particularly in respect of financial, scientific and technical support.

(d) This Ministry has constituted 'Western Ghats Natural Heritage Management Committee' for effective conservation, protection and management of natural heritage sites of Western Ghats and also constituted 'High Level Working Group' to study the preservation of the ecology, environmental integrity and holistic development of the Western Ghats in view of their rich and unique biodiversity and also implication of recognition of Western Ghats in the UNESCO Heritage list.