

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2876  
ANSWERED ON:10.02.2014  
ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCES TO ROAD PROJECTS  
Viswanathan Shri P.

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

- (a) whether the Government has received any complaints from the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways regarding the delay in getting environmental clearances for road projects in the country;
- (b) if so, the details of the projects cleared and the reasons for the projects pending for clearance along with the time limit laid down for environment and forest clearances to road projects in the country;
- (c) whether the Government has exempted the provisions of Forest Rights Act, 2006 with regard to road projects in the country;
- (d) if so, whether the Government is considering uniform Terms of Reference to grant environmental clearances to road projects in the country; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

**Answer**

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

(a) and (b) Ministry of Road Transport and Highways requested the Ministry to expedite the approval process and de-link environment and forests clearances. 256 Highway projects were granted environmental clearance under the Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006. As on date, 7 highway projects are under consideration for environmental clearance. Details are placed at Annexure I.

(b) Ministry vide letter dated 5th February, 2013 informed the States and union Territories that Proposals seeking prior approval of Central Government under the Forests (Conservation) Act, 1980 for projects like construction of roads, canals, laying of pipelines/ optical fibres and transmission lines etc, where linear diversion of use of forest land in several villages are involved, unless recognised rights of Primitive Tribal Groups and Pre- Agricultural/ Communities are being affected, are exempted from the requirement of obtaining consent of the concerned Gram Sabha(s).

(c) to (e) Process of obtaining Terms of Reference (ToRs) for widening of Highways has been waived. Environmental Impact Assessment studies for Highway widening projects can now be carried out by the project proponents as per the model ToRs. The other steps taken by the Ministry to speed up the environmental clearance process under the Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006 include :

- i. De-linking of Environmental clearance and Forests clearances.
- ii. Exempting National Highway widening projects up to 100 km with additional Right of Way/ land acquisition of 40 m in main alignment and 60 m in bye pass alignments from getting prior Environmental clearance.
- iii. No separate clearance for borrow areas for soil and earth for Highway projects. Such projects can be considered along with the Environmental clearance for Highway projects.