

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2850
ANSWERED ON:10.02.2014
REPORT ON WESTERN GHATS
Antony Shri Anto

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

- (a) whether the Government has issued any directives on Western Ghats to various State Governments based on the report of High Working Group chaired by Dr. K. Kasturirangan;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has received any complaints from various stakeholders including State Governments and civil society organizations etc. regarding the adverse impact on the implementation of the recommendations of Madhav Gadgil and High Level Working Group on Western Ghats;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government to redress the grievances in this regard?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) The Ministry had issued Directions under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 dated 13th November 2013, with a view to provide immediate protection to the Western Ghats and maintain its environmental integrity considering unprecedented threats to natural landscape of Western Ghats region. As per these Directions, five categories of new and/or expansion projects/activities which have maximum interventionist and damaging impacts on ecosystems would not be considered for granting Environmental Clearance in the Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA), as identified by the HLWG, in the Western Ghats.

(c) (d) & (e) The Ministry had received comments from stakeholders including from concerned State Governments and central Ministries on the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel report. The Ministry had constituted a High Level Working Group 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.

The Ministry has also received representations from stakeholders on the HLWG recommendations with respect to the issues relating to land use, agriculture, plantations and continued occupation of land in possession of local people as also on the status of ongoing projects/ activities. The Ministry has addressed these concerns through the OM issued on 20th December 2013 (Annexure I). The OM brings out the salient recommendations of HLWG which have been accepted "in-principle" by the Ministry and also provides clarifications on issues mentioned above.