

**COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES**

(1999-2000)

THIRTEENTH LOK SABHA

SECOND REPORT

(REQUEST FOR DROPPING OF ASSURANCES)  
(Presented to Lok Sabha on 25.08.2000)

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT



NEW DELHI

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COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON  
GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES\*  
(1998-99)

Chairman

Shri E. Ahamed

Members

2. Shri Amrik Singh Aliwal
3. Shri Mohd. Ali Ashraf Fatmi
4. Shri Vijay Goel
5. Shri Tarun Gogoi
6. Shri Ganga Ram Koli
7. Shri Sanat Kumar Mandal
8. Shri Rupchand Pal
9. Shri Hari Kewal Prasad
10. Shri A. Venkatarami Reddy
11. Shri Dileep Sanghani
12. Shri A Siddaraju
13. Shri Sartaj Singh
- \*\*14. Dr. Sunguna Kumari Chelia Melia
- \*\*\*15. Shri Uttamrao Deorao Patil

Secretariat

- |    |                     |   |                      |
|----|---------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1. | Dr. A.K. Pandey     | - | Additional Secretary |
| 2. | Shri P.D.T. Achary  | - | Joint Secretary      |
| 2. | Shri K. Chakraborty | - | Deputy Secretary     |
| 3. | Ms. J.C. Namchy     | - | Assistant Director   |

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\* The Committee was nominated by the Speaker w.e.f. August 6,1998 vide Para No.553 of Lok Sabha Bulletin Part-II dated August 6, 1998

\*\* Nominated to the Committee on August 20, 1998 as published vide para No. 585 of Lok Sabha Bulletin-Part II, dated August 20, 1998 vice, 1998 Shri Arjun Charan Sethi resigned.

\*\*\* Nominated to the Committee on December 3, 1998 as published vide para No. 768 of Lok Sabha Bulletin-Part II, dated December 3, 1998 vice shri Prithviraj D. Chavan resigned.

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON  
GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES\*  
(1999-2000)

\_Chairman

Dr. S. Venugopal

Members

2. Shri E. Ahamed
3. Shri Haribhai Chaudhary
4. Shri Padam Sen Choudhry
5. Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi
6. Adv. Uttamrao Dhikale
7. Shri Brahma Nand Mandal
8. Shri Sudarsana E.M. Natchiappan
9. Shri Rupchand Pal
10. Shri Ravindra Kumar Pandey
11. Shri Sukhdeo Paswan
12. Dr. Prasanna Kumar Patasani
13. Shri Jitendra Prasada
14. Shri Maheshwar Singh
15. Shri Manoj Sinha

Secretariat

1. Dr. A.K. Pandey - Additional Secretary
2. Shri P.D.T. Achary - Joint Secretary
3. Shri K. Chakraborty - Deputy Secretary
4. Ms. J.C. Namchyo - Assistant Director

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\* The Committee was nominated by the Speaker w.e.f. December 28,1999 vide Para No.327 of Lok Sabha Bulletin Part-II dated December 28, 1999

## INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of the Committee on Government Assurances having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Report of the Committee on Government Assurances.

The Committee (1999-2000) was constituted on December 28, 1999.

The previous Committee (1998-99) at their sittings held on September 1, 1998 and September 19, 1998 considered inter-alia Memoranda Nos. 1,2,5, 8,10,11,12,14,16 and 25 containing requests received from the Ministries/Departments of the Government of India for dropping of pending assurances.

As the 12 Lok Sabha dissolved prematurely report on the subject could not be considered by the previous Committee.

At their sittings held on August 22, 2000, the present Committee (1999-2000) considered and adopted the draft Report.

The Minutes of the aforesaid sittings of the Committee form part of this Report (Appendices).

The conclusions/observations of the Committee are contained in this Report.

NEW DELHI;

August 22, 2000

Sravana 31, 1922(Saka)

DR. S. VENUGOPAL

Chairman

Committee on Government Assurances

## CHAPTER I

### (i) Elections to Panchayati Raj Institutions

1.1 On March 11, 1996 Shri George Fernandes, M.P. addressed the following Unstarred Question No. 1173 to the Minister of Rural Areas & Employment :-

"(a) whether several States have been postponing election to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and urban local bodies;

(b) if, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether this does not amount to violations of the 73rd Amendment and 74th Amendment to the Constitution; and

(d) if so, the action the Union Government have taken or proposed to take in this regard?"

1.2 In reply to the above question, the then Minister of State in the Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment (Deptt. of Rural Development) (Shri Uttambhai H. Patel) stated as follows :-

"(a) & (b): Panchayats at all levels in Bihar and Tamil Nadu, at Zilla Parishad level in Goa, Manipur and Orissa and in hill districts of Uttar Pradesh should have been constituted immediately after the existing laws on panchayats in these States were brought in conformity with the constitutional provisions. Likewise, Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Orissa should also have held elections to Urban local bodies immediately after legislative formalities were completed. The Gram Panchayats and intermediate level Panchayats in Orissa which were dissolved in August 1995, should have been reconstituted by February, 1996. The State Government has intimated that they could not do so due to delimitation of constituencies which had to be revised.

(c) & (d): The matter is being pursued vigorously with the concerned States and it is expected that they will hold election soon."

1.3 Reply to parts (c) and (d) of the question was treated as an assurance and was required to be implemented by the Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment by June 10, 1996 i.e. within three months of the date of assurance given by the Minister.

1.4 The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. Note No. XVI/RA & E (7) USQ-1173-LS/96 dated August 8, 1997 have forwarded a copy of the request of the Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment for dropping of the aforesaid assurance on the following grounds :-

"That a few States/UTs have yet to conduct Panchayat elections. These are Bihar, Pondicherry, Lakshwadeep and Goa. In the case of Bihar, Pondicherry and Lakshwadeep, the matter is subjudice. Therefore, it may not be possible to fulfil the Assurance until and unless the matter is finally decided by the Hon'ble Courts. So far as elections in Goa (due at District level Panchayats only) is concerned, the State Government has intimated that as it is for the first time that elections are held for District level Panchayats (Zilla Parishads) in the State, they have to build all the infrastructure, before holding the elections. As this process may take some time, it may not be possible to hold elections at an early date. Thus, in the circumstances, it is difficult to complete Panchayat elections in all the above States/UTs within a definite time-frame.

In view of the position explained in the preceding paragraph, the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs is requested to consider dropping the assurance. However, this Ministry will continue to pursue the matter vigorously with the States/UTs to complete the elections as early as possible."

1.5 The Committee considered the request of the Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment for dropping the assurance at their sitting held on September 1, 1998.

1.6 The Committee did not agree to drop the assurance as they observed that the last communication received from the Ministry was in August 1997 and subsequent developments in that regard had not been communicated.

1.7 The Committee have been informed by the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment vide their OM No. H-11015/1/98-PR dated 26.1.1998 that the State Government of Bihar would hold Panchayat elections as soon as the judgement of Supreme Court is announced. In case of Goa, it is stated that elections of Zilla Parishads are due in Goa. It has further been stated that the process of delimitations of urban areas and earmarking of constituencies are yet to be finalised by the State Government. The Government of Goa had intimated that they would conduct elections as soon as decisions are taken. The Committee have been informed that in the U.T. of Pondicherry, steps had been taken to conduct Panchayat elections but the High Court of Chennai passed stay orders against the conduct of Panchayat elections. In case of Lakshwadeep it is stated the Panchayat elections were conducted on 14.12.1997.

1.8 The Committee note that Panchayati elections in the States of Bihar and Goa and UT of Pondicherry have not been held due to one reason or other. In case of Bihar and Pondicherry, the Committee note that Panchayati elections have not been held as the matter is before the Supreme Court and High Court of Chennai respectively. The Committee, however, have not been informed as to the reason for going before the Supreme Court and High Court of Chennai as a result of which Panchayati elections could not be held. The Committee would like to be informed of the brief particulars of the case before the Supreme Court as well as in High Court of Chennai.

