

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2849

ANSWERED ON:10.02.2014

REVIEW ON REPORT OF WGEEP

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

- (a) whether the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) has submitted its report to the Government;
- (b) if so, the details and findings thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has received comments on the report from the States and has decided to set up a committee to review the report of WGEEP in the country; and
- (d) if so, the details and the status thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (Dr. M. VEERAPPA MOILY)

(a) & (b) The Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) constituted by the Ministry of Environment and Forests has submitted its report to the Ministry. The major findings of the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel report inter alia include, (i) demarcation of ecologically sensitive zones in Western Ghats, (ii) measures for management of these ecologically sensitive zones, (iii) measures for preservation, conservation and rejuvenation of this environmentally sensitive and ecologically significant region and (iv) modalities for the establishment of Western Ghats Ecology Authority under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

(c) & (d) The Ministry of Environment and Forests has received comments on the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel report from all the six states of Western Ghats Region viz. Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

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

The HLWG submitted its report to the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) on 15th April 2013 and it was thereafter put in public domain by hosting it on the Ministry's website seeking comments of all stakeholders. The concerned State Governments were also requested to give their views. Thereafter, on completion of a transparent process, the Ministry has accepted the High Level Working Group (HLWG) Report "in principle" subject to certain stipulations as stated in Office Memorandum (OM) of the Ministry dated 20th December, 2013. A copy of this OM is annexed as Annexure-I