

**10**

**STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
(2015-2016)**

**SIXTEENTH LOK SABHA**

**MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

[Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Sixth Report  
(16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of  
External Affairs for the year 2015-16]

**TENTH REPORT**



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT  
NEW DELHI**

*December, 2015/AGRAHAYANA, 1937 (Saka)*

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(16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of  
External Affairs for the year 2015-16]

*Presented to Lok Sabha on 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2015*  
*Laid in Rajya Sabha on 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2015*



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT**  
**NEW DELHI**  
*December, 2015/AGRAHAYANA, 1937 (Saka)*

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**COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
(2015-16)**

| <b><u>Sl. No.</u></b> | <b><u>Name of Members</u></b>    |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1.                    | Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Chairperson  |
| <b>Lok Sabha</b>      |                                  |
| 2.                    | Shri Sirajuddin Ajmal            |
| 3.                    | Prof. (Dr.) Sugata Bose          |
| 4.                    | Shri Ranjit Singh Brahmpura      |
| 5.                    | Shri Arka Keshari Deo            |
| 6.                    | Shri Feroze Varun Gandhi         |
| 7.                    | Shri Rahul Gandhi                |
| 8.                    | Shri Anant Kumar Hegde           |
| 9.                    | Smt. Raksha Khadse               |
| 10.                   | Shri Raghav Lakhnarpal           |
| 11.                   | Shri Venakateswara Rao Magananti |
| 12.                   | Shri Jose K. Mani                |
| 13.                   | Shri Chhedi Paswan               |
| 14.                   | Shri A. Anwhar Raajhaa           |
| 15.                   | Shri Vishnu Dayal Ram            |
| 16.                   | Shri Mohammad Salim              |
| 17.                   | Prof. (Dr.) Mamtaz Sanghamita    |
| 18.                   | Shri P.R. Senthilnathan          |
| 19.                   | Shri Ram Swaroop Sharma          |
| 20.                   | Smt. Supriya Sule                |
| 21.                   | Shri Sharad Tripathi             |
| <b>Rajya Sabha</b>    |                                  |
| 22.                   | Shri Satyavrat Chaturvedi        |
| 23.                   | Shri Chunibhai Kanjibhai Gohel   |
| 24.                   | Smt. Kanimozhi                   |
| 25.                   | Shri Ram Kumar Kashyap           |
| 26.                   | Shri C.M. Ramesh                 |
| 27.                   | Dr. Karan Singh                  |
| 28.                   | Shri D. P. Tripathi              |
| 29.                   | Shri Pavan Kumar Varma           |
| 30.                   | Vacant                           |
| 31.                   | Vacant                           |

**SECRETARIAT**

|    |                        |   |                     |
|----|------------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1. | Shri Cyril John        | - | Joint Secretary     |
| 2. | Dr. Ram Raj Rai        | - | Director            |
| 3. | Smt. Jyochnamayi Sinha | - | Additional Director |
| 4. | Shri Janmesh Singh     | - | Under Secretary     |

## INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Standing Committee on External Affairs (2015-16) having been authorized by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, present this Tenth Report (16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha) on Action Taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Sixth Report (16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha) of the Committee on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the year 2015-16.

2. The Sixth Report was presented to the Parliament on 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2015. The Action Taken Replies of the Government on all the observations/recommendations contained in the Report were received on 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2015.

3. The Committee considered and adopted this Action Taken Report at their sitting held on 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2015. The Minutes of the sitting of the Committee have been given at Appendix-I to the Report.

4. An analysis of the Action Taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Sixth Report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs (16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha) is given at Appendix-II.

**NEW DELHI**  
**21 December, 2015**  
**30 Agradhayana, 1937 (Saka)**

**DR. SHASHI THAROOR,**  
***Chairperson,***  
***Standing Committee on External Affairs***

## **CHAPTER – I** **REPORT**

This Report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs deals with the Action Taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in their Sixth Report on Demands for Grants (2015-16) of the Ministry of External Affairs which was presented to Lok Sabha and laid in Rajya Sabha on 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2015.

2. The Action taken notes have been received from the Ministry of External Affairs on all the observations/recommendations contained in the Report. These have been categorized as follows: -

**(i) Observations/Recommendations, which have been accepted by the Government.**

Recommendation Nos 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 19, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29,  
33, 34, 36, 37, 38 and 40

**Total-23**

**(ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies.**

Recommendations No. 32

**Total- 01**

**(iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration.**

Recommendation No. 17, 20, 22 and 39

**Total- 04**

**(iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited.**

Recommendation Nos. 3, 5, 6, 14, 15, 16, 18, 21, 25, 30, 31 and 35

**Total-12**

3. **The Committee desire that final replies to the comments contained in Chapter-I and observations/recommendations contained in Chapter-V of this Report should be furnished within three months of the presentation of the Report.**

4. The Committee will now deal with the action taken by the Government on some of their observations/recommendations.

**(Recommendation No. 1)**

5. The Committee had observed that during Budget Estimates 2014-15, the Ministry of External Affairs had sought an allocation of Rs. 26,111.23 crore; however, the actual allocation at the Budget Estimate(BE) stage was Rs. 14,730.39 crore. The Committee, therefore, had recommended to the Ministry to vigorously pursue substantially enhanced allocations at Revised Estimates (RE) stage. The Committee, however, were dismayed to note that instead of increasing the allocation, in an unprecedented move, the budgetary allocation of the Ministry of External Affairs was reduced by Rs. 2,110.39 crore at RE stage. This reduction was in spite of the fact that the Ministry had registered an expenditure of 68% in BE till December, 2014 and had actually sought an additional allocation of Rs. 2999.30 crore at RE stage. The Committee were concerned to note that in spite of the intervention made at the level of External Affairs Minister, the situation was not improved. The Committee were unhappy to note that even at the supplementary stage, no cash supplementary was provided initially to the Ministry.

The Committee were particularly dismayed to note that there was substantial reduction in allocation at the RE stage when there were several visits by Head of Government/Minister of External Affairs and requirement of more resources by the concerned Missions/Posts and resources to execute the commitments for aid/ assistance made with various countries as well as several high level visits to India by foreign dignitaries and commitments made therein. The Committee were distressed to take note of the lukewarm attitude of the Government of India and in particular the Ministry of Finance towards the conduct of India's foreign policy and hoped that this approach would change during the current Financial Year.

6. The Ministry of External Affairs, in their action taken reply, has stated as under:

"Ministry acknowledges the concern shown by the Hon'ble Committee regarding the budgetary challenges faced by it. There has also been practically no augmentation in the Non Plan allocation in 2015-16. The Ministry would continue to actively liaise with the Ministry of Finance in seeking additional funds allocated in Supplementary Demands/Revised Estimates."



7. **The Committee are concerned to note that despite their repeated recommendations for enhancement of Budget allocation for the Ministry of External Affairs to meet India's international obligations, the situation has not improved and practically there is no augmentation in the Non-Plan allocation in 2015-16. The Ministry has shown its helplessness by stating that it will continue its efforts to liaise with the Ministry of Finance for seeking additional funds at supplementary Demand/Revised Estimates.**

**The Committee wish to express their disappointment at this approach of the Ministry of Finance for providing such meagre allocations at the Revised Estimates stage instead of suitably increasing it. The Committee strongly feel that due to such an unreasonable attitude of the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of External Affairs will once again be forced to cut short the execution of international commitments for aid/assistance and the functions of Mission/posts will also repetitively affected . The Committee, therefore, wish to reiterate their earlier recommendation to the Government to impress upon the Ministry of Finance the need to suitably enhance allocations at the Supplementary Demands and Revised Estimates stage of 2015-16 and at BE during the year 2016-17.**

**(Recommendation No. 2)**

8. The Committee had noted that the Ministry of External Affairs during the Budget Estimates (BE) 2015-16 had sought an allocation of Rs. 20,034.62 crore comprising a Plan component of Rs. 5,583.69 crore and a Non-Plan component of Rs. 14,450.93 crore. The Committee, however, were distressed to note that the proposed budgetary allocation was only Rs. 14,966.83 crore with a Plan component of Rs. 5,336.20 crore and Non-Plan component of Rs. 9,630.63 crore. The Committee were concerned that the budgetary allocation during BE 2015-16 was only 1.6% more than the overall BE 2014-15 allocation and was 25.3% less than the sought budgetary allocation. The Committee were deeply concerned about the budgetary allocation of the Ministry and wondered whether that allocation was reflective of the priority being attached by the Government of India to foreign policy, particularly when India aspired to be a big power in the twenty-first century and was the third largest emerging economy. Considering the global nature of the Ministry's engagement, the task laid before the Ministry and the responsibility to execute

India's aid commitments and the nature of the Ministry's expenditure, the Committee had strongly recommended that the Government should ensure the predictability and full funding of the Ministry at the BE stage itself. The Committee, however, were of the firm opinion that in view of substantially reduced allocation as compared to the allocation sought by the Ministry at BE stage, the Ministry of Finance should allocate suitably enhanced allocations to the Ministry at the RE 2015-16 stage. The Committee, had therefore, recommend that the Ministry of External Affairs pursue the request for enhanced budgetary allocation not only with the Ministry of Finance but also at the highest level at RE 2015-16 stage as well as well as during discussions for BE 2016-17.

9. The Ministry of External Affairs, in their action taken reply, has stated as under:

"Ministry would continue to actively pursue the request for enhanced allocations with the Ministry of Finance in Supplementary Demands/Revised Estimates of 2015-16. The Hon'ble Committee's recommendation is also expected to give the necessary fillip to the Ministry's cause."