1.9 The Committee would also like to be apprised of the position in Goa. The Committee would like the Ministry of Rural Areas & Employment to persuade the

State of Goa to expeditiously finalise the process of delimitations of certain areas and earmarking of constituencies so as to hold Zilla Parishad level elections at the earliest. The Committee are not aware whether the aforesaid States have already taken necessary steps to bring in conformity the existing laws on Panchayats prevailing there in conformity with the constitutional provisions. The Committee would like the Union Government to impress upon all the States to do so expeditiously and inform the Committee about the latest position.

(ii) Accommodation for Government Employees

1.10 On September 4, 1996, Shri S. Ajay Kumar, MP addressed the following Unstarred Question No. 4251 to the Prime Minister :-

"(a) whether Government propose to construct new type II quarters for Central Government Employees in Delhi for easing the housing problems of these low paid employees;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?"

1.11 The then Minister of State in the Ministry of Urban Affairs & Employment (Dr. U. Venkateswarlu) gave the following reply :-

"(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 540 Type-II quarters at Dev Nagar and 515 Type -II quarters at Mata Sundari Road area are proposed to be constructed.

(c) Does not arise in view of 'b' above."

1.12 Reply to part (b) of the question was treated as an assurance which was to be fulfilled within three months of the date of the reply i.e. by December 3, 1996.

1.13 On March 14, 1997, the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. Note No. II/UAE (24) USQ-4251-LS/96 dated March 14, 1997 forwarded a request of the Ministry of Urban Affairs & Employment to drop the assurance on the ground indicated below :-

"... The matter has been examined in detail and it is felt that a categorical reply was given to parts (a) and (b) of the said question. In reply thereto, it was mentioned that Government propose to construct 540 Type-II quarters at Dev Nagar and 511 quarters at Mata Sundari Road, New Delhi. This reply should not have been treated as an assurance.



In this connection, it is now submitted that whereas the Government have already decided to construct new Government quarters as mentioned in para 2 above, the construction of the same will be taken up in phases and will also depend on the availability of funds to be provided for this purpose. The proposal to construct these Quarters is a part of the larger proposals for the construction of general pool quarters in Delhi. The construction of large number of quarters as mentioned in reply to the Question, will take a long time. It may, therefore, not be possible to fulfil the assurance within a short span of time of 2-3 years.

The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs is, therefore, requested kindly to approach the Committee on Government Assurances (Lok Sabha) with a request kindly to drop this assurance."

1.14 The Committee considered the request of the Ministry of Urban Affairs & Employment for dropping the assurance at their sitting held on September 19, 1999.

1.15 The Committee did not agree to drop the assurance. The decision of the Committee was accordingly conveyed to the Ministry of Urban Affairs & Employment and that Ministry was requested to furnish latest position with regard to construction of accommodation for Government employees. The Committee fail to understand as to why the Ministry did not bother to send any reply in this regard. The Committee observed that the Quarters are essential for the Government employees as there is shortage of accommodation in Delhi and the rent of private accommodation is abnormally high and beyond the reach of Government employees. However, the Committee find that the approach of the Ministry to this acute problem lacks the required seriousness and enthusiasm. The Committee deplore such lackadaisical attitude of the Government. Instead of saying that the assurance cannot be fulfilled within two to three years, the Ministry should have informed the Committee about the time schedule, the funds involved and the likely date of completion. The Committee deplore such indifferent and listless attitude of the Ministry to such an important issue and desire that the latest position with regard to construction of Government accommodation may be furnished at the earliest.

## CHAPTER II

### (i) Tapping of Non-Conventional Energy Sources

2.1 On March 6, 1996, Smt. Bhavana Chikhalia and Dr. K.D. Jeswani, M.P. addressed the following Starred Question No. 91 to the Prime Minister :-

"(a) the total allocation made during the last three years for various approved projects of Non-Conventional Energy Sources, State-wise;

(b) the details of projects submitted/approved during 1995-96;

(c) the total amount spent in this sector during the last three years till date; and

(d) the details of the future plans for taping Non-Conventional Energy Sources, State-wise?"

2.2. In reply to the above question, the then Minister of State in the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources (Prof. P.J. Kurien) stated as follows :-

"Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources take up programme such as Biogas, Improved Chulhas, Wind, Small Hydro, Solar, Biomass, etc. generally on a national basis and no State-wise allocation of funds is made annually. Release of funds to State Governments and State Nodal Agencies is based on the proposals received and the progress achieved in on-going projects during the financial year."

2.3 The year-wise plan allocation to the Ministry during the last three years is as follows :-

Year	Amount (in crores)
1992-93	128
1993-94	204
1994-95	225
Total	<u>557</u>

The total plan expenditure of the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources during 3 years i.e. 1992-93 to 1994-95 is about Rs.528 crores.

The strategy of the Ministry is to give greater thrust to the development of grid quality power through non-conventional energy sources such as Wind, Small Hydro, Biomass and Solar Photovoltaic sources so that in the next plan period a sizeable part of the total installed electricity generation capacity is contributed by non-conventional energy

sources. It is also proposed to increase the coverage of decentralised power and energy systems through programmes on a national basis, the State-wise priorities being determined by the resources and local conditions of the particular State and the region."

2.4 The above reply to the question was treated as an assurance and was required to be implemented by the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources by June, 5, 1996 i.e. within three months of the date of assurance given by the Minister.

2.5 The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. Note No. XVI/N.C.E.S. (1) SQ-91-LS/96, dated October 25, 1996 had forwarded a request of the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources for dropping of the aforesaid assurance on the following grounds :-

"It is submitted that the above mentioned Assurance is of general nature and not of a specific nature. The Assurance given by the Government in the Lok Sabha indicates the strategies, approach, policies and directions of the Ministry so that the increased decentralised power is generated through local resources in different States/regions of the country. Such a general promise cannot be fulfilled in specific terms.

Keeping in view the fact that the availability of resources as well as complexity of the local situations are main constraints in expanding the coverage of decentralised power and energy systems, continuous efforts are being made by devising suitable policy environment and adopting appropriate strategies not only at the national level but also by the States and Union Territories. The favourable policies and programmes of the Ministry are expected to lead to rapid growth in the utilisation of non-conventional energy sources in the country on long-term basis."

2.6 The Committee considered the request of the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources for dropping the assurance at their sitting held on September 1, 1998. The Committee decided to drop the assurance.

2.7 The Committee acceded to the request of the Ministry that the assurance is of a general nature and that general promise cannot be fulfilled in specific terms. The Committee feel that rural people have not yet been properly educated about the use of natural resources like wind, water and solar energy. The Committee would like the Government to popularise it through advertisement on radio, TV especially in the hills, where the receipt of annual rainfall is on higher side and rain inundate the rivers, streams and rivulets in wet season, but during dry seasons, the people living in the towns and villages in these hills face hardship even for drinking water.

2.8 The Committee note that the plan allocation to the Ministry from 1993 to 1995 was a meagre sum of Rs.557 crores. However, that sum proved more than sufficient and the total expenditure of Ministry was Rs.528 crores only. The Committee feel that the Ministry should be able to provide greater thrust to their strategies, approaches and

policies towards expanding the coverage of decentralisation of power and energy system which should act as a viable alternative to the conventional sources of electricity generation. However, much is confined to generalities and strategies and mode of execution lacks the required propelling. Much could be done particularly acquainting the masses about the utility and benefits of non-conventional energy sources through the media and other means. The Committee hope that favourable policies and programmes of the Ministry would lead to rapid growth of non-conventional energy sources.

(ii) Technical Committee for Airbus

2.9 On November 28, 1996, Shri P.C. Thomas, MP addressed the following Unstarred Question No. 1040 to the Minister of Civil Aviation :-

"(a) whether the Government have constituted a Committee to carry out a thorough study to assess whether Airbus can be safely operated to/from Cochin Airport;

(b) if so, the composition of the Committee;

(c) the recommendations made by the Committee; and

(d) the reaction of the Government thereto?"

2.10 The then Minister of State in the Ministry of Civil Aviation (Shri C.M. Ibrahim) gave the following reply :-

"(a) & (b) : Yes, Sir. A Committee has been constituted with representatives of the Director General of Civil Aviation, Indian Airlines, CTE, Hyderabad and Airports Authority of India;

(c) & (d) The Committee has not yet submitted its report."

