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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(2008-2009)**

FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA

**MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(DEPARTMENT OF LAND RESOURCES)**

**DEMANDS FOR GRANTS
(2008-2009)**

*[Action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained
in the Thirty-sixth Report of the Standing Committee on
Rural Development (Fourteenth Lok Sabha)]*

FORTY-SECOND REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

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(2008-2009)

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Presented to Lok Sabha on 19.12.2008

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 19.12.2008



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

December, 2008/Agrahayana, 1930 (Saka)

C.R.D. No. 048

Price : Rs. 58.00

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Published under Rule 382 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha (Twelfth Edition) and printed by Jainco Art India, New Delhi-110 005.

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COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
RURAL DEVELOPMENT (2008-2009)

Shri Kalyan Singh — *Chairman*

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5. Vacant*
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21. Vacant

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4. Shri A.K. Shah — *Deputy Secretary-II*

*Vacancy caused due to the resignation given by Shri George Fernandes, MP from the membership of Lok Sabha and accepted by the Hon'ble Speaker *w.e.f.* 11 November, 2008 *vide* Bulletin Part-II, Para No. 6205 dated 11 November, 2008.

\$Vacancy caused due to change of nomination of Shri Dharmendra Yadav, MP, Lok Sabha by Hon'ble Speaker from Standing Committee on Rural Development to Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law & Justice *w.e.f.* 5 December, 2008 *vide* Bulletin Part-II, Para No. 6267, dated 5 December, 2008.

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Rural Development (2008-2009) having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present the Forty-second Report on the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Thirty-sixth Report of the Standing Committee on Rural Development (2007-08) on Demands for Grants (2008-2009) of the Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development).

2. The Thirty-sixth Report was presented to Lok Sabha on 17 April, 2008. The replies of the Government to all the recommendations contained in the Report were received on 26 August, 2008.

3. The replies of the Government were examined and the Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their sitting held on 15 December, 2008.

4. An analysis of the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Thirty-sixth Report of the Committee is given in Appendix-II.

NEW DELHI;
15 December, 2008

24 Agrahayana, 1930 (Saka)

KALYAN SINGH,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on
Rural Development.

CHAPTER I

REPORT

This Report of the Committee on Rural Development (2008-09) deals with the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in their Thirty-sixth Report on Demands for Grants (2008-09) of the Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development) which was presented to Lok Sabha on 17 April, 2008.

2. Action taken replies have been received from the Government in respect of all the 24 recommendations which have been categorised as follows:

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| (i) Chapter II | Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government:

Para Nos.: 2.5, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.15, 3.16, 3.25, 3.26, 3.27, 3.34, 3.39, 3.45, 3.52, 3.66, 3.69 and 3.74 |
| (ii) Chapter III | Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's replies:

Para No.: Nil |
| (iii) Chapter IV | Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee:

Para Nos.: 3.40, 3.41, 3.55, 3.61 and 3.75 |
| (iv) Chapter V | Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited:

Para Nos.: 3.63, 3.68 and 3.76 |

3. The Committee would like the Department to expedite the proposed action and furnish final replies in respect of Recommendation Nos. 3.63, 3.68 and 3.76, which have been categorized under interim category, within three months of the presentation of the Report.

4. The Committee will now deal with action taken by the Government on some of these recommendations in the succeeding paragraphs.

A. Underspending of Annual Plan allocation for the year 2007-2008

Recommendation (Serial No. 3, Para No. 3.9)

5. The Committee had recommended as under:—

“The Committee note that during the year 2007-08 *i.e.* the first year of the Eleventh Plan, the Department had proposed allocation of Rs. 2840.46 crore, out of which Rs. 1500 crore were allocated at Budget Estimates stage. The allocation was further reduced at RE stage by Rs. 100 crore, thus Rs. 1400 crore were actually allocated during the aforesaid year. The actual releases as on 15 March, 2008 are over Rs. 1337.69 crore, thus resulting into underspending of Rs. 62.31 crore. Further during the year 2008-09, out of the proposed allocation of Rs. 3622.50 crore, the outlay earmarked was Rs. 2400 crore. The Committee note from the aforesaid position that the Department have not been able to utilise even the reduced allocation during the year 2007-08. The main underspending has been stated to be under ‘Professional Support’, due to its being a new scheme and ‘Externally Aided Projects’ due to the low absorption capacity of the State Government. The Committee hope that during the year 2008-09, there would be cent-percent utilisation of outlay under the scheme ‘Professional Support’. As regards ‘Externally Aided Projects’, the Committee would like to be apprised what the Department mean by the absorption capacity of the State Governments. The Committee would also like that all the corrective actions should be taken so as to achieve the indicated objectives under the aforesaid scheme/proposal.”

6. The Department in the action taken replies has stated as under:—

“The Department has taken exhaustive measures to ensure that there is no underspending in the scheme professional support. The physical and financial targets have been fixed for achieving the desired objectives in a time bound manner. Regular interactions are being held with Prasar Bharti, Doordarshan, PIB for holding talk shows, quiz shows, press conferences and Saras Melas for creating wide spread awareness about the schemes of the Department. The Department is monitoring the progress made under each scheme in a weekly review meeting.

The Western Orissa Rural Livelihoods Project (WORLP) was sanctioned by DFID in June, 1999 at a cost of Rs. 230 crore including Technical Consultancy (TC) component over 10 years.

It was launched on 18.8.2000. Under the project, 290 watershed projects of approx. 500 hectares each in 29 blocks of 4 districts of the State were taken up. The implementation programme under the project has two components—watershed and watershed plus activities. Up to 31-07-2008, Rs. 124.0025 crore have been released.

- (i) Though the project started at a slow pace, the State Government has stepped up the pace of execution and utilization of the funds.
- (ii) The State Government is also taking necessary steps for the timely release of funds under the project.
- (iii) During the High Powered Committee (HPC) meeting, the State has assured that the budgetary provision of 2008-09 shall be fully utilized."

7. While examining the Demands for Grants (2008-2009) the Committee had noted that the Department had not been able to utilize the Annual Plan allocation to the tune of Rs. 62.31 crore because of underspending in schemes like 'Professional Support' due to its being a new scheme and 'Externally Aided Projects' due to the low absorption capacity of State Government. The Committee had *inter-alia* desired a clarification as to what the Department meant by the low absorption capacity of respective State Government.

The Department in the action taken reply has indicated the initiatives taken/proposed to be taken to ensure cent per cent physical and financial achievement under the said schemes. However, the specific query of the Committee as to what the Department meant by the low absorption capacity of the State Government which resulted into underspending under 'Externally Aided Projects' has not been addressed by the Department in the action taken reply. The Committee would like the Department to clarify the position in this regard.

B. Need for higher outlays under IWMP during the coming years of the Eleventh Plan

Recommendation (Serial Nos. 5 & 6, Para Nos. 3.15 and 3.16)

8. The Committee had recommended as under:—

"xxxxx The Department had proposed an outlay of Rs. 25,835.67 crore to the Planning Commission for the Eleventh Plan mainly comprising of Rs. 20,700 crore for IWMP. Under IWMP Rs. 6,522

crore are for committed liabilities of on going watershed projects in the first two years of the Eleventh Plan period, Rs. 12,300 crore for funding new watershed projects over the next three years of the Plan and Rs. 1000 crore for necessary 'Infrastructural Support' totaling to Rs. 19,822 crore. The Planning Commission initially agreed to the allocation of Rs. 16,420.84 crore, which has subsequently been revised to Rs. 17,205.48 crore. The revision was necessitated after reviewing the needs of the Department and in view of the suggested modifications in design and contents of the major programmes envisaged for the current Plan. These Programmes are Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP), National Land Records Modernization Programme (NLRMP), National Mission on Bio-diesel, Externally Aided Projects (EAPs), Professional Support and National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy. In this connection, the Committee have been informed that as per the Parthasarthy Committee Report an estimated 125 million hectares of rainfed areas are to be developed with an investment outlay of Rs. 1,50,000 crore in the next 15 years. Out of 125 million hectares, 75 million hectares of rainfed area is to be developed by the Department of Land Resources in the next 15 years by way of covering 25 million hectares in each of the coming three Five Year Plans. Therefore, the target before the Department during the Eleventh Plan is the treatment of 25 million hectares of rainfed areas in the country. After perusal of the outlay as proposed by the Department and work to be taken up by the Department during the current Plan, the Committee find that the Plan allocation of Rs. 17,205.48 crore is not sufficient for the Department to accomplish the task."

[Recommendation Serial No. 5 (Para No. 3.15)]

"xxxxx During the first two years of the Eleventh Plan *i.e.* during 2007-08 and 2008-09, Rs. 3800 crore have been allocated. The total amount of allocation for the Eleventh Plan is Rs. 17,205.48 crore. Thus the proportional allocation for the two years comes to around Rs. 6,880 crore. There is shortfall of Rs. 3080 crore in the proportionate allocation during the first two years of the Eleventh Plan. Keeping in view the aforesaid scenario of allocations being made under different schemes of the Department, the Committee have their apprehensions about the set target of development of rainfed area of 25 million hectares during the Eleventh Plan being achieved. In view of this, the Committee strongly recommend that adequate allocation should be provided to the Department to achieve the set targets under different schemes. While

recommending for higher outlay during the Eleventh Plan, the Committee would also like that the Department should make every effort to ensure that the allocation provided in a year is meaningfully utilised."

[Recommendation Serial No. 6 (Para No. 3.16)]

9. The Department in the action taken replies has stated as under:—

"The Department has achieved full utilization of the allocated budget during 2007-08. The Department shall ensure that the budget allocated for 2008-09 is also fully utilized during 2008-09."

[Reply to Recommendation Serial Nos. 5 & 6 (Para Nos. 3.15 & 3.16)]

10. The Committee note with satisfaction that the Department could achieve full utilisation of the allocated outlay during the year 2007-08 and expect full utilisation of the outlay during the current year 2008-09. The Committee in the earlier recommendations had noted that the allocation made during the first two years of the Eleventh Plan was not proportionate to the overall allocation *i.e.* Rs. 17,205.48 crore during the Eleventh Plan. In this regard, the Committee would like that adequate allocation should be made in the remaining years of the Eleventh Plan so as to ensure that the set targets of development of rainfed area of 25 million hectares during the Eleventh Plan are fully achieved. The Committee would also like to be apprised about the physical achievements against targets in this regard during the year 2007-08.

C. Clarifications with regard to the provision of foreclosure of projects under the 'Common Guidelines, 2008' for watershed projects.