**10. In view of the fact that against the projected amount of Rs. 20034.62 crore for the Ministry of External Affairs, the allocations made at Budget Estimates stage of 2015-16 was Rs. 14,966.83 crore(both plan and non-plan) only, the Committee had expressed their concern over such budgetary mismatch considering the global nature of the Ministry's engagement. The Committee had, therefore, recommended the Government to ensure the predictability and full funding of the Ministry at Budget Estimates stage itself. However, in view of the reduction of allocations at Budget Estimates 2015-16 against the projected amount, the Committee had desired the Ministry of Finance to suitably enhance the allocation at Revised Estimate stage.**

**But the Committee are concerned to note that although the Ministry of Finance in its Budget Circular 2016-17 has asked the Ministry to convey its proposal for Revised Estimate and Budget Estimates by 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2015, in the action taken replies furnished to the Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2015, the Ministry of External Affairs has simply stated that it will continue to actively pursue the request for enhanced allocations with the Ministry of Finance in Supplementary Demand/Revised Estimates for the year 2015-16, without mention of any specific proposal sent to the Ministry of Finance for obtaining additional**

**funds at Supplementary Demands/RE stage 2015-16 and BE 2016-17 and the response of the Ministry of Finance thereon. The Committee, therefore, do not approve such inaction on the part of the Ministry and reiterate that the Ministry should chalk out its budgetary requirements well in advance and pursue the same with Ministry of Finance. The Committee also call on the Government of India to ensure it through all the available methods. The Committee may be apprised about the action taken in this direction.**

**(Recommendation No. 3)**

11. The Committee had noted that due to the lack of resources available with the Ministry of External Affairs, expenditure under several Heads relating to aid to various countries had been reduced and the payments were curtailed/deferred to the next Financial Year i.e. 2015-16. The Committee were concerned to take note of the lack of additional allocation during BE 2015-16 to the Ministry of External Affairs to accommodate for last year's payment as well as any provision for new announcements/commitments to be made at international fora. The Committee were concerned at the paradox of pursuing an active foreign policy and simultaneously, cutting the allocations of Ministry of External Affairs. The Committee, therefore, had recommended that the Government should ensure that the Ministry's allocation was in tune with the Government's policy and under no circumstance the Ministry was forced to adhere to the economy cut at RE stage on lines of other Ministries/Departments in view of peculiar character of the Ministry's expenditure. The Committee had further recommended a substantial enhancement of the budgetary allocation at RE 2015-16 stage in tune with the requirements and commitments for aid/assistance being made internationally. The Committee had further recommended that if new international commitments were made during the first three quarters of the financial year then the Ministry must be provided additional grants at the Supplementary Grants stage and the cash supplementary might be provided to the Ministry for fulfilment of those international commitments. The Committee had reiterated that the Ministry of Finance must not jeopardize the nation's prestige in this manner.

12. The Ministry of External Affairs, in their action taken reply, has stated as under:

"The Ministry will continue its efforts with the Ministry of Finance to secure additional funds in order to give effect to the various foreign policy initiatives made at the highest levels."

**13. While noting the paradox of pursuing wide-ranging foreign policy initiatives and simultaneously cutting the allocations of Ministry of External Affairs, the Committee had recommended that the Government should ensure that the Ministry's allocation is in tune with the Government's international commitments made at the highest levels and under no circumstances should the Ministry be forced to adhere to severe cuts at Revised Estimates stage, causing delay in implementation of these international projects; indeed, substantial enhancement should be made at Revised Estimates stage. In response to this, the Ministry has just stated that it would continue its efforts with the Ministry of Finance to secure additional funds without mention of any concrete efforts made in this regard and the outcome thereof. The Committee, therefore, would like to reiterate that the Ministry must engage with the Ministry of Finance to ensure and secure allocations at Revised Estimates 2015-16 stage and Budget Estimates 2016-17 with the specific mandate of fulfilling the requirements of international projects/aid commitments made at the highest level. Should the Ministry of Finance continue to prove intractable, the Ministry of External Affairs should bring the matter to the attention of the Prime Minister since the nation's credibility has been undermined.**

**(Recommendation No. 5)**

14. The Committee had noted that several commitments were made by the Prime Minister during Financial year 2014-15, but the economic implications were not factored in the allocations at RE 2014-15 stage. The Committee were doubtful whether the full financial implication of Prime Minister's announcement for aid/assistance had been accommodated in the budgetary allocation during BE 2015-16. The Committee were concerned about such lack of allocation by the Ministry of Finance. The Committee, therefore, had recommended that the Ministry should engage with the Ministry of Finance for obtaining additional resources and give due priority to execution of the international commitments made at the highest levels.

Furthermore, in view of the several international commitments made at the level of Head of State/Head of Government/External Affairs Minister, the Committee had suggested that the Ministry must keep the concerned offices apprised about the pace of the project as well as constraints, if any, in implementation of the projects including the financial constraints due to lack of allocation by the Ministry of Finance. The Committee had viewed that, involvement of the concerned high offices may facilitate taking up the issue of lack of allocation with the Ministry of Finance.

15. The Ministry of External Affairs, in their action taken reply, has stated as under:

"The advice of the Hon'ble Committee has been taken note of. Ministry would continue to engage with the Ministry of Finance in order to obtain additional funds to further the commitments made. Ministry would also continue to appraise the Ministry of Finance about these commitments and the pace of the projects, and also involve the high offices concerned in taking up the issue of augmentation of resources with the Ministry of Finance."

**16. The Committee were concerned about lack of allocations by the Ministry of Finance towards the Prime Minister's announcement for aid/assistance during the year 2014-15 and 2015-16. The Committee were of the strong view that by not providing the allocations, India's prestige at the international fora will definitely face a serious setback. Agreeing to the recommendations of the Committee, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated that it will continue to engage with the Ministry of Finance for obtaining additional funds and would continue to apprise the Ministry of Finance about the pace of such projects and commitments by involving high officers. The Ministry however has not submitted the status report of such projects and efforts made so far in this regard. The Committee, therefore, may be furnished with the full details and outcome in this regard within 3 months of presentation of this report.**

**(Recommendation No. 6)**

17. The Committee had taken note of the budgetary cuts during RE 2014-15 for aid/assistance to countries under various Heads. The Committee had noted that provision for grants/projects

were made in allocation during BE 2014-15, yet grant assistance to Bangladesh, Myanmar and Palestine was deferred to the Financial Year 2015-16 due to budgetary cuts during RE 2014-15. The Committee were of the view that such delays in execution of commitments/project adversely reflected upon India's credibility. In the context of the severe financial constraints faced by the Ministry over the years and its impact on execution of the projects abroad, the Committee in their previous Report had suggested to create a separate Head for announcement of aid/assistance made by Head of State/Head of Government/Minister of External Affairs. The Committee had observed that not much progress had been made in this regard except for issuing of a letter and a reminder by the Ministry. The Committee, therefore, had reiterated that Ministry should pursue the matter with the Ministry of Finance for creation of this Head and ensure availability of sufficient funds under this Head.

The Committee had further suggested to the Ministry to engage with Ministry of Finance to explore the possibility of bifurcation of Ministry's budget to include allocations earmarked for the internal usage of the Ministry in one part while a separate budget for all the international/bilateral commitments for aid and assistance so that the aid and assistance programme were not affected by the economy cut by the Ministry of Finance, which had over the years become a regular feature at RE stage.

18. The Ministry of External Affairs, in their action taken reply, has stated as under:

"Ministry has taken up the matter of opening a new head of account to accommodate the budget relating to high level commitments once again with the Ministry of Finance by flagging the issue to the Joint Secretary (Budget).

2. The possibility of bifurcating the Ministry's budget as suggested by the Hon'ble Committee would also be explored in consultation with the Ministry of Finance. The Hon'ble Committee would be apprised of the outcome in due course."

19. **The Committee note that the Ministry has taken up the matter of opening a new Head of Account to accommodate the budget relating to commitments of aid/assistance with the Ministry of Finance. The Committee treat this step as very essential because the creation**

**of a separate Head of account with dedicated matching allocation would ensure the execution of aid/assistance programme without any hindrance and ensure that nation's prestige is not jeopardized. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should keep pursuing the matter with the Ministry of Finance until the purpose is achieved and try its creation in the Budget 2016-17 positively. Similarly, the Ministry should also explore every possibility of bifurcating the budget of the Ministry to include allocations earmarked for internal usage in one part and budget for all international commitments for aid and assistance in the other, and apprise the Committee about the outcome in this regard.**

**(Recommendation No. 8)**

20. The Committee had taken note of the steps taken by the Central Passport Organization regarding filling the gap between the sanctioned cadre strength and the present working strength by recruitment of 450 Data Entry Operators in lieu of vacant non-gazetted posts at Group 'B' and 'C' level. The Committee, however, had noted that that was just a stop gap arrangement and the Ministry should pursue the matter with the Department of Personnel for conducting recruitment for vacant non-gazetted posts at the earliest. Moreover, the Committee had suggested that the Ministry must ensure conducting of due security clearance and checking of credentials for the Data Entry Operators, thus engaged. The Committee had also noted that the Ministry had issued instructions to Passport Offices to rotate the CPO officials between PSKs and PBOs but since long they had not been able to finalize a transfer policy governing CPO officials in view of the changed requirement of manpower at the PSKs and PBOs. The Committee, therefore, had desired that the transfer policy for CPO should be finalized on priority basis considering the functional requirements both at PSKs and PBOs.

21. The Ministry of External Affairs, in their action taken reply, has stated as under:

"It is submitted that as regards recruitment for vacant non-gazetted post, the Ministry has been constantly pursuing the matter with the Staff Selection Commission (SSC). The SSC has conducted examinations for the post of Lower Division Clerks (LDC) and Assistants in 2014 and 2015, which is still under

process. After completion of all the relevant formalities, the nominations and appointments of LDCs and Assistants are expected by December 2015.

2. The Ministry would like to inform the Hon'ble Committee that the process of security clearance and checking of credentials of Data Entry Operators is undertaken directly by the Service Provider.

3. The Transfer Policy relating to Central Passport Organization personnel has been revised in March, 2015 in supersession of the earlier policy guidelines framed in 2010, keeping in view the functional requirements of officials both at PSKs and PBOs."