2.11 Reply to parts (c & d) of the question was treated as an assurance which was to be fulfilled within three months of the date of the reply i.e. by February 27, 1997.

2.12 The Ministry of Civil Aviation vide their U.O. Note No. H11016/CA/42/96-ACIA-USQ-1040 dated 28.5.98 requested for dropping of the assurance on the grounds indicated below :-

"The Technical Committee was constituted with the representatives of Director General Civil Aviation, Indian Airlines, Central Training Establishment, Hyderabad and Airports Authority of India regarding A-320 operations at Cochin. The Committee had submitted its report some time in December 1996

and had indicated a series of recommendations which involve district administration, Transport Department, Government of Kerala, Naval Authorities, Airports Authority of India etc. Accordingly, the matter has already been initiated and a meeting was held under the chairmanship of Joint Secretary on 14th February, 1997 at Cochin to follow up the recommendations of the Committee. In this meeting also a series of measures have been suggested which include availability of land from Port Trust authorities, blocking of rail/road traffic for landing of A-320 aircraft, technical examination of runway and other technical aspects. Since a number of measures are required to be taken over a period of time involving all the above mentioned agencies, no fix time schedule can be given for implementation of the recommendations of the Technical Committee."

2.13 The Committee considered the request of Ministry of Civil Aviation for dropping the assurance at their sitting held on September 1, 1998.

2.14 The Committee decided to drop the assurance as they felt that the action has since been initiated and some more time is required for fulfilment of assurance. The Committee hope that, by now, the implementation of the recommendation of the Technical Committee has been completed. The Committee may be apprised of the progress made in this regard.

iii) Introduction of Courses in Hindi by IGNOU

2.15 On December 2, 1996, Kumari Uma Bharti, MP addressed the following Unstarred Question No.1449 to the Minister of Human Resource Development :-

"(a) whether there is a proposal to start Library Science and Tourism Courses in the Indira Gandhi National Open University in Hindi;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the above courses are likely to be started in Hindi?"

2.16 The then Minister of State in the Department of Education in the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Shri Muhi Ram Saikia) gave the following reply :-

"(a) to (c) According to the information furnished by the Indira Gandhi National Open University the following programmes are on offer :-

Tourism Studies Programmes  
Certificate in Tourism Studies  
Diploma in Tourism Studies  
Bachelor in Tourism Studies

Library Science Programmes  
Bachelor of Library and Information Science  
Master of Library and Information Science

The programmes of certificate in Tourism Studies and Bachelor in Tourism Studies are being offered in Hindi also from January 1997 session. While the diploma in Tourism Studies in Hindi is expected to be on offer from January 1998 session.

So far as the programmes in Library Science are concerned the process of development and launching of these programmes in Hindi is on. It is expected that the Bachelor of Library and Information Science will be on offer in Hindi in January 1999 session."

2.17 The above reply to the question was treated as an assurance and was to be fulfilled within three months of the date of reply i.e. by March 1, 1997.

2.18 The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. Note No. III/H.R.D. (45) USQ-1449-LS/96 dated May 16, 1997 had forwarded a request from the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Deptt. of Education) for dropping the aforesaid assurance on the following grounds :-

"That the Unstarred Question No. 1449 for 2.12.1996 had sought information on the likely time by which IGNOU would be in a position to offer Library Science and Tourism Courses in Hindi. Accordingly, the "Likely" time-schedule has already been indicated in the reply. In view of the nature of the question which centres around a futuristic and long-term goal, the reply has been furnished accordingly in prospective terms. In the given circumstances, Deptt. of Education is of the view that the reply given in response to Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 1449 for 2.12.1996 may kindly be treated as final reply and not as an assurance."

2.19 The Committee considered the request of the Ministry of Human Resource Development for dropping the assurance at their sitting held on September 1, 1998.

2.20 The Committee acceded to the request of the Ministry of Human Resource Development and decided to drop the assurance. The Committee hope that the courses in Library Science and Tourism in Hindi have been started in the Indira Gandhi National Open University as scheduled.

iv) Alleged Fund Raising by Nehru Homoeopathic Medical College, Delhi

2.21 On November 24, 1992, Shri Manoranjan Sur, M.P. addressed the following Unstarred Question No. 32 to the Minister of Health & Family Welfare :

"(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned 'Fund raising drive stirs hornet's nest' appearing in the Indian Express dated September 1, 1992;

(b) if so, whether the Government has probed into the alleged irregularities in the collection of money for the silver jubilee celebration of the Nehru Homoeopathic Medical College;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the action taken or proposed to be taken against guilty persons?"

2.22 The then Minister of State in the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (Smt. D.K. Thara Devi Siddhartha) gave the following reply :-

"(a) Yes, Sir.

(b), (c) & (d) : The matter is being enquired into by the Delhi Administration through their Vigilance Department since allegations are against the Principal of Nehru Homoeopathic Medical College (NHMC) and Director Health Services, who are under the administrative control of Delhi Administration."

2.23 Reply to parts (b) to (d) of the question was treated as an assurance which was to be fulfilled within three months of the date of the reply i.e. by February 23, 1993.

2.24 The Committee reviewed the above assurance at their sitting held on September 1, 1998. The Committee noted that the Ministry had asked the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi to supply the necessary information which has not been received despite repeated efforts.

2.25 The Committee were of the view that as the matter falls under the administrative control of Delhi Government and the Union has no direct involvement the assurance may not be pursued further.

2.26 The Committee, therefore, dropped the assurance and accordingly the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare was informed.

2.27 The Committee note that the information sought by the Union Government is not usually received from the State Governments in cases where the matter involves allegations or is of a controversial nature. The Committee feel that the Union Government should not wash off their hands as the allegations quite often are of a serious nature. The Union Government should persuade the State Governments to pursue the matter to its logical end.

(v) Food Security

2.28 On August 27, 1996, S/Shri Madhavrao Scindia, Pinaki Misra, Dr. T. Subbarami Reddy, S/Shri Mullapally Ramachandran and Ananth Kumar addressed the following Unstarred Question No. 3188 to the Minister of Agriculture :-

"(a) whether the Food and Agriculture Organisation organised a national conference on June 3, 1996 in New Delhi, to study as to how far the Panchayati Raj System in India served as a delivery mechanism for food security;

(b) if so, the main observations and suggestions made therein and the outcome of the study;

(c) whether FAO has offered financial and technical assistance to India to build up the Panchayat level food security system; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?"

2.29 In reply, the then Minister of Agriculture (Shri Chaturanan Mishra) stated as follows :-

"(a) The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) organised a conference on 'Panchayati Raj - the key to Food Security' on 2-3 July, 1996 in New Delhi as a preparatory meeting to the World Food Summit being convened by the FAO in Rome in November, 1996. The conference discussed options relevant to India for attaining food security including, inter-alia, measures for developing the Panchayati Raj System to serve as an effective delivery mechanism for food security.

(b) The Conference observed that the Panchayats and local self-Government institutions can play a crucial role in ensuring household level, food and nutrition security in India and made the following recommendations :-

(i) Empowerment of Panchayats with suitable allocation of financial resources.

(ii) Building the capability of Panchayats for food security.

(iii) Education and Training of elected representatives and functionaries of Panchayats with a focus on sustainable food productivity through micro-level planning.

(iv) Developing of skills of small and marginal farmers and workers, appropriate cost, effective research, promotion of local off-farming, income/employment generation activities, etc.



(c) & (d) A project proposal aimed at developing a strategy so that food security for the poor is ensured through a self-reliant mechanism under the local level villages Panchayats has been posed to the FAO for seeking technical assistance amounting to US \$196000. The proposal is under consideration of the FAO"

2.30 Reply to part (c) & (d) of the question was treated as an assurance and was required to be implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture by November 26, 1996 i.e. within three months of the date of assurance given by the Minister.

2.31 The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. Note No. II/Agri. (12) USQ 3188 - LS/96 dated October 30, 1996 had forwarded a request of the Ministry of Agriculture for dropping of the aforesaid assurance on the following grounds :-

"...Every year this Ministry recommends several project proposals to the FAO for assistance under its Technical Cooperation Programme. Depending upon the availability of funds, priority attached to the subject matter of the proposal etc. the FAO finally agrees to provide assistance to some of these projects. Since FAO is an international organisation and a specialised agency of the United Nations over which we have no control, it is not possible for this Ministry (Government) to ensure approval for a particular project. This Ministry is not in a position to guarantee FAO approval of assistance to this project."