Recommendation (Serial No. 9, Para No. 3.27)

11. The Committee had recommended as under:—

"The Department have furnished a statement indicating the comparison between the various features of Hariyali Guidelines, 2003 and Common Guidelines, 2008. The Committee note that one of the provisions with regard to foreclosure which was not provided under the previous Guidelines has now been provided under the revised Common Guidelines, 2008. The Committee in

their respective Reports have been observing that a number of projects under different watershed schemes *viz.* Integrated Watershed Development Programme (IWDP), Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP) were being foreclosed (refer para 4.59 of 27 Report). On the insistence of the Standing Committee, the Department has even indicated the position of foreclosure in the Outcome Budget (2008-09). The Committee fail to understand how the projects were being foreclosed when there was no provision in the Hariyali Guidelines in this regard. Further, the Committee understand that foreclosure of a project is the last resort available with the implementing agency when it is noticed that the project is not at all viable. The foreclosure of a project leads to crucial wastage of the resources. The Committee are unable to comprehend the justification of making a special provision for foreclosure in the Common Guidelines, 2008, which indicates that the implementing agencies may be free to foreclose any project at any time. The Committee would like a specific clarification of the Department in this regard so as to understand the concept and comment further on the issue."

12. The Department in the action taken replies has stated as under:—

"The Common Guidelines, 2008 have provided for foreclosure only in extreme cases and the Department would like to clarify that this provision does not give freedom to the implementing agency to foreclose the project at any time. This provision is applicable only in such situation when pursuing the project further would only be a waste of time, energy and resources and the extreme step of foreclosure may have to be resorted to Para 79 of the Common Guidelines stipulate following circumstances for foreclosure of the project:

- (a) Consistent apathy on the part of State and District Level Authorities towards the project.
- (b) Non-submission of Detailed Project Report / Approved Work Plan for two years after the expiry of preparatory phase without any valid justification.
- (c) If any matter relating to project is subjudice in any court of law and no order for staying the project activity has been passed by the court.
- (d) Any other reason, which justifies foreclosure as, decided by District/State/Centre from time to time.

Common Guidelines 2008 have been prepared by National Rainfed Area Authority (NRAA) and not by Department of Land Resources, however if as a last resort, if foreclosure is to be undertaken, it will be done to prevent further wastage of funds, responsibility will be fixed and a way will be found for adjusting funds with the State Governments.

Additionally, First Information Reports (FIRs) have been lodged and many enquiries ordered where PIAs and Voluntary Organizations have never submitted Completion Report or never turned up for the second instalments after taking the first instalment."

13. The Committee in the earlier recommendation made in their 36th Report had observed that the Common Guidelines, 2008 specifically provided for the foreclosure of the project, even when the Committee have persistently been expressing concerns over the foreclosure of the projects, more so when there was no such provision in the Hariyali Guidelines, 2003. As such the Committee desired a clarification from the Department in this regard.

The Department in the action taken reply has clarified that foreclosure of the project is allowed only in extreme case/ situation when pursuing the project further would only be a wastage of time, energy, resources and certain other conditions as laid down in Para 79 of the Common Guidelines, 2008. The Department has also informed that the responsibility for foreclosure would be fixed and a way would be found for adjusting funds with the State Governments. The Committee note that no provision in this regard has been made in the guidelines. The Committee would like to be apprised about the mechanism to adjust the funds with the State Governments. Besides, the Committee would also like that a provision in this regard should be made in the guidelines itself so as to make it more effective.

The Department has also informed that FIRs have been lodged and many enquiries ordered where PIAs and Voluntary Organizations have never submitted Completion Report or never turned up for the second instalments after taking the first instalment. The Committee would like to be apprised of the number of PIAs and Voluntary Organizations against whom the FIRs have been lodged and enquiries ordered. The number of PIAs and Voluntary Organizations which have been convicted so far also should be furnished along with the details of the penalty imposed. The Committee would also like to

be apprised whether convicted PIAs and Voluntary Organizations have been blacklisted. The detailed information should be furnished to the Committee in this regard.

D. Expeditious formulation of 'National Land Use Policy'

Recommendation (Serial No. 12, Para No. 3.40)

14. The Committee had recommended as under:—

“The Committee while examining the Demands for Grants of the previous year had also recommended to have a National Land Use Policy (refer para 3.19 of 27th Report) which can guide the various State Governments in having laws with regard to the use of land for different purposes with the objective of balanced and harmonious use of land for different purposes. In this regard, the Committee note that the National Land Use and Conservation Board under the Ministry of Agriculture is dealing with the issue of the Land Use Policy. The Committee are concerned to note that no sitting of the aforesaid Board has been held for the last many years as informed by the Secretary, Department of Land Resources, during the course of oral evidence. The Committee deplore the way such an important national issue is being addressed by the Government. The Committee strongly recommend to take up the issue urgently with the Ministry of Agriculture so that a National Land Use Policy is formulated expeditiously. The Committee may be informed about the concrete action taken in this regard.”

15. The Department in the action taken reply has stated as under:—

“The recommendation of the Committee was sent to Ministry of Agriculture with the request that they may take necessary action to convene the meeting of the National Land Use and Conservation Board (NLCB) so that the issues relating to conversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes including SEZs, formulation of a National Land Use Policy etc. could be discussed. However, that Ministry has informed that Planning Commission has discontinued the National Land Use and Conservation Board *vide* their D.O. letter dated 13.8.2004 and accordingly it is not possible to convene the meeting.”

16. The Committee have persistently been recommending to the Department to pursue the issue regarding finalization of the National Land Use Policy with the concerned Ministries particularly the

Ministry of Agriculture. In this regard during the course of oral evidence while examining Demands for Grants 2008-09 of the Department, the Committee had been informed that no sitting of the National Land Use and Conservation Board under the Ministry of Agriculture was held for the last many years. On the insistence of the Committee, the Department took up the matter with the Ministry of Agriculture and were informed that the Planning Commission has discontinued the National Land Use and Conservation Board *vide* their D.O. letter dated 13.08.2004 and accordingly it was not possible to convene the meeting.

The aforesaid position indicates the callous attitude of the Department towards such a serious recommendation of the Committee which was persistently being pursued. The matter was even raised while examining Demands for Grants of the earlier year *i.e.* 2007-08 and the Department had assured in the action taken reply to pursue the matter with the Ministry of Agriculture. Surprisingly, the Department was not aware of the exact position as recently as during the examination of Demands for Grants 2008-09. While the National Land Use Policy and Conservation Board had been discontinued *w.e.f.* 13.08.2004, the Department misled the Committee by simply stating that no sitting of the Board was held for so many years.

The Committee strongly deprecate the way the Department has misled the Committee in this regard. The Committee desire that the Department should take up the matter of revival of the National Land Use and Conservation Board with the concerned Ministries/ Departments on war footing so as to have a National Land Use Policy at the earliest.

E. Expeditious collection of data with regard to the acquisition of land for Special Economic Zones (SEZs)

Recommendation (Serial No. 13, Para No. 3.41)

17. The Committee had recommended as under:—

“The Committee while examining the Demands for Grants of the previous year (refer para 3.19 of 27th Report) had been informed that the data with regard to the acquisition of land for Special Economic Zones is being collected by the Department from the concerned Ministry of Commerce and Industry. While examining the Demands for Grants for the year 2008-09 again, the Department have informed that the aforesaid data as asked by

the Committee is being collected. The Committee fail to understand even after one year has elapsed since the Committee desired the aforesaid data, the same could not be collected from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The Committee while deploring the casual manner of the Ministry in this regard desired that the data should be obtained expeditiously and furnished to the Committee. Besides, the specific data with regard to the acquisition of agricultural land for setting up SEZs may also be obtained. The information in this regard may separately be asked for single crop, double crop and multi crop agricultural land."

18. The Department in the action taken replies has stated as under:—

"The recommendation of the Committee has been sent to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry with the request to furnish the requisite data with regard to the acquisition of agricultural land for setting up SEZs, including single crop, double crop and multi crop agricultural land acquired for the purpose. Reply from that Ministry has not been received so far.

However, during the oral evidence of the representatives of Ministry of Commerce and Industry, taken by the Standing Committee on Rural Development on 3rd July, 2008, in connection with the Examination of the Land Acquisition (Amendment) Bill, 2007 and the Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill, 2007, they informed that the total extent of land in the 404 formal approvals for SEZs so far is 57,412.70 hectares.

As regards type of land, it was informed that the information is available with the respective State Governments and they have been requested to furnish the detailed information as per the proforma prescribed. Till date, information has been received in respect of 181 SEZs from 6 State Governments *viz.* Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab and Rajasthan. The total area of the land involved in these SEZs is about 16987 hectares. Out of this, 92% is reported to be barren/waste land and 7.5% of the land is single crop. The double crop land acquired for SEZs is negligible."

19. The Committee have persistently been recommending to collect the data with regard to acquisition of land for SEZs category-wise from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and furnish to the Committee. The Committee are concerned to note that whereas the Ministry of Commerce and Industry have given the information

with regard to the aforesaid data collected from some of the States while examining 'The Land Acquisition (Amendment) Bill, 2007', which the Department has also indicated in the action taken reply, the Department failed to get the said information from the concerned Ministry. It seems that no effort has been made to pursue with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on such a serious issue. The Committee deplore the way the recommendation of the Committee has been addressed by the Department. The Committee would like that serious efforts should be made to pursue the matter with the concerned Ministry so that the information with regard to type of land acquired for setting up the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) by various State Governments is maintained and updated regularly. The Committee may be kept apprised accordingly.

F. Early clearance of the proposal relating to 'National Mission on Bio-Diesel' from Group of Ministers

Recommendation (Serial No. 14, Para No. 3.45)

20. The Committee had recommended as under:—

"The Committee are unhappy to note that an important scheme 'National Mission on Bio – diesel' that seeks to reduce country's 20 per cent import dependence on petroleum is still at a nascent stage even after submission of the Report by the Committee set up by the Planning Commission on 'Development of Bio-diesel' way back in April, 2003. The Committee have been informed that the aforesaid 'National Mission on Bio-diesel' seeks to obtain Bio-diesel from seeds of plants like *Jatropha (Ratanjot)* and *Pongamia (Karanj)* by their plantation on wasteland/degraded land available in different States. It is alarming to note that even after an elapse of five years since the submission of the report by the Committee set up by the Planning Commission on the aforesaid matter, the proposal has still not been approved by the Government. As per the latest information furnished by the Department on the above issue, the proposal has been processed by the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) on 9 October, 2006 and has been considered by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on 8 March, 2007 and currently is before the Group of Ministers (GoM) wherein a presentation by the Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Science and Technology and ICAR is awaited on the proposal. The Committee have further been informed that the next meeting is yet to take place. In this connection during the course of evidence, it came out that around

16.49 crore saplings of *Jatropha* and *Pongamia* plants have already been planted with an expenditure of Rs. 49.50 crore in different States and an early clearance of the proposal from the Group of Ministers is essential so that this expenditure does not go waste. In this connection the Committee in their previous Reports on Demands for Grants relating to the Department of Land Resources from 2004-05 onwards have been pursuing the Government for expeditious clearance of the proposal. The Committee are, however, constrained to note that the desired results are not forthcoming. Since the danger of loss of saplings as stated above is looming large for want of necessary funds, the Committee, therefore, once again recommend expeditious clearance of the proposal by the Group of Ministers so that Rs. 50 crore Plan outlay is utilised by the Department during 2008-09. While recommending for expeditious clearance of 'National Mission on Bio-diesel', the Committee may like to emphasize that the *Jatropha/Pongamia* cultivation in the country should be done without affecting the food security and agricultural land of the country."