**22. The Committee observe that the recruitment process is in progress to fill up the vacant non-gazetted posts in the Central Passport Organisation (CPO), through the Staff Selection Commission (SSC) and is likely to be completed by December, 2015. It is however not clear what the requirement is and how many staff are likely to be appointed because there is a significant gap between the sanctioned staff strength and actual working strength. The Committee should be conveyed the exact position in this regard. The Committee are also not satisfied with the process of leaving the security clearance checking of credentials of data entry operators with the service provider. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should conduct due security clearances and checking of credentials of the Data Entry Operators by itself. Similarly, with regard to transfer policy of the personnel of the Central Passport Organisation, the Ministry has only informed the Committee that the transfer policy has been revised in March, 2015. The Committee would however like to be informed about the changes incorporated in the policy and whether the new policy is capable to cater to the functional requirements both at PSKs and PBOs.**

**(Recommendation No. 11)**

23. The Committee had noted that under the budgetary Head 'Entertainment Charges' expenditure was incurred on extending hospitality to foreign dignitaries. It was praiseworthy to note that in spite of several high profile high level visits by foreign dignitaries there was no significant rise of expenditure under that Head and rather the allocation at RE stage was reduced to Rs. 39.00 crore during 2014-15. The Committee, however, had also noted that only time-bound



bills were prioritized by the Ministry. The Committee had conveyed displeasure over the practice of keeping the bills pending and building liabilities for the next Financial Year. The Committee had, therefore, recommended that immediate steps should be taken for the early settlement of pending bills. The Committee were of the opinion that in view of several such visits the budgetary allocation under that Head should be increased at RE 2015-16 stage so that the Ministry would be able to timely process the bills.

24. The Ministry of External Affairs, in their action taken reply, has stated as under:

"Recommendations of the Committee have been noted for compliance and enhanced requirements will be reflected in the RE stage so that expenditure incurred in the current financial year is not required to be deferred."

**25. In view of the practice of keeping the bills pending under the budgetary head 'Entertainment Charges' and building liabilities for the next financial year, the Committee had desired that the Ministry should take adequate steps for an early settlement of pending bills and to pursue with the Ministry of Finance the suitable enhancement of allocations at Revised Estimate for the year 2015-16 for timely settlement of pending bills. In response thereto, the Ministry has simply submitted that the recommendation of the Committee has been noted for compliance and enhanced requirements will be reflected at the Revised Estimates stage.**

**The Committee understand that by the time of submission of action taken replies, the Ministry must have submitted the Supplementary Demands or Demands for RE 2015-16. But the Ministry has not mentioned anything about the proposal sent to the Ministry of Finance and its response thereto. Therefore, the Committee desire to be informed about the concrete action taken in pursuance of their recommendations.**

**(Recommendation No. 12)**

26. The Committee had noted that in spite of the overall cut in the budget allocation at RE stage, there was 10.35% increase under the Head 'Embassies and Missions' in view of high level visits by Indian Government, mandatory expenses and depreciating value of the Rupee. The Committee had further noted that there was an increase of 23.61% during BE 2015-16 over BE

2014-15 in the allocations under that Head. The Committee were of the view that the increased allocation were not in tune with the role and functions assigned to these Missions/Embassies. The Committee, therefore, had recommended that the allocation under that Head should be substantially enhanced at the RE stage. The Committee however, were distressed to note that there was no separate head to cater to improvement of services in the Missions and Posts. The Committee had noted that Indian Missions/Posts form India's residential diplomatic presence in the host country as well as first contact point for locals as well as Indians residing there. The Committee, therefore, were of the view that the Government should adequately focus on streamlining the procedure in the Indian Missions/Posts and ensure high standards of services rendered by them. The Committee had suggested the Ministry to have a mechanism to receive feedback from the general public regarding rendering of services by each Missions/Posts. In context of finalizing e-Samiksha, the Committee had suggested to the Ministry to initiate and complete the project in a time bound manner. The Committee had noted that the portal would be an effective tool in evaluating performance of Missions/Posts. The Committee, therefore, had suggested to the Ministry that on the basis of web data analysis the criteria like public perception and public feedback should also to incorporated. The Committee had further suggested to the Ministry to explore the possibility of an engagement with the State Governments for reporting of consular grievances.

27. The Ministry of External Affairs, in their action taken reply, has stated as under:

"MEA e-Samiksha, an online interface between the Missions/Posts and Headquarters has been made operational by the Ministry with the objective of bringing in greater synergy between Ministry and Missions, including on delivery of public services. Another web portal online Consular Grievances Monitoring System named MADAD, also has provision of receiving public perception and feedback, including appreciation and suggestions, in order to improve the grievance mechanism system. As far as engagement with the State Governments for reporting of consular grievances is concerned, the Branch Secretariats in Chennai, Guwahati, Hyderabad and Kolkata have been associated with this portal for registration of consular grievances and its follow up. The portal is designed to accept suggestions from any registered user, who can be an individual or an organisation."

28. The Committee are happy to note that in pursuance of their recommendations, the Ministry has streamlined its procedure and mechanisms like e-Samiksha and an online consular grievances monitoring portal named MADAD has been put in place. Moreover, the Branch Secretariats in Chennai, Guwahati, Hyderabad and Kolkata have also been associated with the portal for registration of consular grievances and its follow up. The portal is designed to accept suggestions from any registered user who can be an individual or an organization. The Committee desire that other States from where more and more people go abroad for jobs should also be associated with the portal. The Committee had noted that the allocation under the head Embassies and Missions' was enhanced during BE 2015-16 over BE 2014-15. However, the Committee had not found it in tune with the role and functions assigned to these Missions/Posts. Accordingly, they had recommended that allocation under this head should be enhanced suitably at RE stage. But the Ministry's reply is silent with regard to the efforts made by it for enhancement of allocations at the Revised Estimates stage. Therefore, the Committee desire the Ministry to apprise them about the action taken in this regard.

**(Recommendation No. 13)**

29. The Committee had taken note of the collaborative effort of the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs of launch of web portal online Consular Grievances Monitoring System named MADAD for extending a helping hand to Indians abroad requiring consular assistance, consular grievance tracking and follow up. In view of the involvement of two Ministries, the Committee were of the view that the Ministry should establish a coordination mechanism and channels of communication between the two Ministries and also come up with identifiable timelines with Standard Operating Procedures regarding the process to be followed once a grievance was received.

Moreover, in view of the process of registering the new domain and thereafter transfer of web-portal, the Committee had recommended that the Ministry should engage with the concerned authorities for an early registration of the domain name as well as to ensure flawless transfer from the present portal. The Committee were of the view that efforts needed to be made to give wider publicity to the portal. The Committee, therefore, had suggested that the Ministry in collaboration

with the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs should engage in a media campaign, particularly on social media, as well as flash the information of the portal on Passport Seva Portal and on websites of individual Missions/Posts.

30. The Ministry of External Affairs, in their action taken reply, has stated as under:

"The recommendations of the Committee have been noted for compliance. Recently, the Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) in Gurgaon and Indian Workers Resource Centre (IWRC) in Dubai, operated by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, have also been authorised to assist grievants to lodge their grievances on this portal. Setting up a dedicated Call Centre for MADAD is also under process. Soon the Madad Portal will also have facilities of a Mobile App for the benefit of the common man.

A web portal with the URL [www.madad.gov.in](http://www.madad.gov.in) has since been registered and we are in the process of transfer to the new domain. However, MADAD portal would continue to be accessed through Passport Seva portal as well. For the purpose of wider publicity, MADAD Portal has been displayed by Indian Missions and Posts abroad prominently on their websites. In addition, Missions/Posts are also publicizing the MADAD portal in their interaction with the Indian community on various occasions.

A list of designated Welfare Officers in Gulf Countries with their contact numbers and other details as well as emergency contact phone numbers of all Indian Missions and Posts have also been placed on Missions/Posts and MEA websites.

The MADAD portal has provision for registering various categories of grievances, some of which are being handled by MOIA e.g. transportation of mortal remains, Indian nationals in jails, whereabouts unknown, recruitment complaints and martial disputes. A separate drop-box for MOIA is being created, following which MOIA related grievances would automatically be transferred to the MOIA worklist."

31. **The Committee observe that the MADAD portal has a provision for registering various categories of grievances including those under the purview of MOIA. As stated by the Ministry, they are creating a separate drop-box for MOIA where all MOIA grievances would automatically be transferred to MOIA work list. Moreover, the Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) in Gurgaon and Indian Workers Resource Centre (IWRC) in Dubai operated by the MOIA have been authorized to assist petitioners to lodge their grievances on this portal. The Committee, however, find that the grievances related to MIOA are of very serious nature and require urgent action on the part of Missions/Posts**

**which is possible only with coordination between both the Ministries. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their important recommendation that the Ministry should come up with identifiable timelines with a standard operating procedure to be followed for the redressal of the grievances and desire the response of the Ministry in this regard at the earliest.**

**The Committee note that the Ministry has initiated the process of transfer to the new domain and should engage with the concerned authorities for an early registration of the domain name as well as to ensure flawless transfer from the present portal. The Committee also desire that along with display on the website of Indian Missions/Posts, the new domain should be promoted during the interaction of Missions/Posts abroad with the Indian community on various occasions. The Ministry should also take steps to actively use the print/electronic media and other social media for spreading awareness about the portal.**

**(Recommendation No. 14)**

32. The Committee had observed that requests were being received by the Ministry for opening of new Indian Missions/Posts and these were being processed and considered by territorial divisions concerned without any coherent policy. The Committee were of the view that Government should consider those proposals positively and strive to have representation of India in all the countries, and that limitations in terms of finances and human resources should not be a constraint while opening India's new Missions/Posts in those countries where India was currently unrepresented. The Committee had also suggested that the Ministry should come up with a concrete policy regarding establishment of new Embassies/Missions abroad.