2.32 The Committee considered the request of the Ministry of Agriculture for dropping of assurance at their sitting held on September 19, 1998.

2.33 The Committee acceded to the request of the Ministry of Agriculture and decided to drop the assurance. The Ministry of Agriculture was informed about the decision of the Committee.

2.34 The Committee note that Panchayats and local self government institutions can play a crucial role in ensuring household level food and nutrition, security in India and as such their capabilities need to be enhanced, through more allocation of financial resources, training and education of elected representatives and functionaries of Panchayats with an enhanced focus on sustainable food productivity through micro level planning and promotion of skill of marginal farmers and workers, effective research, employment generation research activities etc. The Committee are also informed that the FAO has been approached for technical assistance amount to US \$196000. Pending the sanction of the amount, the Committee would not like the Government to sit idle. Despite the effective following up with F.A.O. the Committee would like the Government to arrange their own resources so that such projects do not remain unattended Food and nutrition security should not suffer due to lack of funds and if FAO fails to supply, the work should not stop, and the Government should come forward with suitable proposal for generation of resources and funding.

2.35 The Committee, however, are optimistic that by now FAO has favourably considered the project proposal submitted by the Ministry of Agriculture. The Committee would like the Government to hasten the steps envisaged in the proposal, especially when several parts of the country are facing severe drought situation.

(vi) Exploitation of Water Resources

2.36 On March 12, 1996, S/Shri Manoranjan Bhakta, Bhogendra Jha and Tara Singh, MPs addressed the following Unstarred Question No. 1411 to the Minister of Water Resources :-

"(a) the terms of the treaty executed recently between the Prime Ministers of India and Nepal regarding exploitation of the water resources of the Mahakali river;

(b) the funds likely to be allocated for this purpose; and

(c) the time by which the different projects are likely to be started?"

2.37 The then Minister of State in the Ministry of Water Resources (Shri P.V. Rangayya Naidu) gave the following reply :-

"(a) The important aspects of the Treaty 'The integrated Development of the Mahakali River including Sarda barrage, Tanakpur barrage and Pancheshwar Project' signed on 12.2.96; are :

1. Existing arrangements for supply of water to Nepal from Sarda barrage to be continued;

2. From the Tanakpur Barrage, water supply of 1000 cusecs in the wet season and 300 cusecs in the dry season as against 150 cusecs under the earlier agreement with Nepal;

3. Supply of electric power of 70 million Kwh to Nepal from Tanakpur power station against the earlier agreement to supply 20 million Kwh, free of cost;

4. Implementing the Pancheshwar Multi purpose project on Mahakali river in accordance with the detailed project report (DPR) being jointly prepared by both the parties, as an Integrated Project with power stations of equal capacity on each side of the river. The total energy generated shall be shared equally between the parties. The DPR shall be finalised within six months from the date of entry into force of treaty; and

5. Constitution of Mahakali River Commission to be composed of an equal number of representatives of both the countries to make recommendations to

both the parties on the steps necessary to implement the provisions of the treaty.

(b) Agreement for financing and implementation including establishment of the Pancheshwar Development Authority shall be negotiated and finalised within one year from the finalisation of DPR and the project shall be aimed to be completed within 8 years from the date of the agreement for its implementation subject to provisions of DPR. Both the countries shall share the cost proportionate to the benefits accruing to each which shall be worked out while finalising the detailed project report. Both the countries have agreed to endeavour to mobilise finance for the project to meet their respective shares."

(c) The Pancheshwar project is expected to be started within one year and six months from the date of entry into force of the treaty."

2.38 Reply to part (c) of the question was treated as an assurance which was to be fulfilled within three months of the date of the reply i.e. by June 11, 1996.

2.39 The Ministry of Water Resources vide their U.O. Note No. WR/8/14/96/665/LS-1411 dated 29.8.96 requested for deleting the assurance on the grounds indicated below :

"The reply to Parliament Question contains the summary of the Treaty 'The Integrated Development of the Mahakali River Basin' signed by the two Prime Ministers of India and Nepal on 12.2.96, which stipulates certain time frame for implementing the Pancheshwar Multipurpose project on Mahakali River. However, these time frames are related to the date of entry in to force of the treaty (see para 4 of the reply) which is the date of which the Nepalese Parliament ratifies the treaty as per the procedure in that country. Therefore, implementation of above time frame, depend upon the ratification of the Treaty by the Nepalese Parliament. Besides, it would also depend upon the positive response and timely cooperation forthcoming from Nepal as well as finance available."

2.40 The Committee considered the request of the Ministry of Water Resources for dropping the assurance at their sitting held on September 19, 1998.

2.41 The Committee decided to drop the assurance as it agreed with the views of the Ministry that the implementation of Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project on Mahakali River was dependent on the ratification of the treaty by Nepalese Parliament. The Committee are not aware whether the treaty has been ratified by Nepal. Nevertheless, the Committee are optimistic that both India and Nepal Governments would expedite all formalities to facilitate exploitation of Mahakali River for the benefits of the respective countries. The Committee would like to be apprised about the latest position in this regard.

(vii) Indo-Bangladesh Border Trade

2.42 On August 1, 1997, Shri Chitta Basu, MP addressed the following Unstarred Question No. 1719 to the Minister of Commerce:-

"(a) whether the Standing Committee attached with the Ministry of Commerce have since examined the potentialities of India-Bangladesh Border Trade;

(b) if so, the essential features of the report;

(c) the recommendations thereof; and

(d) the action taken thereon?"

2.43 The then Minister of State in the Ministry of Commerce (Dr. B.B. Ramaiah) gave the following reply :-

"(a) to (d) The Seventeenth Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce (1995-96) on 'Emerging Trade Prospects with Bangladesh' of December' 95 examined various aspects of India-Bangladesh trade including the Report. The observation of the Standing Committee related to the provisions for Border Trade in Article IV of the Indo-Bangladesh Trade Agreement of 28.3.1972 which could not be implemented due to hesitation on the side of the Bangladesh Government on various grounds. The Standing Committee, however, did not make any recommendation on Border Trade with Bangladesh. The Report was presented to Rajya Sabha on 15.12.1995 and laid on the Table of the Lok Sabha on 22.12.1995. A Sub-Committee of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce is looking into the various aspects of the development of potential for commerce in the North-Eastern region by encouraging trade with neighbouring and South-East Asian Countries including the possibilities of border trade with Bangladesh. The sub-Committee is yet to present its report."

2.44 The above reply to the question was treated as an assurance which was to be fulfilled within three months of the date of the reply i.e. by October 31, 1997.

2.45 The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. Note No. V/Com(6)USQ-1719-LS/97 dated 24.8.1997 forwarded a request of Ministry of Commerce for dropping of assurance on the grounds indicated below :-

".... that the Rajya Sabha Secretariat vide their D.O. letter No. Rs.2/5/97-SC, dated 22.1.98 (copy enclosed) have informed that it is not possible to supply copy of the Report of the Department related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce on their visit to the North Eastern Region as the Lok Sabha has been dissolved and that the Deptt. related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce has become defunct.

In view of the above reasons, it is requested that the Assurance may kindly be dropped from the list pending against the Ministry of Commerce."

2.46 The Committee considered the request of the Ministry of Commerce for dropping the assurance at their sitting held on September 19, 1998.

2.47 The Committee decided to drop the assurance. The Committee are optimistic that the Union Government would take all possible measures to explore the potentialities of the trade between the north eastern state of the country with Bangladesh.

(viii) Asian Railway Project

2.48 On December 5, 1996, Shri Sanat Kumar Mandal, MP addressed the following Unstarred Question No. 1997 to the Minister of Railways :-

"(a) Whether Bangladesh is not considering India transit facility to connect with the Asian highway and railway through Assam via Myanmar;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether this matter was discussed with the Bangladesh Government at any level;

(d) if so, the reaction of the Bangladesh thereto; and

(e) the manner in which the Government now contemplate to go ahead with its participation in the Asian Railway Project."