21. The Department in the action taken replies has stated as under:—

"To discuss the issues on launching of National Mission on Bio-diesel, first meeting of Group of Ministers held on 16/05/2007 and it was decided to have presentation on the proposal of launching of National Mission on Bio-diesel, Ministry of Rural Development, ICAR and Department of Science and Technology later on. Second meeting of Group of Ministers held on 13/06/2008 and the Ministry of Rural Development, ICAR and Department of Science Technology made presentations before the GoM. Third meeting of GoM was held on 9.7.2008 and it was the opinion that reliable data on various aspects of plantations of non-edible oil seed bearing trees is not yet available, and as work on plantation of about 6 lakh hectares and some commercial activities have already been initiated in several States, the demonstration programme proposed by MoRD would not serve the purpose. After discussion, it was recommended that National Mission on Bio-diesel of the Ministry of Rural Development need not be pursued further. Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development has taken up the matter with the Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture who is the Chairman of GoM to reconsider the proposal of the Ministry of Rural Development for setting up the National Mission on Bio-diesel."

22. The Committee are really perturbed to note that an important scheme 'National Mission on Bio-Diesel' approved by the Planning Commission way back in April, 2003 and after making an expenditure of Rs. 49.50 crore for plantation of 16.49 crore saplings of *Jatropha* and *Pongamia* plants has finally been dropped by the Group of Ministers (GoM) for want of reliable data on various aspects of plantation of non-edible oil seed bearing trees. The Department has also informed that the Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development has taken up the matter with the Minister of Agriculture who is the Chairman of GoM to reconsider the proposal of setting up the 'National Mission on Bio-Diesel'. The Committee cannot understand why the requisite data with regard to plantation of non-edible oil seed bearing trees could not be made available which ultimately led to the dropping of the proposal of setting up the said Mission. The Committee would like that the requisite information should be collected urgently and the matter should further be pursued at the Minister's level so that the 'National Mission on Bio-Diesel' is not shelved just for want of data, particularly when the aforesaid Mission seeks to reduce country's 20 percent import dependence on petroleum. The concerns of the Committee in this regard should appropriately be placed before the Minister of Agriculture while pursuing the issue by the Minister of Rural Development with GoM.

G. Need to review the position of development of wastelands in the North Eastern Region

Recommendation (Serial Nos. 15 & 19, Para Nos. 3.52 & 3.66)

23. The Committee had recommended as under:—

"While reviewing the performance of IWDP during the Tenth Plan (2002-07), the Committee find that as against the outlays, the utilisation in terms of percentage of releases was 91.87 per cent, 91.58 per cent and 90.88 per cent respectively during the first three years of the Tenth Plan *i.e.* 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05. The Committee also find that in the remaining two years *viz.* 2005-06 and 2006-2007 of the Tenth Plan, utilisation in terms of percentage of releases was 100.47 per cent and 99.02 per cent. The Committee find that the reason for under-spending in the first three years of the Tenth Plan as indicated by the Department is that a large amount of outlays was utilised for meeting the committed liabilities of on going watershed projects as also failure on the part of North Eastern States to utilise funds for these projects. For instance during 2002-03, out of Rs. 450 crore

earmarked for IWDP as high as Rs. 150 crore was spent on meeting the committed liabilities of on going projects. Similarly during 2003-04 under-spending of Rs. 88 crore was due to non-receipt of new projects from the North Eastern Region. Again during 2004-05 poor absorption of funds by North Eastern States was the reason for slow progress. The Committee conclude from the aforesaid scenario that the expenditure position during the Tenth Plan has been satisfactory except in the case of the North Eastern States where no new projects was demanded. The Committee, therefore, feel that there is an urgent need to review the position of development of wastelands in the North Eastern Region. The various problems encountered in North Eastern Region have been dealt with in subsequent paras of the Report. Here the Committee wish to emphasize that all corrective action should be taken so as to ensure full utilization of outlay during the Eleventh Plan."

[Recommendation Serial No.15 (Para No.3.52)]

"The Committee note that there are serious problems in the implementation of the watershed programmes in the North-Eastern Region including Sikkim. One of the issue, which needs consideration is the lack of coordination between different Departments of the State Governments which are mainly responsible for implementing watershed projects in the entire North Eastern Region. Further, in view of the fragile nature of soil and vegetation in North Eastern Areas, the Committee underlines the need for special care for preserving the original soil and vegetation while dealing with the land management in these areas. The Committee have been informed by the Department that a zonal meeting is planned in Shillong in May, 2008 for an interaction with the members of the North Eastern Council. The Committee therefore, recommend that the aforesaid issues should be discussed at the ensuing Zonal meeting to be held in Shillong and the outcome of the same may be apprised to the Committee."

[Recommendation Serial No.19 (Para No.3.66)]

24. The Department in the action taken replies has stated as under:—

"The Department will ensure full utilization of outlay earmarked for North-Eastern States in the Eleventh Plan. A Regional Review Meeting has already been held in May, 2008 at Shillong in which

all the North-Eastern States including Sikkim participated and exchanged their views and problems faced in timely implementation of the projects. An orientation for the operationalisation of the new Common Guidelines was also arranged by the Department. The roll out plan for the Common Guidelines, 2008 was explained in detail to the representatives of the North-Eastern States. A discussion was also held with the expert team of North-Eastern Council during the review meeting.”

[Reply to Recommendation Serial Nos.15 & 19 (Para Nos. 3.52 & 3.66)]

25. While noting that all the North-Eastern States including Sikkim participated and exchanged their views and problems faced in timely completion of Projects at the Regional Review Meeting held in Shillong, the Committee would like to be informed about the details of the outcome arising out of the discussions held at the Review Meeting. Further, the Committee would also like to be informed about the details of roll out plan for the Common Guidelines 2008 in North-Eastern States.

H. Pursuing the issue of adequate outlay under IWMP with the Planning Commission/ Ministry of Finance

Recommendation (Serial No. 16, Para No. 3.55)

26. The Committee had recommended as under:—

“The Committee note that the three programmes of the Department *viz.* Integrated Wasteland Development Programme (IWDP), the major programme of the Department related to wastelands development in the country alongwith two other area development programmes *viz.* Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP) have been merged into an integrated programme *i.e.* Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) during the Eleventh Plan. Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) is being implemented from the year 2007-08 *i.e.* the first year of the Eleventh Plan. The Committee note that during the year 2007-08 against the proposed allocation of Rs. 2086.46 crore, Rs. 1201 crore were provided at BE stage. The allocation was reduced by Rs. 35 crore at RE stage, thus Rs. 1166 crore were available during the year 2007-08. Out of Rs. 1166 crore, the expenditure as on 15 March, 2008 is Rs. 1160.64 crore. During the year 2008-09, Rs. 1875 crore have been allocated against the proposed allocation of Rs. 2750 crore. The Committee have been apprised that the

Department have decided to complete 45,000 ongoing watershed projects in the first two years of the Eleventh Plan. The Committee further note that Rs. 6,522 crore have been proposed for the committed liabilities of ongoing projects during the Eleventh Plan. Even if the total allocation earmarked during the first two years under IWMP is taken into consideration, only Rs. 3,041 crore (Rs. 1166 crore R.E. of 2007-08 + Rs. 1875 crore B.E. of 2008-09) have been allocated during the aforesaid years. Thus, if only the committed liabilities are taken into consideration, there is shortfall of Rs. 3,481 crore even to meet the committed liabilities for the ongoing projects. The Committee fail to understand how the Department propose to meet the committed liabilities during the first two years of Eleventh Plan with the aforesaid shortfall in the allocations. Further the Committee are unable to comprehend how the new projects would be taken under IWMP with the meagre allocation of resources. The Committee conclude from the aforesaid scenario that the target of developing 25 million hectares of rainfed area during the Eleventh Plan seems to be a distant reality with the position of the allocation of resources during the first two years of the Eleventh Plan as being stated above. The Committee strongly recommend that desired initiatives should be taken to complete the 45,000 ongoing projects in the stipulated timeframe of two years so that the additional projects as per the modified guidelines can be taken up and the set targets could be achieved. The Committee strongly recommend that the Department should pursue with the Planning Commission/ Ministry of Finance for adequate outlay under IWMP."

27. The Department in the action taken reply has stated as under:—

"The Department has not committed that all the 45,000 projects shall be completed during the first two years of the Eleventh Plan. Rather, in view of the huge liabilities, the Department has proposed to focus on meeting only the committed liabilities of ongoing projects instead of creating new liabilities during the first two years of the Eleventh Plan. As the project period is of 5 years and the projects often extends beyond 5 years to be completed, the projects sanctioned towards the end of the Tenth Plan can only be completed at the end of the Eleventh Plan and some projects may also spill over to Twelfth Plan.

The Department is making all out efforts to complete the projects sanctioned prior to Eleventh Plan in time through continuous monitoring and interaction with the implementing agencies at various levels in the states."

28. The Committee note from the action taken reply that the focus of the Department is only to meet the committed liabilities of the ongoing projects during the Eleventh Plan. It seems that no new project is proposed to be undertaken during the Eleventh Plan. During the course of examination of the Demands for Grants, the Committee have been informed that a target to develop 25 million hectares of rainfed area during the Eleventh Plan has been fixed. The Committee fail to understand how the aforesaid target would be achieved without taking new projects during the Eleventh Plan. It is also not clear how the new programme of IWMP would be implemented since all the existing projects are being implemented under the previous programmes like DDP, DPAP & IWDP. The Committee would like the Department to clarify the position in this regard. Besides, as recommended earlier, adequate outlay should be provided under IWMP during the remaining years of the Eleventh Plan so as to achieve the set target.