Furthermore, the Committee had desired that the Ministry should take up the long pending issue of the proposed new Diplomatic Enclave with the Delhi Development Authority. The Committee had recommended that the Ministry should also formulate a policy regarding allotment of land to Foreign Missions/Posts as per international conventions and had also suggested to dwell upon the practice regarding provision of reciprocity in this regard.

33. The Ministry of External Affairs, in their action taken reply, has stated as under:

"The Ministry of External Affairs is committed to expanding ties with other countries through opening new Embassies and Consulates in consultation with the Host Government. The recommendations of the Committee in this regard have been noted.

2. Ministry is in constant touch with DDA and has sent letters No. 2832/COP/2015 dated 24th June and 9th July 2015 to Chief Engineer (Dwarka) requesting confirmation that the rates of offer of land conveyed by them to this Ministry are valid for the financial year 2015-16. The policy to determine the terms and conditions based on which land will be offered to Foreign Diplomatic Missions/ International Organisations in the 2nd Diplomatic Enclave is in final stages of approval. As soon as the policy is firmed up, Ministry will conduct an outreach programme involving Missions and International Organisations based in New Delhi. While framing the policy, Ministry has noted the recommendations of the Standing Committee regarding the provision of the principle of reciprocity to be invoked in each case."

**34. In view of the fact that requests were being received in the Ministry for opening of new Indian Missions/Posts abroad and these were being processed and considered by the concerned territorial divisions without any coherent policy, the Committee had desired that the Ministry of External Affairs should come up with a concrete policy regarding establishment of new embassies/missions abroad. But the Ministry has only stated that MEA is committed to expanding ties with other countries through the opening of new embassies and consulates in consultation with the host Government, without pronouncing any policy. Therefore, the Committee wish to reiterate their earlier recommendation that Ministry should come up with a concrete and coherent policy in this regard.**

**The Committee further note that the policy to determine the terms and conditions for offering land to foreign diplomatic missions/international organizations is in the final stages of approval. The Ministry is also in constant touch with DDA for allotting land for the new diplomatic enclave. The Committee desire the Ministry to expedite the matter and come to an early decision in this regard.**

**(Recommendation No. 17)**

35. The Committee had taken note of the efforts being made by the Ministry to ensure reach of application collection/submission services to every nook and corner of the country and involvement of Common Service Centres. The Committee were happy to note that the Ministry, along with India Post had launched a pilot project in Ahmedabad and Head Post Office Ahmedabad had commenced online filing of Passport application. The Committee were hopeful that based on the outcome of that pilot project, the matter would be taken up for roll out across other post offices in the country. The Committee, however, had suggested to the Ministry to pursue the matter with India Post so as to ensure online filing of applications not only at the Head Post-Office but also that that facility would be made available at all the post offices across India particularly in the hinterland and rural areas. The Committee had also suggested that the possibility of reputed Travel Agents/Agencies to providing assistance in cities might be considered to applicants on similar fixed charges, as was being done by CSCs in cities might also be considered sincerely with a view to stop exploitation of passport seekers by internet cafe operators and Travel Agents. Those may be identified as places where citizens could get the facility on payment of nominal fixed charges with suitable penal provisions in case of irregularities.

36. The Ministry of External Affairs, in their action taken reply, has stated as under:

"It is submitted that despite Ministry's best efforts, India Post have expressed inability for providing facility of online filing of passport applications @Rs.100/- per application. India Post also seems to have dearth of manpower and technical resources. As regards authorising travel agents, it is reiterated that the Passport Portal ([www.passportindia.gov.in](http://www.passportindia.gov.in)) is accessible by anyone, anywhere at any time. The travel agents are free to assist passport seekers in filing passport applications online just like any Common Service Centres (CSCs), internet cafe operators or any other person. At no stage the Ministry has stated or held that such assistance by travel agents of any standing, is illegal. Moreover, authorising or giving license to a few travel agents and regulating their service charges, would also go against the tenet of 'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance'."

**37. In order to supplement the efforts being made by the Ministry to ensure collection/submission of application for passports in every nook and corner of the country**

and involvement of Common Service Centres, the Committee had desired the Ministry to pursue the matter with India Post so as to ensure online filling of applications through all the post offices across India, particularly in the hinterland and rural areas. The Committee had also suggested consideration of the possibility of reputed travel agents/agencies to provide assistance in the cities on payment of a fixed charge in order to stop exploitation of passport applicants by the internet café operators and unauthorised agents. The Committee are concerned to note that despite the Ministry's best efforts, India Post have expressed their inability to provide facilities of online filling of passport application by paying Rs. 100 per application on account of dearth of manpower and technical resources.

The Committee agree with the Ministry that passport portal is accessible by anywhere at any time. However, still, people in the rural areas and other hinterlands do not have computers/internet and sometimes they do not have any knowledge of how to obtain access to the passport portal. Therefore, they seek the assistance of travel agents/agencies operating the internet and in the process are being exploited and charged exorbitantly for filling applications and getting dates. The main intention of the Committee's recommendation to authorize reputed travel agents/agencies to render necessary assistance to the passport applicants was to stop their exploitation by the internet café operators and other persons. In this connection, the Committee do not accept the viewpoint expressed by the Ministry that authorizing or giving license to few travel agents and regulating their service charges would go against the tenet of minimum government and maximum governance. Therefore, the Committee desire the Ministry to explore the possibilities of having a list of reputed travel agents/agencies so as to render possible assistance to the passport applicants by paying a nominal amount as decided by the Ministry.

**(Recommendation No. 19)**

38. The Committee had noted that from 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 Foreign Governments might deny visa or entry to any person travelling with a non-machine Readable Passport (MRP) and the older Indian Passports issued with a validity of 20 years falling under non-MRP category. The Committee had taken note of Ministry's reply that as a result of Ministry's sustained campaign, the figure of handwritten passports had come down from 2.86 lakh passport in December, 2014 to 2.62 lakh passport as on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2015. The Committee had suggested that in view of the



approaching deadline and the vast number of passport holders falling in the category, the Ministry should engage in a media campaign as well as highlight the issue at the Social Media so as to make citizens aware. The Committee had further recommended to the Ministry to flash this information on the Passport Seva Portal as well as on the website of Ministry of External Affairs and all the Missions for awareness of concerned persons.

39. The Ministry of External Affairs, in their action taken reply, has stated as under:

"The Ministry is constantly monitoring the situation related to issuance of Machine Readable Passports in lieu of Non-Machine Readable Passports. The Hon'ble Committee's recommendations related to going for a media campaign and highlighting the issue at the social media in order to make the citizens aware have been noted for compliance. In accordance with Hon'ble Committee recommendation, the Ministry would flash this information (which was earlier circulated on the Passport Portal and also for Missions/Posts abroad vide circular dated 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2014) on the Passport Seva Portal, all websites of Ministry of External Affairs and of Mission/Posts abroad."

**40. In view of the deadline of 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 being overrun for denial of visa or entry to any person travelling with non-Machine Readable Passport (MRP), the Committee, in view of 2.86 lakhs of handwritten passports and decision of the foreign Governments to deny visa to any person travelling with non-Machine Readable Passport (MRP), had recommended that the Ministry engage in a media campaign as well as highlight the issue on social media to generate awareness among the citizens. They had also desired the Ministry to flash this information on the Passport Seva portal as well as on the website of the Ministry and the missions/posts abroad. However, the Committee note that the Ministry has made a note of the recommendations for compliance and accordingly would flash this information on the Passport Seva portal and websites of the Ministry of External Affairs and also of Missions/Posts abroad. However, the Ministry has not flashed this important message on the proposed websites and Passport Seva portal. The Committee take serious note of it and wish to reiterate their earlier recommendation and desire that this should be done at the earliest without further delay.**

**(Recommendation No. 20)**

41. The Committee had noted that over the years, there was vast gap in Budgetary Estimates, the amount released and amount utilised under the Head 'Nalanda University'. The Committee had observed that even in BE 2015-16, the University had sought a sum of Rs. 313.21 crore, while the proposed BE 2015-16 was Rs. 100 crore. The Ministry had justified the BE 2015-16 on account of commencement of teaching since September 2014, admissions to the new academic session, issue of letter of intent to successful bidder. The Committee had noted the extraordinary delay in commencement of construction activities and the delays in execution of construction project for which no responsibility had been fixed till then. The Committee, therefore, had suggested to the Ministry to fix the responsibility for the delay and take necessary action to streamline the construction process in a time bound manner. The Committee had further recommended that the Ministry should ensure that budgetary projection process was streamlined in the University so that realistic budgetary projections were made. The Committee had also desired that a blueprint regarding commencement and status report of the construction project along with timelines should be furnished to the Committee on regular basis.

42. The Ministry of External Affairs, in their action taken reply, has stated as under:

"The Ministry shares the Hon'ble Committee's concern at the extraordinary delay in the commencement of construction activities. Reasons for delay have already been explained in detail. As mentioned earlier, the stake holders faced various challenges in establishing a new institution and there was constant evolution of parameters for the execution of the Nalanda Project. As such, it is difficult to fix responsibility.

2. The tender for preliminary work (Phase 1A), issued on 17 February 2015 had to be abandoned since it attracted only a single bid at a higher than estimated cost. The Ministry had to advise the University to re-tender work for the entire Phase 1 and issue a composite tender which was floated on 6 July 2015. The University proposes to award the Letter of Intent to the successful bidder soon following which the work on site is expected to commence. A copy of the Schedule of Events provided by the University during the Governing Board's meeting held on 5 July 2015 is attached at **Annexure**.

3. The University has also re-assessed its requirement of funds for the current financial year and made a realistic projection of Rs. 172.37 crore as against the

earlier estimate of Rs. 313.21 crore. The Ministry will henceforth keep the Committee informed of commencement of construction and status of the project on regular basis."