2.49 In reply, the then Minister of State in the Ministry of Railways (Shri Satpal Maharaj) stated as follows :-

"(a) to (e) : Under the Asian Land Transport Infrastructure Development Project, UN-ESCAP is considering to undertake a study to examine the feasibility of establishing a Railway Route in South Asia which would be passing through India, Bangladesh and Myanmar. While some preliminary information has been collected by UN-ESCAP, a full fledged study is yet to be undertaken."

2.50 The above reply to the question was treated as an assurance and was required to be implemented by the Ministry of Railways by March 4, 1997 i.e. within three months of the date of assurance given by the Minister.

2.51 The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. Note No. III/Rlys(20)/USQ-1997-LS/96 dated April 9, 1997 have forwarded a request of the Ministry of Railways for dropping of the aforesaid assurance on the following grounds :-

"...that Trans Asian Railway is being considered by UN-ESCAP under its Asian Land Transport Infrastructure with the main objective of providing Rail Link from South East Asia to Europe. While some preliminary information has been collected by UN-ESCAP, specific project proposals have not been formulated yet and no target date can be suggested for completion of the project. In view of the above, it is request that the assurance may be dropped."

2.52 The Committee considered the request of the Ministry of Railways for dropping the assurance at their sitting held on September 19, 1998.

2.53 The Committee decided to drop the assurance. The Committee feels that the project is in nascent stage and as such it requires some time for it to materialise. The Committee are optimistic that the country would be benefited by this project.

NEW DELHI;  
August 22, 2000  
Sravana 31, 1922 (Saka)

DR.S. VENUGOPAL  
Chairman  
Committee on Government Assurances

APPENDIX I  
(Vide Memo 1,2,5,8 & 10)

Minutes

Second Sitting

MINUTES OF THE SECOND SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON  
GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES HELD ON SEPTEMBER 1, 1998 AT 11.00  
HOURS IN COMMITTEE ROOM NO. 53, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, NEW DELHI

The Committee met on Tuesday, September 1, 1998 from 11.00 hrs. to  
12.50 hrs.

PRESENT

1. Shri E. Ahamed - Chairman

Members

2. Shri Prithviraj D. Chavan
3. Shri Ganga Ram Koli
4. Shri Rup Chand Pal
5. Shri Hari Kewal Prasad
6. Shri A. Venkatarami Reddy
7. Shri Sartaj Singh
8. Dr. C. Suguna Kumari

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri P.D.T. Achary - Joint Secretary
2. Shri K. Chakraborty - Deputy Secretary
3. Km. J.C. Namchyo - Assistant Director

2. The Committee considered the following memoranda regarding dropping of assurances :-

Memorandum No. 1 Request for dropping of assurances given on March 6, 1996 in  
reply to SQ No. 91 regarding Tapping of Non-Conventional  
Energy Sources.

The Committee took up for consideration the aforesaid request for  
dropping of the assurance in pursuance of the communication received from the

Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. No. XVI/NCES(1) SQ 91-LS/96 dated October 25, 1996 forwarding therewith a copy of the request of the Ministry of Non-conventional Energy Sources on the following grounds :

"It is submitted that the above mentioned Assurance is of general nature and not of a specific nature. The Assurance given by the Government in the Lok Sabha indicates the strategies, approach, policies and directions of the Ministry so that the increased decentralised power is generated through local resources in different States/regions of the country such a general promise cannot be fulfilled in specific terms.

Keeping in view the fact that the availability of resources as well as complexity of the local situations are main constraints in expanding the coverage of decentralised power and energy system, continuous efforts are being made by devising suitable policy environment and adopting appropriate strategies not only at the national level but also by the States and Union Territories. The favourable policies and programmes of the Ministry are expected to lead to rapid growth in the utilisation of Non-conventional energy sources in the country on long-term basis."

Noting that the assurance was of a general nature and that such a promise could not be fulfilled on specific terms, the Committee acceded to the request of the Ministry of Non-conventional Energy Sources for dropping of the assurance.

Memorandum No. 2 Request for dropping of assurance given on 11.3.96 in reply to Unstarred Question No. 1173 regarding Election to Panchayati Raj Institutions.

The Committee considered the aforesaid request for dropping of the assurance but could not accede to the proposal of the Ministry. The Committee were of the view that the States had not taken the election to the Panchayati Raj Institutions seriously. The Committee were not informed clearly by the Ministry about the issues which were sub-judice in the States of Bihar, Pondichery, Lakashadweep. The Committee observed that the last communication received from the Ministry was on August, 1997 and subsequent developments in that regard had not been communicated by the Ministry so far. The Committee were, therefore, of the view that the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment may be asked to furnish the latest position with regard to the elections to Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Memorandum No. 3 Request for dropping of assurance given on 15.3.95 in reply to Unstarred Question No. 429 regarding Demands of Ex-Servicemen.

The Committee considered the grounds advanced by the Ministry of Defence for dropping of the assurance in their OM No. 14(23)/96/US(WE)/D(RES) dated



October 16, 1996. The Committee noted that out of nine recommendations which were under consideration of Ministry of Defence, decision has been taken on five. The Ministry, however, requested for dropping of three recommendations relating to the lateral induction of Armed Forces Personnel in the Central/State Government, assured employment upto the age of 58 years, and raising the retirement age limit in respect of JCOs/ORS on the following grounds :-

"These recommendations relate to the recruitment policy and the basic terms of engagement of service personnel and hence will have wider implications. The Army HQrs. have formulated proposals in this regard. This being a major policy issue requiring consultation with the various Ministries/Departments like MHA, DOP&T and Ministry of Finance, it is not possible to fix any specific time frame for implementation of these recommendations. The Committee on Government Assurances are, therefore, requested to drop assurance for implementing the recommendations on these three demands."

The Committee were not convinced by the reasons advanced by the Ministry especially that of having a wider implications, if the above demands were implemented. The Committee desired that the Ministry of Defence be asked to furnish a detailed note in this regard. As regard the demand for upgradation of the artificial centres at Delhi and Pune and setting up of the ALSG at Bangalore, Calcutta and Chandigarh, which was under active consideration of Ministry of Defence, the Committee directed that the Ministry should be asked to finalise the proposal expeditiously in consultation with Finance Division and DG Armed Forces Medical Service.

About the six recommendations which were within the competence of the States, the Committee were of the view that a status report, State-wise should be obtained with regard to the follow up action taken in pursuance of the communication of the then Prime Minister, who had written to Chief Minister of States/Administrators of UTs to take action with promptitude on various issues relating to welfare and resettlement of ex-servicemen.

Memorandum No. 4 Request for dropping of assurance given on 8.5.97 in reply to USQ No. 5224 regarding Screening of Netaji Bose Documentaries.

The Committee considered the aforesaid request for dropping of the assurance but did not see substantial grounds to concur with the Ministry's proposal. The Committee were informed that it was not possible to make any firm commitment to telecast the documentary i.e., "Enemy of Empire" produced by BBC, as no offer had been made by the producer to Doordarshan to telecast. The Committee also noted that Netaji Research Bureau were not able to send the cassette in U-Matic to Doordarshan on the Documentary "Netaji and India's Freedom" and that telecast of the documentary was possible only when the cassette is furnished and the same is found suitable by Doordarshan. The Committee, however, took strong exceptions to the tone and spirit of certain observations of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting communicated

through their U.O. No. IV/I&B(15)/USQ-5224-LS/97 dated 18.5.98 and were of the view that Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, be asked to appear before the Committee to clarify.

Memorandum No. 5 Request for dropping of assurance given on 28.11.96 in reply to USQ No. 1040 regarding Technical Committee for Airbus.

The Committee considered the request for dropping of the aforesaid assurance in pursuance of the communication received from Ministry of Civil Aviation vide their U.O. No. H-11016/CA/42/96-ACIA-USQ-1040 dated 28.5.98. Ministry had informed that the Technical Committee constituted regarding A-320 operations at Cochin had already submitted its report and had indicated a series of recommendations which involve district administration, Transport Department, Government of Kerala and many other agencies. The Committee concurred with the Ministry's view that no specific time scale could be given for implementation of the recommendation of the Technical Committee as a series of measures have been suggested which include availability of land from Port Trust authorities, blocking of rail/road traffic for landing of A-320 aircraft, technical examination of runway etc. The Committee, therefore, acceded to the request of the Ministry of Civil Aviation to drop the assurance.