I. Persuading the State Governments for furnishing Utilization Certificates (UCs) in time

Recommendation (Serial No. 17, Para No. 3.61)

29. The Committee had recommended as under:—

“The Committee are constrained to note that as many as 357 Utilisation Certificates (UCs) amounting to Rs. 281.67 crore are outstanding as on 31 December 2007 in respect of the three Area Development Programmes of IWDP, DPAP and DDP. In this connection the Committee also find that out of these as many as 153 UCs pertain to IWDP and 115 UCs relate to DPAP involving approximately Rs. 60 crore each. Remaining 24 UCs relate to DDP amounting to Rs. 21.50 crore. The Committee further find that as on 20 March, 2008 there has been a slight reduction in the aforesaid outstanding UCs. For instance, under IWDP 91 UCs with an amount of Rs. 39.47 crore, under DPAP 101 UCs with an amount of Rs. 51.91 crore and under DDP 8 UCs with an amount of Rs. 12.45 crore are outstanding. From the available data, the Committee find that the major defaulting States are Assam, Kerala, Orissa, Manipur and Sikkim under IWDP; Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Uttarakhand and Maharashtra under DPAP; and Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Karnataka under DDP. The capacity constraints, weak monitoring and lack of will to track out older records etc. have been attributed as the

reasons for the above UCs remaining outstanding from various State Governments. The Committee fail to understand how the States like Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Orissa who have done considerable progress on e-governance are not submitting Utilisation Certificates in time. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend to pursue with the State Governments in this regard. The concrete action taken should be communicated to the Committee. "

30. The Department in the action taken replies has stated as under:—

"The Department has taken measures to obtain pending UCs from the concerned States. The States have been requested to mention the reasons for delay in submission of each pending Utilisation Certificate and a discussion on this has been held with the concerned States in the four Regional Review Meetings held so far at Chennai, Shillong, Dehradun and Udaipur. The concerned States have assured that the UCs shall be submitted in time in future. The Department shall also take up the matter with the remaining States at the fifth Regional Review Meeting to be held at Bhubaneswar during September-October, 2008. The Department has formulated Area Officers Scheme to ensure that pending UCs are expedited. These area officers will visit the States and pursue pending matters with State Governments. The matter of pending UC's is also being pursued through video conferencing."

31. The Committee note that the concerned States have assured for submission of Utilization Certificates (UCs) in time in future in the discussion held in the Four Regional Review Meetings held at Chennai, Shillong, Dehradun and Udaipur. The Department has also assured to take up the matter with the remaining States at the Fifth Regional Review Meeting to be held at Bhubaneswar during September-October, 2008. Besides under Area Officers Scheme, the area officers would be visiting the States for pursuing pending matters. While appreciating the aforesaid initiatives being taken by the Department, the Committee would like the Department to pursue the matter with the concerned States more vigorously. The Committee would also like to be informed about the details of the outcome arising out of the discussions held at the Fifth Regional Review Meeting.

J. Evaluation of erstwhile programme of Computerisation of Land Records (CLRs)

Recommendation (Serial No. 23, Para No. 3.75)

32. The Committee had recommended as under:—

“As regards the performance of CLR during the years 2006-07 and 2007-08, the Committee find that although the financial achievement is almost 100 per cent, there are serious shortfalls in the physical achievement. Against the physical target of installation of Hardware and Software in 75 sub-Divisions, the achievement upto 31st March, 2007 as indicated in the Outcome Budget is 2 sub-Divisions only. Again with regard to setting up of district data level centres for 50 districts, the achievement has been indicated as 27 districts. Various reasons like the delay in the release of funds by the States to implementing agencies, non-availability of data entry agencies and lack of trained staff to manage the Computer Centres have been cited as the reasons for under-performance. The Committee express serious concern over the mis-match between the physical and financial achievement during the year 2006-07. During the year 2007-08 in the Outcome Budget in the Quantifiable Deliverables and achievement column the specific targets have not been indicated. The Committee express serious concern over not indicating specific targets during the year 2007-08. In this regard, the Committee would like that the physical achievement under the programme during the year 2007-08 may be indicated in clear terms so as to analyze the position of the implementation of the programme during the aforesaid year. Besides, corrective actions with regard to the various problems being faced in the implementation of the programme should be taken urgently so as to achieve the objective of computerization of land records in all the States within the stipulated time frame.”

33. The Department in the action taken reply has stated as under:—

“The Scheme of Computerisation of Land Records is demand driven and funds are released to the State Governments/UT administrations keeping in view the proposals received, physical achievements under the scheme and utilization of funds against releases made during previous years. During the years 2006-07 and 2007-08, major portion of funds was provided to the States/UTs for operationalisation of the scheme at tehsil level, scanning of old land records and digitization maps.

During 2006-07, while the targets of setting up of computer centres at Sub-division & District levels and monitoring cell at State Headquarters could not be achieved, operationalisation of the Scheme was sanctioned in 773 Tehsils against the target of 100 Tehsils.

During the year 2007-08, implementation of the National Land Records Modernization Programme (NLRMP) was proposed. However, approval for the NLRMP could not be obtained. Accordingly, there was no separate provision under the CLR Scheme. However, funds to the tune of Rs. 41.24 crore were released to the States/UTs for digitization of cadastral maps and for operationalisation of the Scheme in 64 more tehsils/blocks, setting up of computer centres in 26 sub-divisions, 1 district land records data centre and 1 monitoring cell at State Headquarters."

34. During the course of examination of Demands for Grants, the Committee had been informed that no separate provision has been made for the 'Computerization of Land Records' during the years 2007-08 and 2008-09 as the scheme has been merged with the National Land Record Modernization Programme (NLRMP) (refer para 3.72 of 36th Report) under which funds are being released. In the action taken note, the Department has informed that the approval of NLRMP could not be obtained. The Committee fail to understand how a specific allocation has been made for a new scheme NLRMP when it has actually not been approved as indicated in the action taken reply. It is really difficult to comprehend the status of the various land records schemes/programmes of the Ministry. Whereas the status of new scheme NLRMP is not clear, no outlay is being provided in the earlier scheme 'Computerization of Land Records' and 'Strengthening of Revenue Administration and Updating of Land Records'. While disapproving the way the schemes are being restructured, the Committee would like to have a clarification from the Department in this regard. Besides, the Committee strongly recommend that all the modalities of implementation of the new scheme NLRMP should be finalized expeditiously so that the targets set during Eleventh Plan with regard to maintenance/ computerization of land records are achieved.

CHAPTER II

RECOMMENDATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation (Serial No. 1, Para No. 2.5)

The Committee note that direction 73A of the Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha is not being followed in the right spirit. This is evident from the considerable delay in making the statement by the Minister on various reports of the Committee. As per the direction, the Minister should make the statement within six months of presentation of the Report to Parliament, which has not been done. The statements have been made after 10 to 21 months of the presentation of the concerned Reports. The Committee desire that, in future, the statement under direction 73A should be made within the prescribed time limit.

Reply of the Government

Point has been noted for compliance.

[Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development),
O.M. No. Z-11014/4/2008-GC, dated 22nd August, 2008]

Recommendation (Serial No. 2, Para No. 3.8)

The Committee find that the Department have been allocated Rs. 6,526 crore as against the proposed allocation of Rs. 5,965 crore during the Tenth Plan. Out of the allocated amount of Rs. 6,526 crore, the actual expenditure as on 31 March, 2007 was Rs. 5,526 crore, thus the underspending was to the tune of Rs. 1000 crore. The Committee further find that the main reason for not utilizing the allocated amount during the Tenth Plan was on account of no new initiative having been taken during the Tenth Plan, for which Rs. 1,000 crore were exclusively earmarked. The Committee deplore the way the planning for new schemes is being made. Even when no specific scheme was proposed, a substantial outlay of Rs. 1,000 crore was earmarked at the start of the Tenth Plan. No new scheme could be taken during the whole period of five years resulting in shortfall in expenditure of Rs. 1,000 crore. The Committee have repeatedly been recommending for proper planning, particularly, with regard to launching of new schemes. All the preparatory works should be undertaken before the specific outlay for a scheme is earmarked. There is entirely no justification for allocating substantial amount for vague initiatives for which there are no concrete proposals. The Committee would like the

Department to convey the concerns of the Committee to the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance in this regard.

Reply of the Government

The observation of the Committee is taken due note of for guidance. The concerns of the Committee has been conveyed to the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance.

[Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development),
O.M. No. Z-11014/4/2008-GC, dated 22nd August, 2008]

Recommendation (Serial No. 3, Para No. 3.9)

The Committee note that during the year 2007-08 *i.e.* the first year of the Eleventh Plan, the Department had proposed allocation of Rs. 2840.46 crore, out of which Rs. 1500 crore were allocated at Budget Estimates stage. The allocation was further reduced at RE stage by Rs. 100 crore, thus Rs. 1400 crore were actually allocated during the aforesaid year. The actual releases as on 15 March 2008 are over Rs. 1337.69 crore, thus resulting into underspending of Rs. 62.31 crore. Further during the year 2008-09, out of the proposed allocation of Rs. 3622.50 crore, the outlay earmarked was Rs. 2400 crore. The Committee note from the aforesaid position that the Department have not been able to utilise even the reduced allocation during the year 2007-08. The main underspending has been stated to be under 'Professional Support', due to its being a new scheme and 'Externally Aided Projects' due to the low absorption capacity of the State Government. The Committee hope that during the year 2008-09, there would be cent percent utilisation of outlay under the scheme 'Professional Support'. As regards 'Externally Aided Projects', the Committee would like to be apprised what the Department mean by the absorption capacity of the State Governments. The Committee would also like that all the corrective actions should be taken so as to achieve the indicated objectives under the aforesaid scheme/proposal.

Reply of the Government

The Department has taken exhaustive measures to ensure that there is no under spending in the scheme 'Professional Support'. The physical and financial targets have been fixed for achieving the desired objectives in a time bound manner. Regular interaction are being held with Prasar Bharti, Doordarshan, PIB for holding talk shows, quiz shows, press conferences and Saaras Melas for creating wide spread awareness about the schemes of the department. The department is monitoring the progress made under each scheme in a weekly review meeting.

The Western Orissa Rural Livelihoods Project (WORLP) was sanctioned by DFID in June, 1999 at a cost of Rs. 230 crores including Technical Consultancy (TC) component over 10 years. It was launched

on 18.8.2000. Under the project, 290 watershed projects of approx. 500 hectares each in 29 blocks of 4 districts of the State were taken up. The implementation programme under the project has two components—watershed and watershed plus activities. Up to 31-07-2008, Rs. 124.0025 crores has been released.

- (i) Though the project started at a slow pace, the State Government has stepped up the pace of execution and utilization of the funds.
- (ii) The State Government is also taking necessary steps for timely release of funds under the project.
- (iii) During the High Powered Committee (HPC) meeting, the State has assured that the budgetary provision of 2008-09 shall be fully utilized.

[Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development),
O.M. No. Z-11014/4/2008-GC, dated 22nd August, 2008]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 7 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial No. 4, Para No. 3.10)

The detailed analysis scheme-wise has been done in the subsequent paras of the Report. Here the Committee conclude from the analysis of the data given by the Department during the first two years of Eleventh Plan that the Department are not getting adequate allocation. Further the Committee also observe that to get the allocation as estimated and proposed, the Department have to strive hard to ensure cent per cent utilisation under different schemes along with achieving the physical targets.

Reply of the Government

Department will make necessary efforts to get adequate funding from the Planning Commission in the remaining period of the Plan *i.e.* three years to fulfil its targets in the 11th Plan.

[Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development),
O.M. No. Z-11014/4/2008-GC, dated 22nd August, 2008]

Recommendation (Serial Nos. 5 & 6, Para Nos. 3.15 and 3.16)

The Committee find that the Department had proposed an outlay of Rs 25,835.67 crore to the Planning Commission for the Eleventh Plan mainly comprising of Rs. 20,700 crore for IWMP. Under IWMP Rs. 6,522 crore are for committed liabilities of on going watershed projects in the first two years of the Eleventh Plan period, Rs. 12,300 crore for funding new watershed projects over the next three years of the Plan and Rs. 1000 crore for necessary 'Infrastructural Support' totaling to Rs. 19,822 crore. The Planning Commission initially agreed to the allocation of Rs. 16,420.84 crore, which has subsequently been

revised to Rs. 17,205.48 crore. The revision was necessitated after reviewing the needs of the Department and in view of the suggested modifications in design and contents of the major programmes envisaged for the current Plan. These Programmes are Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP), National Land Records Modernisation Programme (NLRMP), National Mission on Bio-diesel, Externally Aided Projects (EAPs), Professional Support and National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy. In this connection, the Committee have been informed that as per the Parthasarthy Committee Report an estimated 125 million hectares of rainfed areas is to be developed with an investment outlay of Rs. 1,50,000 crore in the next 15 years. Out of 125 million hectares, 75 million hectares of rainfed area is to be developed by the Department of Land Resources in the next 15 years by way of covering 25 million hectares in each of the coming three Five Year Plans. Therefore, the target before the Department during the Eleventh Plan is the treatment of 25 million hectares of rainfed areas in the country. After perusal of the outlays as proposed by the Department and work to be taken up by the Department during the current Plan, the Committee find that the Plan allocation of Rs. 17,205.48 crore is not sufficient for the Department to accomplish the task.

Recommendation Serial No.5 (Para No. 3.15)

The Committee further note that during the first two years of the Eleventh Plan *i.e.* during 2007-08 and 2008-09, Rs. 3800 crore have been allocated. The total amount of allocation for the Eleventh Plan is Rs. 17,205.48 crore. Thus the proportional allocation for the two years comes to around Rs. 6,880 crore. Thus there is shortfall of Rs. 3080 crore in the proportionate allocation during the first two years of the Eleventh Plan. Keeping in view the aforesaid scenario of allocations being made under different schemes of the Department, the Committee have their apprehensions about the set target of development of rainfed area of 25 million hectares during the Eleventh Plan being achieved. In view of this, the Committee strongly recommend that adequate allocation should be provided to the Department to achieve the set targets under different schemes. While recommending for higher outlay during the Eleventh Plan, the Committee would also like that the Department should make every effort to ensure that the allocation provided in a year is meaningfully utilised.

Recommendation Serial No. 6 (Para No. 3.16)

Reply of the Government

The Department has achieved full utilization of the allocated budget during 2007-08. The Department shall ensure that the budget allocated for 2008-09 is also fully utilized during 2008-09.

[Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development),
O.M. No. Z-11014/4/2008-GC, dated 22nd August, 2008]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 10 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial Nos. 7 & 8, Para Nos. 3.25 & 3.26)

The Committee have persistently been recommending in their Reports presented during 12th, 13th and 14th Lok Sabha that all the activities related to watershed programmes being undertaken by the different Ministries of Union Government should be brought under one umbrella. Pursuant to the aforesaid recommendation of the Committee, the Ministry of Rural Development initially transferred DDP, DPAP and Watershed component of its erstwhile Employment Assurance Scheme from the Department of Rural Development to the Department of Land Resources to bring convergence of the activities related to watershed schemes in their own Ministry. With the continuous pursuance of the issue of bringing the watershed activities of different Ministries under one umbrella, the Government finally agreed to the recommendation of the Committee and the National Rainfed Area Authority (NRAA) was constituted under the Ministry of Agriculture with the initial allocation of Rs. 100 crore during the year 2007-08. As a further initiative on the issue of convergence, the Department have merged three area development programmes *viz.* Integrated Watershed Development Programme (IWDP), Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP) into a single programme of Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP). In the sitting of the National Rainfed Area Authority held on 11 February, 2008, the Hariyali Guidelines, 2003 have been revised and named as Common Guidelines, 2008. The Common Guidelines were prepared by the Department and finally approved by the Governing Body of the National Rainfed Area Authority on 11 February, 2008. The Department have informed that the aforesaid Guidelines would come into force from 1 April, 2008. Further, the Guidelines would be made fully operational by January, 2009. While appreciating the initiatives taken by the Department for bringing convergence into the watershed activities being undertaken by the different Departments/Ministries in pursuance of the persistent recommendations of the Standing Committee, the Committee find that there is an inordinate delay in the finalisation of the Common Guidelines. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the process of operationalisation of the Guidelines should be accelerated keeping in view the task of covering target of 25 million hectare of rainfed areas during the current plan period of which the first year *i.e.* 2007-08 is already over. For this, the time frames for various stages of operationalisation of the guidelines need to be tightened considerably and strict monitoring be ensured.

Recommendation Serial No. 7 (Para No. 3.25)

The Committee have also been repeatedly emphasizing on the convergence of watershed activities at the State level as well as at the ground level. In this regard, the Committee find that under the Common Guidelines, a provision has been made for setting-up dedicated institutional structures at National, District, Project and Village level. The Committee appreciate the aforesaid initiative taken by the Department which is in line with the persistent recommendations of the Committee. The Committee would like that the institutional structures at national, district, project and village level are set up expeditiously so as to have proper coordination and an idea of the actual work being undertaken at the ground level with regard to watershed activities in the country.

Recommendation Serial No. 8 (Para No. 3.26)

Reply of the Government

The Department has prepared a rollout plan for implementation of the new Common Guidelines, 2008 in the States. This rollout plan includes setting up of the dedicated institution at National, State and District level in the first phase. This rollout plan has been put on the website of the Department. The plan has been circulated to all the States for compliance. The progress of implementation is being discussed and monitored with each State in the Zonal Review Meetings scheduled by the Department. An online monitoring system for the rollout plan is also put on the website of the Department.

[Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development),
O.M. No. Z-11014/4/2008-GC, dated 22nd August, 2008]

Recommendation (Serial No. 9, Para No. 3.27)

The Department have furnished a statement indicating the comparison between the various features of Hariyali Guidelines, 2003 and Common Guidelines, 2008. The Committee note that one of the provisions with regard to foreclosure which was not provided under the previous Guidelines has now been provided under the revised Common Guidelines, 2008. The Committee in their respective Reports have been observing that a number of projects under different watershed schemes *viz.* Integrated Watershed Development Programme (IWDP), Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP) were being foreclosed (refer para 4.59 of 27th Report). On the insistence of the Standing Committee, the Department have even indicated the position of foreclosure in the Outcome Budget (2008-09). The Committee fail to understand how the projects were being foreclosed when there was no provision in the Hariyali Guidelines in this regard. Further, the Committee understand that foreclosure of a project is the last resort available with the implementing agency when it is noticed that the project is not at all

viable. The foreclosure of a project leads to crucial wastage of the resources. The Committee are unable to comprehend the justification of making a special provision for foreclosure in the Common Guidelines, 2008, which indicates that the implementing agencies may be free to foreclose any project at any time. The Committee would like a specific clarification of the Department in this regard so as to understand the concept and comment further on the issue.

Reply of the Government

The Common Guidelines, 2008 have provided for foreclosure only in extreme cases and the Department would like to clarify that this provision does not give freedom to the implementing agency to foreclose the project at any time. This provision is applicable only in such situation when pursuing the project further would only be a waste of time, energy and resources and the extreme step of foreclosure may have to be resorted to Para 79 of the Common Guidelines stipulate following circumstances for foreclosure of the project:

- (a) Consistent apathy on the part of State and District Level Authorities towards the project.
- (b) Non-submission of Detailed Project Report/ Approved Work Plan for two years after the expiry of preparatory phase without any valid justification.
- (c) If any matter relating to project is subjudice in any court of law and no order for staying the project activity has been passed by the court.
- (d) Any other reason, which justifies foreclosure as, decided by District/State/Centre from time to time.

Common Guidelines, 2008 have been prepared by National Rainfed Area Authority (NRAA) and not by Department of Land Resources, however if as a last resort, if foreclosure is to be undertaken, it will be done to prevent further wastage of funds, responsibility will be fixed and a way will be found for adjusting funds with the State Governments.

Additionally, First Information Reports (FIRs) have been lodged and many enquiries ordered where PIAs and Voluntary Organizations have never submitted Completion Report or never turned up for the second installments after taking the first installment.

[Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development),
O.M. No. Z-11014/4/2008-GC, dated 22nd August, 2008]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 13 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial No. 10, Para No. 3.34)

The Committee learn from a statement made by the Minister of Rural Development in Lok Sabha on 3 March, 2008 that Ministry of Rural Development have developed a system for online reporting of Monthly Progress Reports (MPRs) of rural development schemes including IWDP, DPAP and DDP. Although sufficient progress in this regard has been made with regard to sending Quarterly Progress Reports online, the progress with regard to Monthly Progress Reports is far from satisfactory. For instance, under IWDP out of 28 States only 3 States of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Haryana have the system of online reporting of Monthly Progress Reports. Similarly, out of 16 States under DPAP and 7 States under DDP only 2 States have a system of reporting online the Monthly Progress Reports. Andhra Pradesh is the only State, which has developed online monitoring of all these Area Development Programmes. The Committee further note that the process of online monitoring has been started by the Department of Land Resources during the year 2007-08 and the Department propose to make it fully operational by the year 2008-09. Keeping in view the status of implementation of the project of online monitoring of Monthly Progress Reports as indicated above, the Committee have doubts about achieving the target of making the system fully operational by 2008-09. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that the Department should work on a war footing so as to achieve the targets by the stipulated deadline.

Reply of the Government

The Department is pursuing online reporting of Monthly Progress Reports (MPRs) by the States on a regular basis. Recently, Hon'ble RD Minister has written to Chief Ministers to accord priority to online reporting of progress of all watershed schemes. For month of June, 2008 the online reporting has been done by 13 out of 28 States for IWDP, 11 out of 16 States for DPAP and 4 out of 7 States for DDP. The Department is making all efforts to get online Monthly Progress Report from all the States in order to make the system fully operational by the end of 2008-09. Additionally, a Special Officer of the Department has been dedicated only for monitoring and to bring the online monitoring system into a working mode.

[Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development),
O.M. No. Z-11014/4/2008-GC, dated 22nd August, 2008]

Recommendation (Serial No. 11, Para No. 3.39)

The Committee note that the Minister of Rural Development has taken up the issue of acquisition of agricultural land for setting up of SEZs with the Minister of Commerce and Industry and has emphasized that prime agricultural land should not be acquired for establishing

SEZs and these Zones need to be established invariably on wastelands. In unavoidable situation if it is necessary to acquire agricultural land for SEZs, the requiring body must develop equal area of wastelands simultaneously so that the loss of agricultural land could be compensated. While appreciating the initiatives taken by the Minister of Rural Development, the Committee strongly recommend to pursue this issue further with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Besides, the concerns of the Committee in this regard expressed while examining Demands for Grants of the previous year and reiterated here again should be brought to the knowledge of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Cabinet Secretariat. The Committee desire that not only in the case of SEZs including housing colonies whenever agricultural land is acquired for any non-agricultural purpose, it should be made mandatory on the requisitioning authority to develop at least an equal area of wasteland into agricultural land. Exemption from the development of equal area of wasteland into agricultural land may be considered only in the States where adequate area of wastelands is not available.