**43. The Committee while *inter-alia* recommending to streamline the budgetary projection process had also suggested that the Ministry fix the responsibility for the delay in implementation of the Nalanda University Project. The Ministry however have submitted that in the case of Nalanda University, there was a constant evolution of parameters for the execution of the project and hence it is difficult to fix the responsibility. The Committee are not at all convinced by the justification given by the Ministry. The Ministry should have anticipated these challenges before executing the project of such a nature as they entail circumstances that could have been anticipated when the University had availed of a lot of time in planning the project. It is a matter of surprise that despite the planning, the tender could attract no more than a single bid leading to the cancellation of the tender. The exercise of the re-issue of the tender has already taken a lot of time and it would commensurately contribute to further delays in the project. The Committee would, therefore, reiterate that the Ministry should fix accountability for the delay in the Nalanda University project and take all initiatives necessary for the implementation of the project within a fixed time frame.**

**(Recommendation No. 21)**

44. The Committee had noted that apart from Budgetary allocation of Rs. 302.89 crore during the BE 2014-15, an additional allocation of Rs. 141.00 crore was sought during supplementary grants in anticipation of the South Asian University construction project. The Committee wondered as to why the additional resources were augmented when basic necessary clearances were awaited. The Committee did not support the approach being followed by SAU when a major portion of the land was in their possession since long, leaving small patches awaiting clearances. The Committee, therefore had desired that the construction plan should be modified at the earliest on the plot available with a view to commence the activities. Simultaneously, they might have continued pursuing the case with concerned authorities to get clearances of the remaining portion of the land.

45. The Ministry of External Affairs, in their action taken reply, has stated as under:

"Government of India is committed to provide full capital costs including 100 acres of land for construction of the permanent campus of the South Asian University. Delhi Development Authority has transferred unencumbered land measuring 90.96 acres so far.

2. The university has informed that they have obtained the statutory approvals for its master plan of the project from Delhi Urban Arts Commission, South Delhi Municipal Corporation and the Airports Authority. They have also obtained the necessary environmental clearance. Permission for felling trees is under process with the Department of Forest and Wild Life.

3. The additional allocation of Rs. 141 crores was asked for on the premise that all clearances and permission would be in place soon and the project would require fresh infusion of funds to take off successfully. In fact, construction activity commenced on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2015 with a ground breaking ceremony. A Legal notice has, however, been served by some individuals claiming the land to be under their ownership. Necessary action is being taken to deal with the matter through inter-departmental consultations and legal counsel.

4. The recommendation of the Hon'ble Committee to prepare fresh lay out plan by making necessary changes with reference to land available for construction without any encumbrances has been noted. This may, however, require fresh approval from SDMC, CPWD etc. for the revised lay out plan. However, the Ministry is in consultation with the stakeholders and would exercise the best available option for completion of the project at the earliest."

**46. The Committee had recommended that the plan for the construction of a permanent campus of the South Asian University should be modified in light of the small patches of land still awaiting clearances. The Committee have been apprised that after the construction activity had commenced on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2015, a legal notice was served by some individuals claiming the land to be under their ownership. This has led to further delay in the project. The Committee are of the considered opinion that once the land has been formally transferred to the University by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), the University is the *de jure* owner of the land and such litigations by few individuals is nothing but dilatory tactics. The Committee would therefore, recommend that an expeditious solution to this vexatious problem should be sought through legal counsel. The Committee would further recommend that consultations at the highest level should be held with the SDMC, CPWD**

**and DDA for getting clearances and enabling the earliest possible completion of the project. In the meantime the design could be suitably modified so as to permit construction of one part of the campus.**

**(Recommendation No. 22)**

47. The Committee had noted that over 60% of the budget of the Ministry was earmarked for developmental engagement with other countries via allocation under aid/loans. The Committee, however, were dismayed to note that during RE 2014-15, a reduction of Rs. 2190 crore was made in budgetary allocation under aid and loans to countries, though an allocation of Rs. 400 crore was sought at the supplementary stage under the Head 'Aid to Afghanistan'. The Committee had noted that matching savings made under various Sub-Heads was used for allocation for utilization within the Ministry under the Heads Special Diplomatic Expenditure, Embassies and Missions, etc. The Committee had expressed their concern over the Ministry's approach of cutting on international commitments towards maintaining relations with friendly countries and towards countries' commitments and developmental engagement with these countries in order to fulfil the internal needs of the Ministry and had desired that such practice should not continue because it directly affected the bilateral relation and prestige of the country.

48. The Ministry of External Affairs, in their action taken reply, has stated as under:

"Due to reduction in overall allocation at RE stage during 2014-15, almost all heads of account under 'Major Head 3605 - Technical and Economic Cooperation' had to be reduced in order to comply with the ceiling mandated by the Ministry of Finance. Ministry, however, had to provide for the mandatory establishment expenses of the Missions/Posts abroad, and under the Special Diplomatic Expenditure which is discretionary in nature. These expenses could not be withheld, being mandatory in nature. However, to the extent possible, it was ensured that implementation of key projects would not suffer and important commitments were met by rolling over expenditure to next financial year."

**49. The Committee had expressed serious concern over the Ministry's approach of cutting down budgetary resources on international commitments while using the matching savings made under various Sub-Heads for utilization within the Ministry under the Heads**

**Special Diplomatic Expenditure, Embassies and Missions.** The Committee are not convinced with the justification given by the Ministry that the development funds were reduced in order to comply with the ceiling mandated by the Ministry of Finance and consequently, the Ministry had to provide for funds under the Special Diplomatic Expenditure. The Committee have no objections in principle to the mandatory establishment expenses of the Missions/Posts abroad, as they are indispensable for running of the Foreign Affairs establishment. However, the Committee opine that if fund cuts were to be effected due to the strictures of the Finance Ministry, then the same should be spread out among all the Heads. Keeping out the head of Special Diplomatic Expenditure from the purview of budgetary cuts not only amounts to a discretionary exercise but also defies logic. The Committee cannot assume that the Special Diplomatic Expenditure is more important and sacrosanct for the Ministry than announced aid commitments to other countries. The Committee would, therefore, recommend that the Ministry should refrain from reducing the funds under the Head 'Technical and Economic Cooperation ' and if all the budgetary cuts are to be effected than the impact of such reductions should be spread out evenly, across all the heads.

**(Recommendation No. 25)**

50. The Committee were concerned to note that due to the ceiling communicated by the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry had to reprioritize its budgetary resources and the fourth and final instalment of US \$25 million cash grant to Bangladesh could not be released and it was proposed to provide it in the financial year 2015-16. But the Ministry had not explained how did they propose to do the same. The Committee, therefore, had desired that the amount should be released in the first quarter of 2015-16 in order to honour the commitment.

The Committee had also noted that there was a significant progress in the implementation of the Akhaura-Agartala Rail Link Project. But there was no mention of progress on financing of the Indian portion of the project. The Committee had, therefore, desired that the Ministry should pursue the matter vigorously with the Ministry of Development of North East Region for confirmation on financing the cost of the project and ensure that due clearances were taken from the concerned authorities for commencement of construction on the Indian side simultaneously.

51. The Ministry of External Affairs, in their action taken reply, has stated as under:

"The fourth and final installment of US\$ 25 million cash grant to Bangladesh was released in full in April 2015 and formally handed over to Govt. of Bangladesh on 12 May 2015.

2. The financing of the Indian portion of the Akhaura-Agartala rail Link project is being pursued vigorously. DoNER has expressed its inability to finance this, owing to lack of jurisdictional mandate (land acquisition in States) and budgetary constraints on their side. Thereafter, M/o Railways[MoR] was requested by MEA to consider the implementation of Indian portion as a Project of National Importance. MoR has conveyed its inability to add any more such projects of national importance to its existing list of twelve. The matter was discussed in a Committee of Secretaries meeting on 23 July 2015, chaired by Cabinet Secretary, where it was decided that MEA will move a note to the Ministry of Finance which would approve the funding and designate the Ministry to which these will accrue. Construction of the Indian portion will commence thereafter."

**52. The Committee are pleased to note that the fourth and final instalment of US \$25 million cash grants to Bangladesh was released in full in April, 2015 and formally handed over to the Government of Bangladesh. The Committee are, however, perturbed over the fate of their recommendation wherein the Committee had desired confirmation on financing of Indian portion of the Akhaura-Agartala Rail Link Project. It has emerged that the Department of North Eastern Region (DoNER) and the Ministry of Railways (MoR) have conveyed their inability to shoulder the responsibility of financing the project. The Committee have now been informed that the Ministry of External Affairs will now move a note to the Ministry of Finance to approve the requisite funding and also designate the Ministry to which these will accrue. In light of the fact that the Akhaura-Agartala Rail Link is of vital importance for further deepening of the Indo-Bangladesh ties, the Committee would recommend that the modalities for financing the Indian portion of the Project should be worked out without any further delay.**

**(Recommendation No. 30)**

53. The Committee had noted that under the Head 'Aid to African Countries' the BE for 2014-15 was Rs. 350 crore which was reduced to Rs. 145 crore while the BE for 2015-16 had been pegged at Rs. 200 crore. The Committee were concerned to note that in spite of pendency of

several projects and zero allocation for several projects under that Head, the allocation had been reduced at BE 2015-16 as compared to BE 2014-15. Furthermore, the Committee were concerned about that slow or no progress in implementation of projects announced under India Africa Forum Summit I and II. The Committee, therefore, had suggested that the Government should engage with African Union regarding the constraints being faced in implementation of the projects and get them expedited. The Ministry had stated that the announcements/identification of projects were demand driven and an important factor in India's political relations but it did not appear to be true when the failure percentage of projects under IAFS-I and II were analysed. The Committee had, therefore, strongly desired that while identifying the projects under IAFS III, the Ministry must ensure that projects were actually demand driven. In the Committee's view that was possible through more extensive ground work before the IAFS III, better engagement with African Union as well as the intended beneficiary countries at the stage of identification of project itself.