Memorandum No. 6 Request for dropping of assurances given in reply to various Unstarred Questions tabled from February 24, 1998 to May 4, 1995 regarding National Policy on Rehabilitation for displaced tribals.

The Committee considered the request for dropping of the assurance in pursuance of the OM NO. 16012/25/89-TDB dated 5 March 1998 from Ministry of Welfare. The Committee noted that as many as eleven assurances in regard to the National Policy on Rehabilitation for Displaced Persons have been pending. The Committee did not see enough reasons to drop the assurance. As several Ministries were involved, the Committee were of the view that the representatives of the concerned Ministries be summoned to explain to the Committee the latest position in this regard.

Memorandum No. 7 Request for dropping of assurance given on 16.12.1996 in reply to USQ No. 3306 regarding Ring Road in Agra, U.P.

The Committee considered the above Memorandum in pursuance of the Ministry of Parliamentary U.O. NO. III/ST(5) USQ-3306/LS/96 dated 2.7.1997 forwarding therewith a request of Ministry of Surface Transport for dropping of the assurance on the following grounds :-

"Proposal for construction of Ring Road in Agra, U.P. is at the stage of signing of agreement with Asian Development Bank who have to provide grant (technical assistance) for the feasibility study of the project. If the feasibility

study okays the project, the State Government of U.P. will be requested to send an estimate for the project for approval. Execution of the project will start only thereafter meaning thereby that it will take a couple of years to start/execute and finalise this gigantic project."

After considering the grounds advanced by the Ministry for dropping of the assurance, the Committee were of the view that Ministry of Surface and Transport be asked to furnish the latest position in regard to the construction of Ring Road in Agra to save Taj from vehicular pollution.

Memorandum No. 8 Request for dropping of assurance given on December 2, 1996 in reply to USQ No. 1449 regarding Introduction of Courses in Hindi by IGNOU.

The Committee considered the Memorandum for dropping of the assurance of communication received from Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. No. III/H.R.D.(45)USQ-1449-LS/96 dated May 16, 1997 forwarding therewith a request of Ministry of Human Resource Development to drop the assurance on the following grounds :-

"That the Unstarred Question No. 1449 for 2.12.1996 had sought information on the "likely" time by which IGNOU would be in a position to offer Library Science and Tourism Courses in Hindi. Accordingly, the "likely" time-schedule has already been indicated in the reply. In view of the nature of the question which centres around a futuristic and long-term goal, the reply has been furnished accordingly in prospective terms. In the given circumstances, Deptt. of Education is of the view that the reply given in response to Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 1449 for 2.12.1996 may kindly be treated as final reply and not as an assurance."

The Committee acceded to the request of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Deptt. of Education) for treating the reply to USQ No. 1449 as final reply, and not as assurance.

Memorandum No. 9 Request for dropping of assurance given on May 6, 1997 in reply to USQ No. 4790 regarding Voluntary Organisations.

The Committee considered the request for dropping the above assurance in pursuance of the communication received from Ministry of Environment & Forests vide their F. No. 7/6/97-E.E. dated 21.5.98 on the following grounds :-

"The information asked for by the Hon'ble Member of Parliament was required to be called from all the State/Union Territory Governments. Accordingly all the State/Union Territory Governments were requested to provide the information. In spite of Ministry's best efforts, information has still not been received from 11 States/UTs. Even in those cases where the States/UTs have responded, the information furnished by them cannot be

considered as complete. Since the 'Voluntary Organisations' working for the development of environment and protection of wildlife in the country are not obliged to register themselves with the State or the Central Government, it is very difficult to provide exact number of organisations. In so far as details regarding financial assistance to these organisations are concerned, the Ministry of Environment & Forests itself provides financial assistance to thousands of Voluntary Organisations every year under its various programmes like National Environment Awareness Campaign, Eco-clubs, Grants-in-aid to Professionals Information System etc. Besides this, the States/Union Territories also provide financial assistance to these organisations. While on the one hand it is almost impossible to provide exact information about the number of organisations working in these areas of activities, the information regarding financial assistance provided to each of these organisations during the last three years would run into several thousands of pages. It is obvious that the efforts needed to compile with information for fulfilment of assurance will not be commensurate with the result."

After discussing the matter in detail, the Committee were of the view that a Status Report be obtained from the Ministry in this regard. The Committee also decided to summon the representatives of the Ministry of Environment & Forests to indicate the latest position.

Memorandum No. 10 Request for dropping of assurance given on November 24, 1992 in reply to Unstarred Question No. 32 regarding Alleged Fund Raising by Nehru Homoeopathic Medical College, Delhi.

The Committee lastly took up for consideration the above Memorandum regarding alleged irregularities in the collection of money for the silver jubilee celebration of the Nehru Homoeopathic Medical College. The Committee agreed to drop the assurance, as the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare have no jurisdiction over Nehru Homoeopathic Medical College (NHMC) and Director Health Services, which are under the administrative control of Delhi Administration.

3. The Committee thereafter considered the draft tour programme prepared by the Secretariat. The Committee decided to visit Mumbai, Calicut, Chennai and Hyderabad from 7th October to 13 October 1998.

The Committee also decided to hold their next sitting (Third Sitting) on Saturday, 19th September, 1998 at 3 P.M.

The Committee then adjourned.

APPENDIX II  
(Vide Memo 11,12, 14, 16 & 25)

MINUTES  
Third Sitting

MINUTES OF THE THIRD SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES HELD ON SEPTEMBER 19, 1998 AT 1500 HOURS IN COMMITTEE ROOM NO. 62, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, NEW DELHI

The Committee met on Saturday, September 19, 1998 from 1500 hrs. to 1600 hrs.

PRESENT

Shri E. Ahamed - Chairman

Members

2. Shri Prithviraj D. Chavan
3. Shri Mohd. Ali Ashraf Fatmi
4. Shri Vijay Goel
5. Shri Tarun Gogoi
6. Shri Sanat Kumar Mandal
7. Shri Rup Chand Pal
8. Shri Hari Kewal Prasad
9. Shri A. Venkatarami Reddy
10. Dr. C. Suguna Kumari

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri P.D.T. Achary - Joint Secretary
2. Shri K. Chakraborty - Deputy Secretary
3. Km. J.C. Namchoy - Assistant Director

2. The Committee considered the following memoranda regarding dropping of assurances :-

Memorandum No. 11 Request for dropping of assurance given on 27th August, 1996 in reply to Unstarred Question No. 3188 regarding Food Security.

The Committee took up for consideration the aforesaid request for dropping of the assurance in pursuance of the communication received from the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. No. II/Agri.(12)USQ 3188-LS/966 dated October 30, 1996 forwarding therewith a copy of the request of the Ministry of Agriculture to drop the assurance on the following grounds :

"Every year this Ministry recommends several project proposals to the FAO for assistance under its Technical Cooperation Programme. Depending upon the availability of funds, priority attached to the subject matter of the proposal etc. the FAO finally agrees to provide assistance to some of these projects. Since FAO is an international organisation and a specialised agency of the United Nations over which we have no control, it is not possible for this Ministry (Government) to ensure approval for a particular project. This Ministry is not in a position to guarantee FAO approval of assistance to this project."

The Committee acceded to the request of the Ministry for dropping of the assurance since Food and Agriculture Organisation is an international Organisation and Ministry have no control over it to ensure expeditious approval for a particular project.

Memorandum No. 12 Request for dropping of assurance given on 12.3.1996 in reply to USQ No. 1411 regarding Exploitation of Water Resources.

The Committee considered the grounds advanced by the Ministry of Water Resources for dropping of the assurance vide their U.O. Note No. WR/8/14/96/(ER)/665/LS-1411 dated 29.8.96. Since the implementation of Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project on Mahakali River was entirely dependent on the ratification of the Treaty on the 'Integrated Development of the Mahakali River Basin' by Nepalese Parliament, which was signed by India and Nepal on 12 February 1996, the Committee concurred with the request of the Ministry to drop the assurance. The Committee, however, hoped that the Government of India would make earnest effort to persuade the Government of Nepal to ratify the treaty expeditiously.