Reply of the Government

As already intimated, Ministry of Commerce and Industry has been requested that prime agricultural land should not be acquired for establishing SEZs and these Zones need to be established invariably on wastelands. In unavoidable situations if it is necessary to acquire agricultural land for a SEZ the requiring body must develop equal area of wastelands simultaneously so that the loss of agricultural land could be compensated.

Ministry of Commerce and Industry have advised the State Governments that in case of land acquisition for SEZs, first priority should be for acquisition of waste and barren land and, if necessary, single crop agricultural land could be acquired for the SEZs. They have also been advised that if perforce a portion of double cropped agricultural land has to be acquired to meet the minimum area requirements, especially for multi-product SEZs, the same should not exceed 10% of the total land required for such SEZ.

The observations of the Committee have been sent to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry for necessary action.

The observations of the Committee have also been sent to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation and to the Cabinet Secretariat for necessary action.

[Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development),
O.M. No. Z-11014/4/2008-GC, dated 22nd August, 2008]

Recommendation (Serial No. 14, Para No. 3.45)

The Committee are unhappy to note that an important scheme 'National Mission on Bio-diesel' that seeks to reduce country's 20 per cent import dependence on petroleum is still at a nascent stage even after submission of the Report by the Committee set up by the Planning Commission on 'Development of Bio-diesel' way back in April, 2003. The Committee have been informed that the aforesaid 'National Mission on Bio-diesel' seeks to obtain Bio-diesel from seeds of plants like *Jatropha* (*Ratanjot*) and *Pongamia* (*Karanj*) by their plantation on wasteland/degraded land available in different States. It is alarming to note that even after an elapse of five years since the submission of the report by the Committee set up by the Planning Commission on the aforesaid matter, the proposal has still not been approved by the Government. As per the latest information furnished by the Department on the above issue, the proposal has been processed by the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) on 9 October, 2006 and has been considered by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on 8 March, 2007 and currently is before the Group of Ministers (GoM) wherein a presentation by the Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Science and Technology and ICAR is awaited on the proposal. The Committee have further been informed that the next meeting is yet to take place. In this connection during the course of evidence, it came out that around 16.49 crore saplings of *Jatropha* and *Pongamia* plants have already been planted with an expenditure of Rs. 49.50 crore in different States and an early clearance of the proposal from the Group of Ministers is essential in order that this expenditure does not go waste. In this connection the Committee in their all previous Reports on Demands for Grants relating to the Department of Land Resources from 2004-05 onwards have been pursuing the Government for expeditious clearance of the proposal. The Committee are, however, constrained to note that the desired results are not forthcoming. Since the danger of loss of saplings as stated above is looming large for want of necessary funds, the Committee, therefore, once again recommend expeditious clearance of the proposal by the Group of Ministers so that Rs. 50 crore Plan outlay is utilised by the Department during 2008-09. While recommending for expeditious clearance of 'National Mission on Bio-diesel', the Committee may like to emphasise that the *Jatropha/Pongamia* cultivation in the country should be done without affecting the food security and agricultural land of the country.

Reply of the Government

To discuss the issues on launching of National Mission on Bio-diesel, first meeting of Group of Ministers held on 16/05/2007 and it was decided to have presentation on the proposal of launching of National Mission on Bio-diesel, Ministry of Rural Development, ICAR and Department of Science and Technology later on. Second meeting

of Group of Ministers held on 13/06/2008 and the Ministry of Rural Development, ICAR and Department of Science Technology made presentations before the GoM . Third meeting of GoM held on 9.7.2008 and it was the opinion that reliable data on various aspects of plantations of non-edible oil seed bearing trees is not yet available, and as work on plantation of about 6 lakh ha. and some commercial activities have already been initiated in several States, the demonstration programme proposed by MoRD would not serve the purpose. After discussion, it was recommended that National Mission on Bio-diesel of the Ministry of Rural Development need not be pursued further. Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development has taken up the matter with the Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture who is the Chairman of GoM to reconsider the proposal of the Ministry of Rural Development for setting up the National Mission on Bio-diesel.

[Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development),
O.M. No. Z-11014/4/2008-GC, dated 22nd August, 2008]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 22 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial Nos. 15 & 19, Para Nos. 3.52 & 3.66)

While reviewing the performance of IWDP during the Tenth Plan (2002-07), the Committee find that as against the outlays, the utilisation in terms of percentage of releases was 91.87 per cent, 91.58 per cent and 90.88 per cent respectively during the first three years of the Tenth Plan *i.e.* 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05. The Committee also find that in the remaining two years *viz.* 2005-06 and 2006-2007 of the Tenth Plan, utilisation in terms of percentage of releases was 100.47 per cent and 99.02 per cent. The Committee find that the reason for under-spending in the first three years of the Tenth Plan as indicated by the Department is that a large amount of outlays was utilised for meeting the committed liabilities of on going watershed projects as also failure on the part of North-Eastern States to utilise funds for these projects. For instance during 2002-03, out of Rs. 450 crore earmarked for IWDP as high as Rs. 150 crore was spent on meeting the committed liabilities of on going projects. Similarly during 2003-04 under-spending of Rs. 88 crore was due to non-receipt of new projects from the North-Eastern Region. Again during 2004-05 poor absorption of funds by North-Eastern States was the reason for slow progress. The Committee conclude from the aforesaid scenario that the expenditure position during the Tenth Plan has been satisfactory except in the case of the North-Eastern States where no new projects were demanded. The Committee, therefore, feel that there is an urgent need to review the position of development of wastelands in the North-Eastern Region. The various problems encountered in North-Eastern

Region have been dealt with in subsequent paras of the Report. Here the Committee wish to emphasize that all corrective action should be taken so as to ensure full utilization of outlay during the Eleventh Plan.

Recommendation Serial No. 15 (Para No. 3.52)

The Committee note that there are serious problems in the implementation of the watershed programmes in the North-Eastern Region including Sikkim. One of the issue, which needs consideration is the lack of coordination between different Departments of the State Governments which are mainly responsible for implementing watershed projects in the entire North-Eastern Region. Further, in view of the fragile nature of soil and vegetation in North-Eastern Areas, the Committee underlines the need for special care for preserving the original soil and vegetation while dealing with the land management in these areas. The Committee have been informed by the Department that a zonal meeting is planned in Shillong in May, 2008 for an interaction with the members of the North-Eastern Council. The Committee therefore, recommend that the aforesaid issues should be discussed at the ensuing Zonal meeting to be held in Shillong and the outcome of the same may be apprised to the Committee.

Recommendation Serial No. 19 (Para No. 3.66)

Reply of the Government

The Department will ensure full utilization of outlay earmarked for North-Eastern States in the XI Plan. A Regional Review Meeting has already been held in May, 2008 at Shillong in which all the North-Eastern States including Sikkim participated and exchanged their views and problems faced in timely implementation of the projects. An orientation for the operationalisation of the new Common Guidelines was also arranged by the Department. The roll out plan for the Common Guidelines, 2008 was explained in detail to the representatives of the North-Eastern States. A discussion was also held with the expert team of North-Eastern Council during the review meeting.

[Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development)
O.M. No. Z-11014/4/2008-GC, dated 22nd August, 2008]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 25 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial No. 21, Para No. 3.69)

The Committee, while examining the Demands for Grants of the previous year, had expressed serious reservations on the proposed restructured programme *i.e.* NPCLRM, now restructured as NLRMP.

The aforesaid reservations were again reiterated in 31st Action Taken Report (refer para 31) as under:—

- (i) the restructured programme would help only the good performing States and the worse performing States again would be at a disadvantageous situation;
- (ii) there is a peculiar problem in North-Eastern States where cadastral survey has not been done in some of the States and no land records exist. In view of this scenario, the Committee had strongly recommended the Government to continue SRA & ULR and address the shortcomings by restructuring some of its components.

The Committee would like the Department to clarify how the concerns expressed by the Committee while examining the Demands for Grants of the previous year and reiterated in the Action Taken Report would be taken into consideration in the restructured programme.

Reply of the Government

It is proposed to converge all activities under the NLRMP on a district, and to take the district as the unit of implementation. Since the States and UTs are at different levels of development and preparedness, a detailed sizing exercise has been undertaken to assess the magnitude of the problem and to design State-specific strategies and approaches customized to the local situations. Each State/UT, including the slow-moving States/UTs, have been requested to prepare and submit a perspective plan, beginning with work in at least one district in each State/UT, progressing in a systematic manner, and covering all the districts over time, so that all districts in all States/UTs are ready for ushering in the system of conclusive titles by the 12th Plan period. Hand-holding support would be provided under the programme and no State/UT will be allowed to unduly lag behind.

Land management system in large parts of the North-Eastern region consists of a wide variety of tenurial and cultivating arrangements, largely reflecting the customary laws and practices of different tribals, sub-tribals and clans. Accordingly, a different approach is proposed to be adopted for introduction of a land records system and carrying out survey operation for this purpose in the North-Eastern States. For this purpose, a study has been entrusted by this Department to the Centre for Rural Studies (CRS), Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), following which the special approach for the NE States will be worked out in consultation with those States.

The objectives and the systematic approach to be adopted for implementation of the NLRMP were discussed with the representatives of the North-Eastern States in the Regional Review Meeting held during

22nd to 24th May, 2008 at Shillong. The State Govt. representatives assured their full cooperation in implementation of the programme in the NE region.

[Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development)
O.M. No. Z-11014/4/2008-GC, dated 22nd August, 2008]

Recommendation (Serial No. 22, Para No. 3.74)

While reviewing the work done under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Computerisation of Land Records (CLR) so far, the Committee find that although a total of Rs. 321.13 crore has been released for CLR, very little work has been done at the ground level. For instance there are only three States *viz.* Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand which have completed the RoR data entry work and put the same on their website and stopped manual issue of RoRs. In the remaining States the progress varies from State to State. For instance Chhattisgarh has completed the RoR data entry work and put on the website. However, it has not stopped the issue of manual RoRs. Further, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal have completed the RoR data entry work and stopped issue of manual RoRs. However, these States have not put the RoR data on the website. Goa has completed data entry work only.

The Committee while reviewing the State-wise progress would like to emphasize that urgent steps should be taken to ensure that the RoR data entry work is completed in the remaining States and the data is put on the website. Besides where the RoR data work has been computerized, there is an urgent need to stop the manual issue of RoR. The Department should take the desired steps in this regard.