54. The Ministry of External Affairs, in their action taken reply, has stated as under:

"Recommendation of the Hon'ble Committee has been noted. A comprehensive review of all the projects announced so far under India-Africa Forum Summit-I & II is currently underway in consultation with all the concerned Ministries/departments. Based on this, a decision will be taken on the project that can be continued or dropped. Ministry had consulted the African Union on the projects announced during IAFS-III."

**55. The Committee are happy to note that the Ministry has consulted the African Union on the projects announced during the India Africa Forum Summit III. Such a move would definitely go a long way towards ensuring that the projects under 'Aid to African Countries' are actually demand-driven and hence make them more viable. The Committee have been informed that a comprehensive review of all the projects announced so far under India-Africa Summit-I & II is currently underway in consultation with all the concerned Ministries/Departments. India has embarked on a plan to significantly make its presence felt in Africa. In view of the urgency of engaging the African nations, the Committee would recommend that such a review should be expedited. The changing global reality makes it mandatory for India to enhance the place of Africa at the centre of India's foreign policy**



**matrix and it is therefore, incumbent that the aid to African nations should be increased substantially.**

**(Recommendation No. 31)**

56. The Committee had observed that our bilateral engagements with countries of Latin America and Caribbean Region had grown in the last few years and our political engagements had also intensified at the highest level. Almost all the countries of the region had been supporting India at the International fora and many of them look up to Indian development assistance. The Committee were really concerned that a very small component of funds had been allocated under 'Aid to Latin American countries' and that too was reduced drastically at RE stage. The Committee had noted that during the recent visit of the President of Guyana, the Prime Minister had conveyed the Government of India's decision to give US \$ 10 million Line of Credit which had been approved by the Inter-Ministerial Standing Committee. However, sanction of Line of Credit of US \$ 8 million had been held in abeyance pending availability of funds. The Committee were concerned at the Ministry's own admission that in absence of funds under the 'Aid to Latin American countries' budget, that politically important project could not be implemented despite announcement at Prime Minister's level. The Committee had disapproved such approach of the Government on the issue of funds and recommended that due priority should be given to the projects announced at the highest level especially when it related to strategically important countries.

Furthermore, the Committee had also taken note of the status regarding implementation of another politically very important Project pertaining to assistance to upgrade and overhaul the ICT (Information, Communication and Technology) system of CARICOM Secretariat, which was originally set up by India, the implementation of which was also dependent upon the availability of funds in the financial year 2015-16. The Committee had, therefore, recommended that the Ministry must take up the project on priority basis particularly, in view of the political significance of the project and budgetary requirement of only Rs. 15 crore over the span of two years.

57. The Ministry of External Affairs, in their action taken reply, has stated as under:

"The recommendations of the Hon'ble Committee regarding budgetary requirements under this Head as well as the Project pertaining to assistance to upgrade and overhaul the ICT (Information, Communication and Technology) system of Caricom Secretariat have been noted. Additional funds required under the Head will be sought at the RE stage and through Supplementary Demand for Grants. A technical evaluation team from the Ministry of Information Technology and Communication has held discussions with the officials of the CARICOM Secretariat when it visited Georgetown in the second half of May 2015. Report of the Team is awaited. The Ministry would be undertaking up gradation of ICT system of CARICOM Secretariat on priority basis in a time bound manner."

**58. The Committee had observed that lack of funds was a key factor in limiting India's outreach and bilateral engagement with countries of the Latin America and Caribbean Region. The Committee are dismayed that the sanction of Line of Credit of US \$ 8 million to Guyana had been kept in abeyance pending availability of funds. The Committee had disapproved of such a diffident approach of the Government on the issue and would reiterate that due priority should be accorded to and projects announced at the highest level and the pledges should be observed scrupulously.**

**The Committee hope that the Ministry would be able to get the required funds for upgradation and overhaul of the Information Communication and Technology (ICT) system of CARICOM Secretariat at the RE stage and effectively implement it in light of the Report of the technical evaluation team from the Ministry of Information and Technology. Further, the Committee desire that they should be apprised about the outcomes of the project.**

**(Recommendation No. 35)**

59. In view of lack of desired budgetary resources and Ministry's response regarding lack of avenues to make Indian Cultural Centres self sufficient, the Committee were of the view that ICCR should explore the possibility of generating additional resources. The Committee had taken note of the initiatives undertaken by the Ministry/ICCR for partners and public private partnership. The Committee, therefore, had recommended to ICCR to explore the possibility and

study the matter in depth regarding engagement with the local associations of Indians/PIOs for organising the events as well as for sponsorship of events. Moreover, the Committee had suggested that the Ministry/ICCR should develop basic parameters, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) etc. with regard to engagement of local Indians/Indian Diaspora organisations.

60. The Ministry of External Affairs, in their action taken reply, has stated as under:

"Indian Missions/ Posts/ Cultural Centres abroad typically have to arrange for local hospitality for ICCR-sponsored cultural groups/delegates, i.e. boarding, lodging, and transport within the foreign country, venue and technical support for their performance, talk or other activities, and publicity. In countries where we have large diaspora this is generally done through Indian community and/or local associations. As recommended by the Committee, ICCR is consulting Indian Missions/Posts/Cultural Centres regarding developing basic parameters and procedures for engagement with Indian Diaspora organizations."

**61. The Committee are happy to note that acting on their recommendation, the ICCR is now in consultation with India Missions/Posts/Cultural Centres regarding development of basic parameters and procedures for engagement with Indian Diaspora organizations. The Indian diaspora has made its presence felt in major countries of the world and has contributed immensely to the respective host societies. It is the considered opinion of the Committee that the dynamism of the Diaspora can be further tapped to popularize India's rich culture and heritage on foreign shores. The Diaspora organizations can themselves emerge as important stakeholders in safeguarding Indian culture in due course if they are given appropriate recognition. Therefore, the Committee would recommend that the modalities for engaging the diaspora organizations should be formulated without any further delays and that they should also be consulted on the matter.**

**(Recommendation No. 39)**

62. Capacity building through defence and civilian training programme under ITEC, SCAAP and Technical Cooperation Scheme under Colombo Plan is an integral part of India's developmental cooperation. The Committee had noted that the ITEC Programme had completed 50 years in operation. In Committee's view it was the appropriate occasion to conduct a comprehensive review of the programme including the decision making process, types of training, identification of institutions, etc. and carry out an objective assessment of the programme from

the perspective of achievement of India's foreign policy goals. It was also necessary to evaluate whether our programme was meeting the needs and expectations of the beneficiary countries. Furthermore, the Committee had suggested that the Ministry should critically analyse the requests received for training from the beneficiary countries and accordingly review the type of training provided to include new and emerging areas of technology as per their requirements. The Committee had recommended that the Ministry must develop SOPs regarding each step from the stage of receipt of request from the beneficiary country up to the final conclusion and post-conclusion feedback from the beneficiary country. The Committee had also noted that the last review regarding inclusion of institutions was done in 2008. The Committee, therefore, had desired that the Ministry should review the list of institutions and incorporate or exclude the institutions as per their performance and altered requirements.

63. The Ministry of External Affairs, in their action taken reply, has stated as under:

"ITEC programme consists of capacity building courses conducted for partner countries. The programme has completed 50 years of operation in 2014. The capacity building courses are conducted at the request of partner countries. There is a system of regular and continuous review. No overall structural review seems to have been carried out, as the requirement for this was not felt. The reason being, under ITEC, training in diverse areas such as Accounts, Audit, Banking and Finance courses, IT, Telecommunication and English Courses, Management Courses, SME/Rural Development Courses, Specialized Courses, Technical Courses and Environment and Renewable Energy Courses are already being covered and special courses are also conducted at specific request of ITEC partner countries.

2. Ministry regularly evaluates the training programmes under ITEC/SCAAP/TCS Colombo Plan. The feedback from participants are carefully analyzed to evaluate training courses. Inputs are examined to assess the course contents, duration and requirement of practical exercises/project works. The courses are evaluated on a yearly basis based on the popularity of the course, i.e., number of participants received during that training period, feedback of the participants who attended the course, etc. Depending on the response received, the popular courses are continued and unpopular courses are discontinued in the next academic year."

64. **The Committee had *inter-alia* recommended to strengthen the ITEC programme by carrying out a comprehensive review of the programme and a review of the list of the participating institutions. The Committee are not convinced with the arguments of the**

Ministry that there is a system of regular and continuous review and no overall structural review was carried out as the requirement for this was not felt. While observing that the last review regarding inclusion of institutions was done in 2008, the Committee opine that training needs in diverse fields like Accounts, Audit, Banking and Finance Courses, IT, Tele-Communications etc. are in fact evolving and some of the practices are liable to become obsolete. With the rapid advancement in the fields related to Information Technology and Communications, it would be a worthwhile exercise to re-evaluate the training programmes at regular intervals to keep pace with such developments. Moreover during the last eight years a number of new institutes have come up which might be better equipped to meet the training requirements of the participant countries. In light of the above, the Committee would strongly reiterate that a comprehensive review of the ITEC programme should be carried out. Further, the list of the participating institutions should also be reviewed. In the light of the dynamism which has been today imparted to each and every walk of life, it would be futile if the training programme is not reviewed at regular intervals.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT**

#### **(Recommendation No. 1)**

The Committee observe that during Budget Estimates 2014-15, the Ministry of External Affairs had sought an allocation of Rs. 26,111.23 crore; however, the actual allocation at the Budget Estimate(BE) stage was Rs. 14,730.39 crore. The Committee, therefore, had recommended to the Ministry to vigorously pursue substantially enhanced allocations at Revised Estimates (RE) stage. The Committee, however, are dismayed to note that instead of increasing the allocation, in an unprecedented move, the budgetary allocation of the Ministry of External Affairs was reduced by Rs. 2,110.39 crore at RE stage. This reduction was in spite of the fact that the Ministry had registered an expenditure of 68% in BE till December, 2014 and had actually sought an additional allocation of Rs. 2999.30 crore at RE stage. The Committee are concerned to note that in spite of the intervention made at the level of External Affairs Minister, the situation was not improved. The Committee are unhappy to note that even at the supplementary stage, no cash supplementary was provided initially to the Ministry.