Memorandum No.13 Request for dropping of assurance given on December 2, 1996 in reply to USQ No. 1397 regarding Barrage over Yamuna

The Committee considered the above memorandum in pursuance of the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs U.O. Note No. III/WR(1)USQ-1397-LS/96 dated 8.8.97 forwarding therewith a request of Ministry of Water Resources for dropping of the assurance on the following grounds :-

"...However, Writ Petition (Civil No. 13381/84) has been filed in the Supreme Court inter alia regarding funding of the construction cost of Agra Barrage at Agra and Gokul Barrage at Mathura over river Yamuna by the Central Government and the State Government of Uttar Pradesh on 50:50 basis. Ministry of Water Resources filed an affidavit in case of writ petition (Civil NO. 13381/84) in Supreme Court of India in the matter after obtaining views of the Ministry of Urban Affairs, Planning Commission and Central Water Commission. In the affidavit, it was mentioned that this Ministry do not operate any scheme to provide special Central Assistance to such projects for drinking water as mentioned in the affidavit. As per Ministry of Urban Affairs, there is also no scheme under the drinking water sector to provide assistance to Gokul and Agra Barrage Projects. However, for Urban Water Supply only one Central Programme on "Accelerated Urban Water Supply Programme is in operation since March, 1994 and is applicable to small towns having population of upto 20,000 as per 1991 Census. The Planning Commission in their comments in the matter stated vide an affidavit filed in Supreme Court on 21.11.96 that the State Government would be getting more than 300 crores under basic minimum services which are to be ear-marked by the State Government for water supply, primary education and primary health."

The Committee were informed by the Ministry that the matter is sub-judice and hence further information could not be disclosed before the House of Parliament. The Committee, however, were of the view that the Ministry of Water Resources be asked to furnish the latest position with regard to the construction of barrage over Yamuna in Agra alongwith the funds allocated to the project. The request for dropping of assurance could be considered thereafter.

Memorandum No. 14 Request for dropping of assurance given on August 1, 1997 in reply to USQ No. 1719 regarding Indo Bangladesh Border Trade.

The Committee considered the above Memorandum in pursuance of Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs U.O. Note No. V/Com.(6) USQ-1719-LS/97 dated 24.8.1997 forwarding therewith a request of Ministry of Commerce to drop the assurance on the following grounds:

".... that the Rajya Sabha Secretariat vide their D.O. letter No. RS/2/5/97-SC dated 22.1.98 (copy enclosed) have informed that it is not possible to supply copy of the Report of the Department related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce on their visit to the North Eastern Region as the Lok Sabha has been dissolved and that the Deptt. related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce has become defunct."

The Committee acceded to the request of the Ministry of Commerce to drop the assurance from the list pending against the Ministry of Commerce.

Memorandum No. 15 Request for dropping of assurance given on August 5, 1997 in reply to USQ No. 2190 regarding SC/ST/OBC population.

The Committee then took up the above Memorandum and considered the request of Ministry of Welfare to drop the assurance. The Committee were informed by the Ministry of Welfare that political reservation and reservation in educational institutions in respect of Other Backward Classes are major policy questions and hence a decision on these matters could be arrived at only after having wider consultations with various authorities and interest groups. As no definite time frame could be adhered to in finalizing the decisions in these matters, the Ministry of Welfare had entreated that the above should not be viewed as an assurance.

The Committee were not convinced by the reasons advanced by the Ministry for dropping of the assurance. The Committee were of the view that the representatives of Ministry of Welfare be asked to appear before the Committee to indicate the various authorities/interest Groups with whom detailed consultations are called for and the hurdles faced in formulating a policy expeditiously.

Memorandum No. 16 Request for dropping of assurance given on September 4, 1996 in reply to USQ No. 4251 regarding Accommodation for Government Employees.

The Committee took up for consideration the aforesaid request for dropping of the assurance in pursuance of the communication received from Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. Note No. II/UAE(24)/USQ-4251-LS/96 dated 14.3.97 forwarding therewith a copy of the request of Ministry of Urban Affairs and Employment on the following grounds :-

"The matter has been examined in detail and it is felt that a categorical reply was given to parts (a) and (b) of the said question. In reply thereto, it was mentioned that Government propose to construct 540 Type-II quarters at Dev Nagar and 511 quarters at Mata Sundari Road, New Delhi. This reply should not have been treated as an assurance. In this connection, it is now submitted that whereas the Government have already decided to construct new Government quarters as mentioned in para 2 above, the construction of the same will be taken up in phases and will also depend on the availability of funds to be provided for this purpose. The Proposal to construct these Quarters is a part of the larger proposals for the construction of large number of quarters as mentioned in reply to the Question, will take a long time. It may, therefore, not be possible to fulfil the assurance within a short span of time 2-3 years."

The Committee were of the view that the Ministry of Urban Affairs and Employment be asked to furnish the latest position with regard to accommodation for Government employees. The request for dropping of the assurance could be considered after hearing from the Ministry.



Memorandum No. 17 Request for dropping of assurance given on 1.12.1995 in reply to USQ No. 1053 regarding Procurement of Aircrafts.

The Committee considered the aforesaid request for dropping of the assurance on the following grounds vide Ministry of Civil Aviation O.M. No. H.11016/71/95-ACIA-USQ-1053-LS/95 dated 4.2.97 :-

"...that the fare structure to operate 50 seater aircraft is not viable even with hundred percent seat capacity and occupancy. Indian Airlines has still not been able to come to any conclusion on this subject. It is difficult to indicate any time frame to take a decision in this aspect."

The Committee were informed by the Ministry on 9th July, 1998 :-

".... that Indian Airlines have invited revised offers from the two short listed manufacturers of 50 seater aircraft. The revised offers were received from the two manufacturers on the 20th of April, 1998 and they are under evaluation by the Inhouse Committee set up for the purpose. The report of the Inhouse Committee on the evaluation of the 50 seater aircraft is likely to be put up to the Board of IA at its forthcoming meeting."

The Committee desired that this matter be taken up with Indian Airlines at Mumbai on 7 October, 1998 when the Committee will be on tour.

Memorandum No. 18 Request for dropping of assurance given on September 3, 1996 in reply to USQ No. 3943 regarding Fake Railway Passes.

The Committee considered the above request for dropping of the assurance on the following grounds in pursuance of communication received from Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. Note No. II/Rly.(25) USQ-3943-LS/96 dated 23.6.97.

".....in this connection, it may be stated that out of the 7 cases referred to in the reply to the question, in one case charge sheet has been filed in the court. The matter is, thus, subjudice. In the other six cases, the investigation of CBI/Police is still in progress. These organisations are independent of the Ministry of Railways. Even then the necessary chasing is being done to speed up the process of investigation. After the reports of investigation are available, the same will be considered by the CBI/Police and cases will be filed in the appropriate Court. Action will be taken as per the judgement of the Court. The investigation by CBI/Police and subsequent cases in the Court will take quite sometime till a logical conclusion is arrived at. The fact that cases have been entrusted to CBI for investigation and that they are examining these cases, should itself be taken as the compliance of assurance....."

The Committee were not convinced by the reasons advanced by the Ministry to drop the assurance. The Committee were of the view that representatives of Ministry of Railways be summoned to appear before the Committee to spell out the entire policy and norms involved with regard to the issue of Railway passes to boarders throughout the country.

Memorandum No. 19 Request for dropping of assurance given on November 26, 1996 in reply to USQ No. 600 regarding Irregularities in I.V.R.I.

The Committee took up the above Memorandum containing the request of Ministry of Agriculture to drop the assurance on the following grounds vide their O.M. No. III/Agri(2) USQ No. 600 dated 5.3.97:-

"That the reply given by this Ministry which was placed on the table of the Lok Sabha on 26.11.96 may please be treated as a complete reply to the matter lies in the purview of the CBI and it will not be possible to fulfil the assurance and will take a considerable time. Therefore, the instant question may be deleted from the list of assurances and treat the earlier reply as a complete reply."

