

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:121
ANSWERED ON:27.11.2009
DISTRIBUTION OF PACKAGED FOOD
Singh Alias Pappu Singh Shri Uday

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has permitted United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF) to distribute packaged imported food for severely malnourished children in several States;
- (b) if so , the details thereof;
- (c) whether guidelines have been issued regarding distribution of packaged food to malnourished children;
- (d) if so, whether the guidelines have been followed in respect of the food being distributed to malnourished children by UNICEF;
- (e) if not, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- (f) the corrective steps taken by the Government to ensure compliance of guidelines by UNICEF?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH)

(a), (b), (c), (d), (e) & (f): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (a), (b), (c), (d) &(f) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 121 BY SHRI UDAY SINGH REGARDING DISTRIBUTION OF PACKAGED FOOD

(a) to (f) UNICEF had procured and supplied Ready to Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) called `Plumpy Nut` in the States of Madhya Pradesh (Khalwa Block) and Bihar (Kosi flood affected areas) between September, 2008-May, 2009, without any request or approval of Government of India and in contravention of Government guidelines. As soon as the procurement and distribution of RUTF by UNICEF came to the notice of Government, UNICEF was confronted for an explanation.

Since, their explanation was not found satisfactory and since the decision for procurement and distribution of supplies was taken by UNICEF in an unauthorized manner, UNICEF was conveyed that the mandate on declaration of emergency in any part of the country rests with the Government of India and not with the UNICEF. It was, therefore, not correct for UNICEF to have introduced this new component in contravention of Government of India Policy on its own. Further, as use of RUTF/Sprinklers are not accepted policy of the Government of India, any legal implications arising from this procurement shall rest with the UNICEF and not with the Government of India. Alongwith, UNICEF was directed to take following actions:

(i) Ship out the supplies out of the country by 15th June, 2009 and restore the funds of equivalent value of the RUTF supplies to GO-UNICEF India Country Programme for Child Development and Nutrition 2008-12.

(ii) Put all the activities relating to Child Development and Nutrition (CDN) on hold (unless otherwise specifically requested by the Ministry) till all the issues relating to supplies procured under the CDN Work Plan 2008 are clarified and Annual Work Plan for 2009 is approved.

In compliance of these directions, the UNICEF has reported that the stocks of RUTF have been sent outside the country and an amount of US \$880,000 has been restored to GO-UNICEF Country Programme for Child Development and Nutrition. UNICEF has further assured that Annual State Work Plans are accordance with their Annual Work Plan for the country. Further, in order that it does not recur, the following decisions of the Government of India have been conveyed to the UNICEF.

(a). UNICEF should not act on any request received directly by it from State Governments. Any request for supplies or activities would be referred to the concerned Ministry of GOI for a decision under intimation to the nodal Ministry i.e. Ministry of Women and Child Development. States/UT Government have also been apprised of this decision of the Government of India.

(b). UNICEF should, in future, respond to request for Vitamin A solution by State Governments only after specific clearance by Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

(c). UNICEF should ensure that State/UT specific Annual Work Plans are in accordance with the UNICEF Annual Work Plan approved

by the Government of India.

(d). Disbursal of medicines and other health and family welfare related supplies are to be made under the supervision of the State Health and Family Welfare Authorities with the knowledge/concurrence of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

UNICEF has confirmed discontinuation of use of RUTF and also that there would be no further imports of the RUTF by UNICEF unless and until there is an official request from the UNION Government. They have also assured their full compliance in this regard.