

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2910
ANSWERED ON:10.02.2014
AMENDMENT IN ENVIRONMENT AND FOREST POLICIES
Pala Shri Vincent H

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

- (a) whether the Environment and Forest Policies framed in the country are uniformly applicable across the country;
- (b) if so, whether there is any need for making exception for States, including North- East where forest wealth is in abundance so that the tribal lives and economy are enriched; and
- (c) if so, the measures taken to make changes in environment and forest policies so that North Eastern States which are abundant in forest wealth made rapid economic progress?

Answer

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

(a) Yes Sir. The National Environment Policy, 2006 is a response to our national commitment to a clean environment, mandated in the Constitution in Articles 48 A and 51 A (g), strengthened by judicial interpretation of Article 21. It is recognized that maintaining a healthy environment is not the state's responsibility alone, but also that of every citizen. A spirit of partnership should thus be realized throughout the spectrum of environmental management in the country. While the state must galvanize its efforts, there should also be recognition by each individual - natural or institutional, of its responsibility towards maintaining and enhancing the quality of the environment. The National Environment Policy, 2006 is uniformly applicable across the country.

The National Forest Policy, 1988 is a policy at Central level to ensure environmental stability and maintenance of ecological balance including atmosphere equilibrium which are vital for sustenance of all life forms, human, animal and plant. This is applicable to all State Governments. However, the aim of National Forest Policy, 1988 regarding the area under forest is to have a minimum of one-third of the total land area of the country under forest or tree cover. In hills and in mountainous regions, the aim is to maintain two-third of the areas under such cover in order to prevent erosion and land degradation and to ensure the stability of the fragile eco-system.

Further, the Forest Policy provides that the life of tribals and other poor living within and near forest revolves around forests. The rights and concessions enjoyed by them should be fully protected within the carrying capacity of forests.

(b) The Ministry does not consider any need for making exception for States, including North- East as protection of Environment is the fundamental duty of every citizen across the country.

(c) Does not arise.