The Committee were not convinced by the plea of the Ministry that the assurance could not be fulfilled as it is pending with C.B.I., the investigation of which will require sufficient time. The Committee were of the view that the Ministry of Agriculture should continue to pursue the matter with C.B.I. and inform the Committee about the action taken/proposed to be taken after completion of the enquiry.

Memorandum No. 20 Request for dropping of assurance given on November 27, 1996 in reply to USQ No. 866 regarding CAPART.

The Committee took up for consideration the aforesaid request for dropping of assurance on the following grounds in pursuance of Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs O.M. No. III/RAE(1) USQ No. 866-L.S./96 dated 7.4.97 forwarding therewith a request of Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment to drop the assurance :-

"The part of the reply that "CAPART has also reported that it has referred the cases of 61 organisations to CBI for further investigations" has been treated as an assurance. In this regard, it may be mentioned that in so far as this Ministry is concerned it has furnished complete information asked for by the Members in part (e) of question. It will further be appreciated that CBI will take its own time to complete the investigations and for taking further action against the concerned on completion of such investigations. In view of the position explained above, it is requested that the part of the reply that "CAPART has also reported that it has referred the cases of 61 organisations to CBI for further investigations" may not be treated as an assurance."

The Committee did not find that complete information had been supplied by Ministry to part (e) of the Question concerning the steps Union Government proposed to take against the NGOs involved in the misuse of funds allocated by CAPART. The Committee desired that the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment be asked to furnish the details of the steps to be taken/proposed to be taken after CBI have completed their investigation against 61 organisations.

Memorandum No. 21 Request for dropping of assurance given on November 24, 1997 in reply to USQ No. 734 regarding Acquisition of AJT for IAF.

The Committee took up for consideration the aforesaid request for dropping of the assurance in pursuance of a request received from the Ministry of Defence duly forwarded by Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their O.M. No. VI/Defence (2) USQ No. 734-L.S./97 dated 24.2.1998. The Committee noted that detailed negotiations were involved with M/s British Aerospace (BAE) UK and the Alphajet of M/s Dassault Aviation (DA), France for meeting the AJT requirement of the IAF and as such the proposal was not likely to materialise in the near future in view of further deliberations. The Committee were informed by the Ministry that a similar assurance (Rajya Sabha SQ No. 69 dated 13.7.1992 regarding purchase of AJT aircraft) had been dropped by the Committee on Government Assurances, Rajya Sabha. The Committee, however, decided that the latest position with regard to the acquisition of AJT for IAF be obtained from the Ministry. The proposal to drop the assurance could be considered thereafter.

Memorandum No. 22 Request for dropping of assurance given on March 13, 1997 in reply to SQ No. 266 regarding Norms for Rating Sponsored Programme of Doordarshan.

The Committee took up the above Memorandum for dropping of assurance in pursuance of a request from Ministry of Information & Broadcasting duly forwarded by Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide U.O. Note No. IV/I&B(4) SQ-266-LS/97 dated July 4, 1997. The Committee were not convinced that the assurance should be dropped since Ministry of Information & Broadcasting will be sending Action Taken Report to PAC. The Committee were of the view that Committee on Government Assurances are not debarred in any way from treating the above as an assurance, even though the matter relating to the lower categorisation of the programme 'The World This Week', had been examined in its entirety by the Public Accounts Committee. The Committee, therefore, decided to summon the Secretary, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting to clarify the position.

Memorandum No. 23 Request for dropping of assurance given on November 22, 1996 in reply to USQ No. 394 regarding Anti-dumping duty on PVC and Bisphenol-A.

The Committee considered the above Memorandum for dropping of the assurance in pursuance of Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs O.M. dated 16.9.1997

forwarding therewith a request of Ministry of Commerce to drop the assurance on the following grounds :-

"This Ministry had called for the requisite information from the Ministry of Finance, Department of Revenue to fulfil the Assurance. In response to our communications, this Ministry has been advised that the information called for is not being maintained by the Department of Revenue. As such, the time and effort in collecting the information from individual invoices/bills of the entry will not commensurate with the results likely to be achieved. Since this Ministry is unable to furnish the requisite information for the reasons stated above, it is requested that the Assurance given on the table of the House may kindly be dropped against the name of Ministry of Commerce."

The Committee opined that dumping of PVC Resin into India by certain countries which is causing injury to the domestic industry should be a cause for concern to the entire nation. The Committee took strong exception to the plea of the Ministry of Finance that efforts in collecting the information from individual invoices/bills of the entry will not commensurate with the results likely to be achieved. The Committee were of the view that representatives of Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Finance (Deptt. of Revenue) be summoned before the Committee to clarify the position.

Memorandum No. 24 Request for dropping of assurance given on November 27, 1996 in reply to USQ No. 882 regarding Task Force.

The Committee took up for consideration the above Memorandum in pursuance of a request from Ministry of Urban Affairs & Employment to drop their assurance duly forwarded by Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs vide their U.O. Note No. III/UAE(1)USQ-882-LS/96 dated 7.3.97 on the following grounds :

"...that the MCD has informed that action for demolition in Premises No. 1576, Post Office Building, Naveen Shahdara was taken on 8.10.1996 but complete action could not be taken as the owner/builder produced the Stay-Order for the ground floor and the first floor. As a result further demolition action was stopped. At present there is a status quo order passed by the Hon'ble Court of Appellant Tribunal/MCD, Tis Hazari, Delhi in Suit No. 378/A.T., MCD/96. All efforts are being made by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi to get the status quo orders vacated.

In view of the position stated above and as the matter is sub-judice, the assurance is unlikely to be fulfilled immediately. It is, therefore, requested that the Committee on Government Assurances (Lok Sabha) may kindly be moved for the deletion of the assurance."

The Committee did not see sufficient reasons to drop the assurance though the matter is sub-judice. The Committee decided to call the representatives of

the Ministry of Urban Affairs & Employment to throw further light on the areas from which unauthorised construction/encroachments are to be removed (vide 34-HP 142 Annexure Statement-II)

Memorandum No. 25 Request for dropping of assurance given on December 5, 1996 in reply to USQ No. 1997 regarding Asian Railway Project.

The Committee finally considered the above Memorandum for dropping of the assurance in pursuance of Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs U.O. No. III/Rlys(20)/USQ-1997-LS/96 dated April 9, 1997 on the following grounds :-

".....that Trans Asian Railway is being considered by UN-ESCAP under its Asian Land Transport Infrastructure with the main objective of providing Rail Link from South East Asia to Europe. While some preliminary information has been collected by UN-ESCAP, specific project proposals have not been formulated yet and no target date can be suggested for completion of the project. In view of the above, it is requested that the assurance may be dropped."

The Committee acceded to the request of the Ministry of Railways to drop the assurance.

The Committee then adjourned.

APPENDIX III

MINUTES  
Ninth Sitting

MINUTES OF THE NINTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES HELD ON AUGUST 22, 2000 AT 1500 HOURS IN CHAIRMAN'S ROOM (NO. 133, FIRST FLOOR) PARLIAMENT HOUSE ANNEXE, NEW DELHI

The Committee met on Tuesday, August 22, 2000 from 1500 hours to 1545 hours.

PRESENT

Dr. S. Venugopal - Chairman

Members

2. Shri Haribhai Choudhary
3. Shri Padam Sen Choudhary
4. Adv. Uttamrao Dhikale
5. Shri Brahma Nand Mandal
6. Shri Sudarsana E.M. Natchiappan
7. Shri Ravindra Kumar Pandey
8. Shri Sukhdeo Paswan
9. Shri Maheshwar Singh

Secretariat

1. Dr. Ashok Kumar Pandey - Additional Secretary
2. Shri K. Chakroborty - Deputy Secretary
3. Ms. J.C. Namchy - Assistant Director

2. The Committee considered draft 2nd and 3rd Reports and adopted the same.

3. The Committee authorised the Chairman to present the Reports on August 24, 2000.

4. The Committee noted that many assurances are pending for years together though the time limit for fulfilment of assurances is three months. The Committee desired that the Ministries concerned should be asked to abide by the specific time of fulfilment as per rules and, if it is not possible to fulfil the assurances within three months, they should invariably communicate the firm time schedule by which the assurances would be fulfilled. In no case the assurances should be kept pending indefinitely.

The Committee then adjourned.