

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2885  
ANSWERED ON:10.02.2014  
ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE AREA  
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**Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the Government has notified the Western Ghats as ecologically sensitive area in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the activities banned in such areas;
- (c) whether all the recommendations of the Kasturirangan Committee have been accepted by the Government in this regard;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the date since which the ban on such activities is likely to be effected and the fate of earlier projects which are under process?

**Answer**

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

(a) & (b) The Ministry has not issued any draft notification for the declaration of Ecologically Sensitive Area in Western Ghats as identified by the High Level Working Group under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

(c) (d) & (e) The Ministry has accepted the High Level Working Group (HLWG) Report "in principle" subject to certain stipulations vide Office Memorandum (OM) of the Ministry dated 20th December 2013 after completion of the consultation process with the stakeholders. The OM brings out the salient recommendations of the HLWG which have been accepted "in-principle" by the Ministry and also provides clarifications on 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 had also issued Directions under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 dated 13th November 2013, wherein, the following 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 from 17th April 2013:

- (a) Mining, quarrying and sand mining
- (b) Thermal Power Plants
- (c) Building and construction projects of 20,000 sq. m. area and above
- (d) Township and area development projects with an area of 50 ha and above and /or with built up area of 1,50,000 sq. m. and above
- (e) Red category of industries

Cases received before 17th April 2013 and which are pending with the concerned Expert Appraisal Committees and/or the Ministry of Environment and Forests or the State Level Expert Appraisal Committees and/or State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authorities will be dealt under the guidelines and rules applicable at the time of application.