The Committee are particularly dismayed to note that there was substantial reduction in allocation at the RE stage when there were several visits by Head of Government/Minister of External Affairs and requirement of more resources by the concerned Missions/Posts and resources to execute the commitments for aid/ assistance made with various countries as well as several high level visits to India by foreign dignitaries and commitments made therein. The Committee are distressed to take note of the lukewarm attitude of the Government of India and in particular the Ministry of Finance towards the conduct of India's foreign policy and hope that this approach will change during the current Financial Year.

#### **Reply of the Government**

Ministry acknowledges the concern shown by the Hon'ble Committee regarding the budgetary challenges faced by it. There has also been practically no augmentation in the Non Plan allocation in 2015-16. The Ministry would continue to actively liaise with the Ministry of Finance in seeking additional funds allocated in Supplementary Demands/Revised Estimates.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]]

### **(Recommendation No. 2)**

The Committee note that the Ministry of External Affairs during the Budget Estimates (BE) 2015-16 had sought an allocation of Rs. 20,034.62 crore comprising a Plan component of Rs. 5,583.69 crore and a Non-Plan component of Rs. 14,450.93 crore. The Committee, however, are distressed to note that the proposed budgetary allocation is only Rs. 14,966.83 crore with a Plan component of Rs. 5,336.20 crore and Non-Plan component of Rs. 9,630.63 crore. The Committee are concerned that the budgetary allocation during BE 2015-16 is only 1.6% more than the overall BE 2014-15 allocation and is 25.3% less than the sought budgetary allocation. The Committee are deeply concerned about the budgetary allocation of the Ministry and wonder whether this allocation is reflective of the priority being attached by the Government of India to foreign policy, particularly when India aspires to be a big power in the twenty-first century and is the third largest emerging economy. Considering the global nature of the Ministry's engagement, the task laid before the Ministry and the responsibility to execute India's aid commitments and the nature of the Ministry's expenditure, the Committee strongly recommend that the Government should ensure the predictability and full funding of the Ministry at the BE stage itself. The Committee, however, are of the firm opinion that in view of substantially reduced allocation as compared to the allocation sought by the Ministry at BE stage, the Ministry of Finance should allocate suitably enhanced allocations to the Ministry at the RE 2015-16 stage. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry of External Affairs pursue the request for enhanced budgetary allocation not only with the Ministry of Finance but also at the highest level at RE 2015-16 stage as well as well as during discussions for BE 2016-17.

### **Reply of the Government**

Ministry would continue to actively pursue the request for enhanced allocations with the Ministry of Finance in Supplementary Demands/Revised Estimates of 2015-16. The Hon'ble Committee's recommendation is also expected to give the necessary fillip to the Ministry's cause.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

### **(Recommendation No. 4)**

The Committee note that out of the total BE 2015-16 allocation of Rs. 14,966.83 crore, 38.14% budget of the Ministry pertains to technical and economic cooperation with other countries, 22.7% pertains to loans to foreign governments and nearly 15.04% pertains to obligatory expenditure such as expenditure on SDE, mandatory contribution to international organisations of which India is a Member, Grants in Aid, etc. The Committee observe that only 21.8% of the total budgetary allocation of the Ministry is earmarked for the establishment cost including expenditure on the Ministry of External Affairs Secretariat and Missions/Posts abroad as well as the expenditure on the overall establishment of the Central Passport Organization and

0.73 percent on other expenditure. The Committee, therefore, note that even if expenditure on Special Diplomatic Expenditure and Grants to various Institutions is included, less than 40 percent of the Ministry's budget is meant for its consumption and most of the expenditure is meant to fulfil international commitments/obligations.

Furthermore, the Committee note that the revenue earned by the Ministry from Passport, Visa and other services was Rs. 4,044 crore till February, 2015 while the total establishment cost of the Ministry during the same period was Rs. 2,743 crore. The Committee, therefore, observe that the Ministry has earned more than 47% of expenditure on its entire establishment in India and abroad. The Committee, therefore, are of the opinion that in view of the peculiar needs of the Ministry as well as revenues generated by the Ministry, the Government/ Ministry of Finance should pursue a policy of minimum reduction of budgetary allocation *vis-à-vis* budgetary allocation sought by the Ministry of External Affairs.

### **Reply of the Government**

The advice of the Hon'ble Committee has been taken note of. Ministry had taken a conscious decision to increase the passport fees a couple of years back, thereby contributing to the non-tax revenues of the Govt. of India. In spite of the Ministry's pointing out the fact that there is a case of ploughing back the revenues in order to deliver better services to the passport applicants, the RE 2014-15 was drastically reduced. The Ministry has already projected its additional requirements in the 1<sup>st</sup> Batch of Supplementary Demands for Grants (SDG) to the Ministry of Finance. The efforts would continue in the remaining batches of SDG and at RE stage as well.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

### **(Recommendation No. 7)**

The Committee in their 14<sup>th</sup> Report (15<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha) had called upon the Ministry to recruit external applicants with relevant expertise for lateral entry into the Ministry up to and including the Joint Secretary level. The Committee are happy to note that a lateral entry scheme has been initiated by the Ministry. The Committee, however, recommend that apart from the normal process of recruitment from other Government Departments, lateral entry should also be open to academia, think tanks, NGOs and the private sector. In addition to regular APARs, the Ministry should conduct specified feedback regarding the role, efficiency and suitability of the such officers recruited/ deputed via lateral entry. Furthermore, the Committee are of the view that the Ministry should also consider the policy of retaining such personnel or continuation of their deputation particularly, for those candidates who are found suitable for the job and have gained suitable expertise. The Committee suggest that the Ministry should pursue the matter with Department of Personnel and Training rather than deputing new persons every two-three years and spare Ministry's resources on their placement and training.



### **Reply of the Government**

The Ministry has started the process of engaging consultants from the academia for its Policy, Planning and Research Division and has brought out an advertisement on June 29, 2015. The consultancy is for an initial period of three years which can be extended based on performance of the individual. The consultants would be engaged as International Relations experts in the Policy Planning & Research Division.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

### **(Recommendation No. 8)**

The Committee take note of the steps taken by the Central Passport Organization regarding filling the gap between the sanctioned cadre strength and the present working strength by recruitment of 450 Data Entry Operators in lieu of vacant non-gazetted posts at Group 'B' and 'C' level. The Committee, however, note that this is just a stop gap arrangement and the Ministry should pursue the matter with the Department of Personnel for conducting recruitment for vacant non-gazetted posts at the earliest. Moreover, the Committee suggest that the Ministry must ensure conducting of due security clearance and checking of credentials for the Data Entry Operators, thus engaged. The Committee also note that the Ministry has issued instructions to Passport Offices to rotate the CPO officials between PSKs and PBOs but since long they have not been able to finalize a transfer policy governing CPO officials in view of the changed requirement of manpower at the PSKs and PBOs. The Committee, therefore, desire that the transfer policy for CPO should be finalized on priority basis considering the functional requirements both at PSKs and PBOs.

### **Reply of the Government**

It is submitted that as regards recruitment for vacant non-gazetted post, the Ministry has been constantly pursuing the matter with the Staff Selection Commission (SSC). The SSC has conducted examinations for the post of Lower Division Clerks (LDC) and Assistants in 2014 and 2015, which is still under process. After completion of all the relevant formalities, the nominations and appointments of LDCs and Assistants are expected by December 2015.

2. The Ministry would like to inform the Hon'ble Committee that the process of security clearance and checking of credentials of Data Entry Operators is undertaken directly by the Service Provider.

3. The Transfer Policy relating to Central Passport Organization personnel has been revised in March, 2015 in supersession of the earlier policy guidelines framed in 2010, keeping in view the functional requirements of officials both at PSKs and PBOs.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

### **(Recommendation No. 9)**

The Committee note that out of the total budgetary allocation under the Head 'Training' only marginal expenditure of Rs. 1.21 crore, Rs. 1.88 crore and Rs. 1.08 crore has been made on the training of Indian diplomats/officials during 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14 respectively. The Committee note that the Ministry has often stated that special attention would be paid to training, yet the expenditure does not seem to be reflective of this approach. The Committee are also not convinced with the Ministry's reasoning for non-implementation of the non-mandatory training programme. The Committee, therefore, suggest that the Ministry place due stress on the training of its diplomats/officials in accordance with the New Training Framework. Furthermore, the Committee are appreciative of the Ministry's initiative for training of Indian Diplomats for updation and maintenance of social media and website of the Missions/Posts abroad. The Committee, however, desire that the Ministry should incorporate this training in the New Training Framework as well as provide this training to all the officers of the rank of Joint Secretary and above in the Ministry.

### **Reply of the Government**

Since implementation of the MEA Training Framework (July 2013) started, there has been progressive escalation, indeed a quantum jump in the number of Indian diplomats/officials trained. The number of training programmes conducted by FSI as well as the number of training hours have also gone up significantly especially during 2014-15. FSI could achieve all the above without an increase in expenditure, by introducing innovative and cost-effective methods of training delivery such as (i) the use of webinar to reach officers across geographical and time-zone barriers, (ii) regrouping target groups and rationalizing the training content accordingly, and (iii) introducing greater flexibility in training methods to reduce disruption of normal work on account of training. Further, training has been made mandatory for all officers/officials up to the rank of Director before proceeding on postings, thus ensuring larger participation in training.

2. Information about the non-mandatory training programme including the procedure put in place for its utilization was disseminated through webinar and website to all the officers. Taking note of the Committee's recommendations, further modalities will be worked out in consultation with Administration Division of the MEA to ensure better utilization.