Reply of the Government

The Progress made under the Scheme of Computerisation of Land Records is being reviewed from time to time at various fora including the Conference of Revenue Secretaries of the States/UTs. The State Governments have been requested for completion of all activities under the programme.

The Progress in this regard is also being reviewed in the Regional Review Meetings being organized by this Department.

The State Governments which have completed computerization of RoR data, but have not stopped manual issue of RoRs or have not put the data on the website have been requested to indicate the reasons. On receipt of the same, the Committee will be apprised of the position.

[Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development)
O.M. No. Z-11014/4/2008-GC, dated 22nd August, 2008]

CHAPTER III

RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO
NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE
GOVERNMENT'S REPLIES

—Nil—

CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

Recommendation (Serial No. 12, Para No. 3.40)

The Committee while examining the Demands for Grants of the previous year had also recommended to have a National Land Use Policy (refer para 3.19 of 27th Report) which can guide the various State Governments in having laws with regard to the use of land for different purposes with the objective of balanced and harmonious use of land for different purposes. In this regard, the Committee note that the National Land Use and Conservation Board under the Ministry of Agriculture is dealing with the issue of the Land Use Policy. The Committee are concerned to note that no sitting of the aforesaid Board has been held for the last many years as informed by the Secretary, Department of Land Resources, during the course of oral evidence. The Committee deplore the way such an important national issue is being addressed by the Government. The Committee strongly recommend to take up the issue urgently with the Ministry of Agriculture so that a National Land Use Policy is formulated expeditiously. The Committee may be informed about the concrete action taken in this regard.

Reply of the Government

The recommendation of the Committee was sent to Ministry of Agriculture with the request that they may take necessary action to convene the meeting of the National Land Use and Conservation Board (NLCB) so that the issues relating to conversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes including SEZs, formulation of a National Land Use Policy etc. could be discussed. However, that Ministry has informed that Planning Commission has discontinued the National Land Use and Conservation Board *vide* their DO letter dated 13.8.2004 and accordingly it is not possible to convene the meeting.

[Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development)
O.M. No. Z-11014/4/2008-GC, dated 22nd August, 2008]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 16 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial No. 13, Para No. 3.41)

The Committee while examining the Demands for Grants of the previous year (refer para 3.19 of 27th Report) had been informed that the data with regard to the acquisition of land for Special Economic Zones is being collected by the Department from the concerned Ministry of Commerce and Industry. While examining the Demands for Grants for the year 2008-09 again, the Department have informed that the aforesaid data as asked by the Committee is being collected. The Committee fail to understand even after one year has elapsed since the Committee desired the aforesaid data, the same could not be collected from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The Committee while deploring the casual manner of the Ministry in this regard desired that the data should be obtained expeditiously and furnished to the Committee. Besides, the specific data with regard to the acquisition of agricultural land for setting up SEZs may also be obtained. The information in this regard may separately be asked for single crop, double crop and multi crop agricultural land.

Reply of the Government

The recommendation of the Committee has been sent to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry with the request to furnish the requisite data with regard to the acquisition of agricultural land for setting up SEZs, including single crop, double crop and multi crop agricultural land acquired for the purpose. Reply from that Ministry has not been received so far.

However, during the oral evidence of the representatives of Ministry of Commerce and Industry, taken by the Standing Committee on Rural Development on 3rd July, 2008, in connection with the Examination of the Land Acquisition (Amendment) Bill, 2007 and the Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill, 2007, they informed that the total extent of land in the 404 formal approvals for SEZs so far is 57,412.70 hectares.

As regards type of land, it was informed that the information is available with the respective State Governments and they have been requested to furnish the detailed information as per the proforma prescribed. Till date, information has been received in respect of 181 SEZs from 6 State Governments *viz.* Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab and Rajasthan. The total area of the land involved in these SEZs is about 16987 hectares. Out of this, 92% is reported to be barren/waste land and 7.5% of the land is single crop. The double crop land acquired for SEZs is negligible.

[Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development)
O.M. No. Z-11014/4/2008-GC, dated 22nd August, 2008]

Comments of the Committee

(Please *see* Paragraph No. 19 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial No. 16, Para No. 3.55)

The Committee note that the three programmes of the Department *viz.* Integrated Wasteland Development Programme (IWDP), the major programme of the Department related to wastelands development in the country alongwith two other area development programmes *viz.* Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP) have been merged into an integrated programme *i.e.* Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) during the Eleventh Plan. Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) is being implemented from the year 2007-08 *i.e.* the first year of the Eleventh Plan. The Committee note that during the year 2007-08 against the proposed allocation of Rs. 2086.46 crore, Rs. 1201 crore were provided at BE stage. The allocation was reduced by Rs. 35 crore at RE stage, thus Rs. 1166 crore were available during the year 2007-08. Out of Rs. 1166 crore, the expenditure as on 15 March, 2008 is Rs. 1160.64 crore. During the year 2008-09, Rs. 1875 crore have been allocated against the proposed allocation of Rs. 2750 crore. The Committee have been apprised that the Department have decided to complete 45,000 ongoing watershed projects in the first two years of the Eleventh Plan. The Committee further note that Rs. 6,522 crore have been proposed for the committed liabilities of ongoing projects during the Eleventh Plan. Even if the total allocation earmarked during the first two years under IWMP is taken into consideration, only Rs. 3,041 crore (Rs. 1166 crore R.E. of 2007-08 + Rs. 1875 crore B.E. of 2008-09) have been allocated during the aforesaid years. Thus, if only the committed liabilities are taken into consideration, there is shortfall of Rs. 3,481 crore even to meet the committed liabilities for the ongoing projects. The Committee fail to understand how the Department propose to meet the committed liabilities during the first two years of Eleventh Plan with the aforesaid shortfall in the allocations. Further the Committee are unable to comprehend how the new projects would be taken under IWMP with the meagre allocation of resources. The Committee conclude from the aforesaid scenario that the target of developing 25 million hectares of rainfed area during the Eleventh Plan seems to be a distant reality with the position of the allocation of resources during the first two years of the Eleventh Plan as being stated above. The Committee strongly recommend that desired initiatives should be taken to complete the 45,000 ongoing projects in the stipulated timeframe of two years so that the additional projects as per the modified guidelines can be taken up and the set targets could be achieved. The Committee strongly recommend that the Department should pursue with the Planning Commission/Ministry of Finance for adequate outlay under IWMP.

Reply of the Government

The Department has not committed that all the 45,000 projects shall be completed during the first two years of the Eleventh Plan. Rather, in view of the huge liabilities, the Department has proposed to focus on meeting only the committed liabilities of ongoing projects instead of creating new liabilities during the first two years of the Eleventh Plan. As the project period is of 5 years and the projects often extend beyond 5 years to be completed, the projects sanctioned towards the end of the Tenth Plan can only be completed at the end of the Eleventh Plan and some projects may also spill over to Twelfth Plan.

The Department is making all out efforts to complete the projects sanctioned prior to Eleventh Plan in time through continuous monitoring and interaction with the implementing agencies at various levels in the States.

[Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development)
O.M. No. Z-11014/4/2008-GC, dated 22nd August, 2008]

Comments of the Committee

(Please *see* Paragraph No. 28 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial No. 17, Para No. 3.61)

The Committee are constrained to note that as many as 357 Utilisation Certificates (UCs) amounting to Rs. 281.67 crore are outstanding as on 31 December 2007 in respect of the three Area Development Programmes of IWDP, DPAP and DDP. In this connection the Committee also find that out of these as many as 153 UCs pertain to IWDP and 115 UCs relate to DPAP involving approximately Rs. 60 crore each. Remaining 24 UCs relate to DDP amounting to Rs. 21.50 crore. The Committee further find that as on 20 March, 2008 there has been a slight reduction in the aforesaid outstanding UCs. For instance, under IWDP 91 UCs with an amount of Rs. 39.47 crore, under DPAP 101 UCs with an amount of 51.91 crore and under DDP 8 UCs with an amount of 12.45 crore are outstanding. From the available data, the Committee find that the major defaulting States are Assam, Kerala, Orissa, Manipur and Sikkim under IWDP; Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Uttarakhand and Maharashtra under DPAP; and Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Karnataka under DDP. The capacity constraints, weak monitoring and lack of will to track out older records etc. have been attributed as the reasons for the above

UCs remaining outstanding from various State Governments. The Committee fail to understand how the States like Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Orissa who have done considerable progress on e-governance are not submitting Utilisation Certificates in time. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend to pursue with the State Governments in this regard. The concrete action taken should be communicated to the Committee.

Reply of the Government

The Department has taken measures to obtain pending UCs from the concerned states. The states have been requested to mention the reasons for delay in submission of each pending Utilisation Certificate and a discussion on this has been held with the concerned states in the four Regional Review Meetings held so far at Chennai, Shilong, Dehradun and Udaipur. The concerned states have assured that the UCs shall be submitted in time in future. The Department shall also take up the matter with the remaining states at the fifth Regional Review Meeting to be held at Bhubaneswar during September-October, 2008. The Department has formulated Area Officers Scheme to ensure that pending UCs are expedited. These area officers will visit the States and pursue pending matters with State Governments. The matter of pending UCs is also being pursued through video conferencing.

[Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development),
O.M. No.Z-11014/4/2008-GC, dated 22nd August, 2008]

Comments of the Committee

(Please *see* Paragraph No. 31 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial No. 23, Para No. 3.75)

As regards the performance of CLR during the year 2006-07 and 2007-08, the Committee find that although the financial achievement is almost 100 per cent, there are serious shortfalls in the physical achievement. Against the physical target of installation of Hardware and Software in 75 sub-Divisions, the achievement upto 31st March, 2007 as indicated in the Outcome Budget is 2 sub-Divisions only. Again with regard to setting up of district data level centres for 50 districts, the achievement has been indicated as 27 districts. Various reasons like the delay in the release of funds by the States to implementing agencies, non-availability of data entry agencies and lack of trained staff to manage the Computer Centres have been cited as the reasons for under-performance. The Committee express serious concern over

the mis-match between the physical and financial achievement during the year 2006-07. During the year 2007-08 in the Outcome Budget in the Quantifiable Deliverables and achievement column the specific targets have not been indicated. The Committee express serious concern over not indicating specific targets during the year 2007-08. In this regard, the Committee would like that the physical achievement under the programme during the year 2007-08 may be indicated in clear terms so as to analyze the position of the implementation of the programme during the aforesaid year. Besides, corrective actions with regard to the various problems being faced in the implementation of the programme should be taken urgently so as to achieve the objective of computerization of land records in all the States within the stipulated time frame.

Reply of the Government

The Scheme of Computerisation of Land Records is demand driven and funds are released to the State Governments/UT administrations keeping in view the proposals received, physical achievements under the scheme and utilization of funds against releases made during previous years. During the year 2006-07 and 2007-08, major portion of funds was provided to the States/UTs for operationalization of the scheme at Tehsil level, scanning of old land records and digitization maps.

