

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4550  
ANSWERED ON:22.04.2013  
CHECK ON DESERTIFICATION  
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**Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the Government has identified the areas under threat of desertification in the country;
- (b) if so, the details of such areas, State-wise;
- (c) whether the Government has submitted any proposal of the National Action Programme to Combat Desertification to the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

**Answer**

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

(a) The status of land degradation and desertification in the country has been assessed by several organizations, providing varied figures; the systematic spatial inventory has never been done before. The Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas (2007) was first ever attempt in the country to systematically carry out Desertification/land degradation Status mapping on 1:500,000 scale in the representation sites pertaining to arid, semi arid and dry sub humid areas, in both hot and cold regions in India.

India has a total geographic area (TGA) of 328 million ha, out of which drylands constitute an area of 228.3 million hectares (about 69.6 %). The drylands comprise of Arid areas covers 50.8 million hectares, Semi-Arid areas covers 123.4 million hectares and Dry sub-humid areas covers 54.1 million hectares.

The total area undergoing the process of land degradation in India is estimated at 105.48 million hectares, which constitutes 32.07 percentage of India's total land area. The area undergoing desertification is 81.45 million ha, which constitutes 24.78% of country's geographical area (source: Desertification Status Map, Space Application Centre, ISRO, Ministry of Space, 2007).

(b) Details of State wise statistics of the processes of desertification & land degradation are placed as Annexure I.

(c), (d) & (e) India submitted its National Action Programme (NAP) to Combat Desertification to the Secretariat of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in 2001; providing an overview of the status of natural resources in the country, the status and impacts of desertification, measures under implementation, and in particular, the initiatives taken for combating desertification.

Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) issues are being addressed through a number of programs of various Ministries/State Governments/UT's which include; Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP), National Afforestation Programme (NAP), National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPA), National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP), The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojagar Yojna (SGSY)/National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) and National Mission for a Green India, one of the Missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change, etc.