During 2006-07, while the targets of setting up of computer centres at Sub-division & District levels and monitoring cell at State Headquarters could not be achieved, operationalization of the Scheme was sanctioned in 773 Tehsils against the target of 100 Tehsils.

During the year 2007-08, implementation of the National Land Records Modernization Programme (NLRMP) was proposed. However, approval for the NLRMP could not be obtained. Accordingly, there was no separate provision under the CLR Scheme. However, funds to the tune of Rs. 41.24 crore were released to the States/UTs for digitization of cadastral maps and for operationalization of the Scheme in 64 more Tehsils/blocks, setting up of computer centres in 26 sub-divisions, 1 district land records data centre and 1 monitoring cell at State Headquarters.

[Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development),
O.M. No.Z-11014/4/2008-GC, dated 22nd August, 2008]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 34 of Chapter-I of the Report)

CHAPTER V

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

Recommendation (Serial No. 18, Para No. 3.63)

The Committee find that the per hectare norms of the treatment of wasteland were revised from Rs. 4000 per hectare to Rs. 6000 per hectare *w.e.f.* 1 April 2000. Eight years have passed since the per hectare cost was revised and the various State Governments have represented to the Parthasarthy Committee for increase in the per hectare cost of wasteland. In view of this, the Committee recommend that the issue of hike in per hectare cost needs to be examined by the Department. In this connection, the Committee would like to refer to their earlier recommendation made in this regard as reproduced below (refer para 4.30 of 27th Report):—

“the Committee would like to be informed about the existing practice indicating clearly whether the allocation is being made on project to project basis or at the existing rate *i.e.* Rs. 6,000 per hectare. Besides, the Committee may also be informed whether there is any noticeable cost difference between the development of wastelands and the rainfed area. The Committee feel that the major portion of the cost of wastelands/rainfed area goes towards the wages of labourers, since, these are labour intensive work. As such another fact which needs to be considered while fixing the cost of treatment of wastelands is the hike in the wages of labourers in different States.

The Committee while reiterating their stand in this regard would like that the aforesaid observations should be taken into consideration while arriving at the decision on the revised per hectare cost norms.

Reply of the Government

The recommendation of the Committee complied and proposal for the approval of Expenditure Finance Committee of Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance has been moved.

[Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development),
O.M. No. Z-11014/4/2008-GC, dated 22nd August, 2008]

Comments of the Committee

(Please *see* Paragraph No. 3 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial No. 20, Para No. 3.68)

The Committee note from the Outcome Budget that from the year 2007-08 onwards, Computerization of Land Records (CLR) and Strengthening of Revenue Administration & Updating of Land Records (SRA & ULR) and Comprehensive Modernization of Land Records (CMLR) have been shown as merged into National Land Records Modernization Programme (NLRMP). While examining the Demands for Grants of the previous year, the Committee had been informed that the aforesaid two schemes were proposed to be merged into the 'National Programme for Comprehensive Land Resources Management' (NPCLRM), which was proposed to be started on a pilot basis. The information furnished by the Department during the course of the examination of the current Demands for Grants indicates that the NPCLRM has been renamed as NLRMP and the programme is awaiting EFC Clearance, which would be placed before the Cabinet for approval thereafter. Besides the comments on EFC Note from some of the Ministries/Departments are still awaited. The Committee note that there is utter confusion with regard to the name and restructuring of the schemes related to land records and its computerization. The Committee fail to understand how a restructured programme can be implemented without getting EFC Clearance and the Cabinet approval. It is difficult to analyse the performance of such an important scheme in the absence of clarity with regard to guidelines and restructuring of the programme. The Committee strongly disapprove the way the planning and restructuring of the schemes is being made by the Department. The whole process of restructuring and preparation of guidelines should be completed before 1st April of the year in which a Five Year Plan starts so as to ensure effective implementation of the schemes. Almost one year has been wasted and till today, there is no clarity on the stand of the Department with regard to merging, restructuring of the Programme. The Department owe an explanation with regard to utter confusion in the implementation of the important schemes of the Department. The modalities and the guidelines of the restructured programme should be furnished to the Committee expeditiously.

Reply of the Government

As rightly indicated by the Committee, there has been delay in obtaining approval for the "National Land Records Modernization Programme (NLRMP)". However, approval of the 'Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC)' for the NLRMP has been obtained and the Cabinet Note has been sent to the Cabinet Secretariat for placing the same before the Cabinet for its consideration. Thereafter, detailed implementation guidelines for the programme shall be finalized and circulated among all concerned and a copy of the same shall be furnished to the Committee Secretariat.

[Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development),
O.M. No. Z-11014/4/2008-GC, dated 22nd August, 2008]

Comments of the Committee

(Please *see* Paragraph No. 3 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial No. 24, Para No. 3.76)

The Committee note that land records are vital documents. In the absence of proper land records, there are always apprehensions in the mind of a person who wants to purchase property. In the absence of a clear title, there is no guarantee that a person gets the conclusive right with regard to the property purchased by him. Besides, the land records are always needed for various purposes like getting loans from Banks and getting benefits under various schemes of the Governments like Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY). The efforts made by the State Governments with regard to updation and computerisation of land records are being supplemented by making allocations under the schemes related to computerisation of land records, now named as NLRMP. The Committee note that the thrust of the Government is on computerisation of land records. However, they wish to emphasise that the very purpose of computerisation of land records is defeated if proper land records are not available. Therefore, there is an urgent need, first of all, to have the correct and updated land records. The Committee feel that a solution to the problem should be sought through technological intervention. Nowadays e-enabled database through satellite imagery have been developed through which any plot of land or house can be easily located through the web. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that ways and means should be found out through technological intervention to achieve the objective of having correct and up-to-date land records so as to give the required security to the owner of the land. The Department should take the desired initiatives in this regard and inform the Committee accordingly.

Reply of the Government

The Department agrees with the observations of the Committee. The Schemes of CLR and SRA&ULR have supported the efforts of the States/UTs for updating and computerization of land records and have generated awareness amongst the masses about the benefits of the computerization of land records. However, much more needs to be done to reach the ultimate goal of ushering in the system of conclusive titles with title guarantee, which is essential for security of property rights, minimizing land disputes, efficient functioning of the economic operations based on land, and overall efficiency of the economy. Access to the conclusive titles data to the Cooperatives and other financial institutions would also facilitate credit operations, and bring the desired efficiency into the system.

With a view to achieving the above objectives, a modified scheme *viz.* the National Land Records Modernization Programme (NLRMP) has been formulated by merging the two Centrally Sponsored Schemes, namely, Computerization of Land Records (CLR) and Strengthening of Revenue Administration and Updating of Land Records (SRA&ULR). The NLRMP is concerned not merely with computerization, updating and maintenance of land records and validation of titles, but also a Programme that will add value and provide a comprehensive tool for development planning wherever location-specific information is required. Under the NLRMP, three layers of data : (a) spatial data from satellite imagery/aerial photography, (b) topographic maps and other data from the Survey of India , and (c) land records data – both records of rights (RoRs) and maps will be integrated and harmonized on a geographic information system (GIS) platform. The primary focus of the Programme will be on (i) providing citizen services, such as providing records of rights (RoRs) with maps to scale; other land based certificates such as caste certificates, income certificates (particularly in rural areas), domicile certificates; information for eligibility for development programmes, and passbooks, etc, and (ii) developing a comprehensive tool for supporting and planning developmental, regulatory, and disaster management activities. Ushering in the system of conclusive titles in the country is the ultimate goal of the programme, for which all the required activities shall be undertaken in a systematic manner, and the primary activities shall coverage in the district, and all districts in the country are proposed to be covered under the programme by the 12th Plan period, beginning with 1-2 district per State/UT this year.

Approval of the 'Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC)' for the NLRMP has been obtained and the Cabinet Note has been sent to the Cabinet Secretariat for placing the same before the Cabinet for its consideration.

[Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development),
O.M. No.Z-11014/4/2008-GC, dated 22nd August, 2008]

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 3 of Chapter-I of the Report)

NEW DELHI;
15 December, 2008
24 AgraHayana, 1930 (Saka)

KALYAN SINGH,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on
Rural Development.

APPENDIX I

COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT (2008-2009)

MINUTES OF THE ELEVENTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY, THE 15 DECEMBER, 2008

The Committee sat from 1500 hrs. to 1600 hrs. in Committee Room 'C', Ground Floor, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Kalyan Singh — *Chairman*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Mani Charenamei
3. Shri Sandeep Dikshit
4. Shri Hannan Mollah
5. Shri D. Narbula
6. Shrimati Jyotirmoyee Sikdar

Rajya Sabha

7. Shri Balihari Babu
8. Smt. T. Ratna Bai
9. Shri Prabhat Jha
10. Dr. Chandan Mitra
11. Shri P.R. Rajan
12. Ms. Sushila Tiriya

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri P.K. Grover — *Joint Secretary*
2. Shrimati Sudesh Luthra — *Director*
3. Shri A.K. Shah — *Deputy Secretary II*
4. Shri Vinod Gupta — *Under Secretary*

2. At the outset, the Hon'ble Chairman welcomed the members to the sitting of the Committee convened for consideration and adoption of three draft action taken reports on Demands for Grants (2008-2009) of the Department of Land Resources, Drinking Water Supply and Rural Development of the Ministry of Rural Development.

3. The Committee, thereafter, took up for consideration the Memorandum Nos. 2, 3 and 4 regarding draft reports on action taken by the Government on recommendations/observations contained in Thirty sixth, Thirty-seventh and Thirty-fifth Reports of the Committee on Demands for Grants (2008-2009) in respect of Departments of Land Resources, Drinking Water Supply and Rural Development under the Ministry of Rural Development. The Committee after deliberations adopted the aforesaid draft action taken Reports with a slight modification in the draft action taken Report of the Department of Rural Development.

4. The Committee then authorized the Chairman to finalise the aforesaid draft action taken Reports on the basis of factual verification from the concerned Department/Ministry and present the same to both the Houses of Parliament.

The Committee then adjourned.

APPENDIX II

(Vide Para 4 of the Introduction)

ANALYSIS OF THE ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE THIRTY-SIXTH REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT (14TH LOK SABHA)

I. Total number of recommendations	24
II. Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government: Para Nos.: 2.5, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.15, 3.16, 3.25, 3.26, 3.27, 3.34, 3.39, 3.45, 3.52, 3.66, 3.69 and 3.74	16
Percentage to the total recommendations	(66.67%)
III. Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's replies: Para No.: Nil	NIL
Percentage to the total recommendations	NIL
IV. Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee: Para Nos.: 3.40, 3.41, 3.55, 3.61 and 3.75	5
Percentage to the total recommendations	(20.83%)
V. Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited: Para No.: 3.63, 3.68 and 3.76	3
Percentage to the total recommendations	(12.5%)