3. Media management including updation and maintenance of social media and website of mission/posts abroad is already included in training programmes for various levels of IFS officials / officers and would be explicitly reflected whenever the Training Framework is revised. As recommended by the Committee, Mid-career training program for Joint Secretary and above too would ensure continued incorporation of this training.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

### **(Recommendation No. 10)**

The Committee observe that during RE 2014-15, allocation had been reduced in almost all the Heads due to economy cut imposed by the Ministry of Finance. The Committee note that despite the increase in allocation under the Head 'Special Diplomatic Expenditure (SDE)' at the RE stage as well as the supplementary grant stage, yet no cash supplementary was provided initially and the Ministry had to make arrangements for matching savings from within the resources of the Ministry. The Committee are concerned at the Ministry of Finance's move of not providing cash supplementary initially. Furthermore, the Committee note that under the Head Special Diplomatic Expenditure (SDE) though there is an increase in budgetary allocation during BE 2015-16, as compared to RE 2014-15, yet the Committee are of the opinion that all the resources needed for the security aspects of the foreign policy are not considered in these budget estimates. The Committee, therefore, recommend to the Government that the allocation under this Head should be in consonance with the active foreign policy being pursued by the Government of India.

The Committee suggest that in view of the discretionary nature of expenditure and allocation based upon the functional requirement, the existing monitoring mechanism to oversee expenditure under this Head should be reviewed and further strengthened and more checks and balances should be created within.

### **Reply of the Government**

The Ministry is grateful to the committee for recommending to the Government that the allocation under this Head should be in consonance with the active foreign policy being pursued by the Government of India. The Ministry has also noted the suggestion that the existing monitoring mechanism to oversee expenditure under this Head should be reviewed and further strengthened and more checks and balances should be created within.

2. Accordingly, Foreign Secretary has commenced a monthly review of the expenditure under the SDE scrupulously to ensure that the expenditure incurred is as per the political and security requirements of India. The review mechanism will be followed rigorously to ensure that the expenditure under SDE is incurred only for the purpose for which it has been sanctioned and is also kept within the amount approved.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

### **(Recommendation No. 11)**

The Committee note that under the budgetary Head 'Entertainment Charges' expenditure is incurred on extending hospitality to foreign dignitaries. It is praiseworthy to note that in spite of several high profile high level visits by foreign dignitaries there is no significant rise of expenditure under this Head and rather the allocation at RE stage was reduced to Rs. 39.00 crore

during 2014-15. The Committee, however, also note that the Ministry has stated that only time-bound bills were prioritized. The Committee would like to convey displeasure over the practice of keeping the bills pending and building liabilities for the next Financial Year. The Committee, therefore, recommend that immediate steps should be taken for the early settlement of pending bills. The Committee are of the opinion that in view of several such visits the budgetary allocation under this Head should be increased at RE 2015-16 stage so that the Ministry is able to timely process the bills.

### **Reply of the Government**

Recommendations of the Committee have been noted for compliance and enhanced requirements will be reflected in the RE stage so that expenditure incurred in the current financial year is not required to be deferred.

The Committee note that in spite of the overall cut in the budget allocation at RE stage, there was 10.35% increase under the Head 'Embassies and Missions' in view of high level visits by Indian Government, mandatory expenses and depreciating value of the Rupee. The Committee further note that there is an increase of 23.61% during BE 2015-16 over BE 2014-15 in the allocations under this Head. The Committee are of the view that the increased allocation are not in tune with the role and functions assigned to these Missions/Embassies. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the allocation under this Head should be substantially enhanced at the RE stage. The Committee however, are distressed to note that there is no separate head to cater to improvement of services in the Missions and Posts. The Committee note that Indian Missions/Posts form India's residential diplomatic presence in the host country as well as first contact point for locals as well as Indians residing there. The Committee, therefore, are of the view that the Government should adequately focus on streamlining the procedure in the Indian Missions/Posts and ensure high standards of services rendered by them. The Committee suggest the Ministry to have a mechanism to receive feedback from the general public regarding rendering of services by each Missions/Posts. In context of finalizing e-Samiksha, the Committee suggest to the Ministry to initiate and complete the project in a time bound manner. The Committee note that this portal would be an effective tool in evaluating performance of Missions/Posts. The Committee, therefore, would like to suggest to the Ministry that on the basis of web data analysis the criteria like public perception and public feedback should also to incorporated. The Committee further suggest to the Ministry to explore the possibility of an engagement with the State Governments for reporting of consular grievances.

MEA e-Samiksha, an online interface between the Missions/Posts and Headquarters has been made operational by the Ministry with the objective of bringing in greater synergy between Ministry and Missions, including on delivery of public services. Another web portal online Consular Grievances Monitoring System named MADAD, also has provision of receiving public

perception and feedback, including appreciation and suggestions, in order to improve the grievance mechanism system. As far as engagement with the State Governments for reporting of consular grievances is concerned, the Branch Secretariats in Chennai, Guwahati, Hyderabad and Kolkata have been associated with this portal for registration of consular grievances and its follow up. The portal is designed to accept suggestions from any registered user, who can be an individual or an organisation.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

### **(Recommendation No. 12)**

The Committee note that in spite of the overall cut in the budget allocation at RE stage, there was 10.35% increase under the Head 'Embassies and Missions' in view of high level visits by Indian Government, mandatory expenses and depreciating value of the Rupee. The Committee further note that there is an increase of 23.61% during BE 2015-16 over BE 2014-15 in the allocations under this Head. The Committee are of the view that the increased allocation are not in tune with the role and functions assigned to these Missions/Embassies. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the allocation under this Head should be substantially enhanced at the RE stage. The Committee however, are distressed to note that there is no separate head to cater to improvement of services in the Missions and Posts. The Committee note that Indian Missions/Posts form India's residential diplomatic presence in the host country as well as first contact point for locals as well as Indians residing there. The Committee, therefore, are of the view that the Government should adequately focus on streamlining the procedure in the Indian Missions/Posts and ensure high standards of services rendered by them. The Committee suggest the Ministry to have a mechanism to receive feedback from the general public regarding rendering of services by each Missions/Posts. In context of finalizing e-Samiksha, the Committee suggest to the Ministry to initiate and complete the project in a time bound manner. The Committee note that this portal would be an effective tool in evaluating performance of Missions/Posts. The Committee, therefore, would like to suggest to the Ministry that on the basis of web data analysis the criteria like public perception and public feedback should also to incorporated. The Committee further suggest to the Ministry to explore the possibility of an engagement with the State Governments for reporting of consular grievances.

### **Reply of the Government**

MEA e-Samiksha, an online interface between the Missions/Posts and Headquarters has been made operational by the Ministry with the objective of bringing in greater synergy between Ministry and Missions, including on delivery of public services. Another web portal online Consular Grievances Monitoring System named MADAD, also has provision of receiving public perception and feedback, including appreciation and suggestions, in order to improve the

grievance mechanism system. As far as engagement with the State Governments for reporting of consular grievances is concerned, the Branch Secretariats in Chennai, Guwahati, Hyderabad and Kolkata have been associated with this portal for registration of consular grievances and its follow up. The portal is designed to accept suggestions from any registered user, who can be an individual or an organisation.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

### **(Recommendation No. 13)**

The Committee take note of the collaborative effort of the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs of launch of web portal online Consular Grievances Monitoring System named MADAD for extending a helping hand to Indians abroad requiring consular assistance, consular grievance tracking and follow up. In view of the involvement of two Ministries, the Committee are of the view that the Ministry should establish a coordination mechanism and channels of communication between the two Ministries and come up with identifiable timelines with Standard Operating Procedures regarding the process to be followed once a grievance is received.

Moreover, in view of the process of registering the new domain and thereafter transfer of web-portal, the Committee recommend that the Ministry should engage with the concerned authorities for an early registration of the domain name as well as to ensure flawless transfer from the present portal. The Committee are of the view that efforts need to be made to give wider publicity to the portal. The Committee, therefore, suggest that the Ministry in collaboration with the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs should engage in a media campaign, particularly on social media, as well as flash the information of the portal on Passport Seva Portal and on websites of individual Missions/Posts.

### **Reply of the Government**

The recommendations of the Committee have been noted for compliance. Recently, the Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) in Gurgaon and Indian Workers Resource Centre (IWRC) in Dubai, operated by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, have also been authorised to assist grievants to lodge their grievances on this portal. Setting up a dedicated Call Centre for MADAD is also under process. Soon the Madad Portal will also have facilities of a Mobile App for the benefit of the common man.

2. A web portal with the URL [www.madad.gov.in](http://www.madad.gov.in) has since been registered and we are in the process of transfer to the new domain. However, MADAD portal would continue to be accessed through Passport Seva portal as well. For the purpose of wider publicity, MADAD Portal has been displayed by Indian Missions and Posts abroad prominently on their websites. In addition, Missions/Posts are also publicizing the MADAD portal in their interaction with the Indian community on various occasions.

3. A list of designated Welfare Officers in Gulf Countries with their contact numbers and other details as well as emergency contact phone numbers of all Indian Missions and Posts have also been placed on Missions/Posts and MEA websites.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

**(Recommendation No. 19)**

The Committee note that from 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 Foreign Governments may deny visa or entry to any person travelling with a non-machine Readable Passport (MRP) and the older Indian Passports issued with a validity of 20 years fall under non-MRP category. The Committee take note of Ministry's reply that as a result of Ministry's sustained campaign, the figure of handwritten passports has come down from 2.86 lakh passport in December, 2014 to 2.62 lakh passport as on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2015. The Committee suggest that in view of the approaching deadline and the vast number of passport holders falling in the category, the Ministry should engage in a media campaign as well as highlight the issue at the Social Media so as to make citizens aware. The Committee further recommend to the Ministry to flash this information on the Passport Seva Portal as well as on all the websites of Ministry of External Affairs and the Missions for awareness of concerned persons.

**Reply to the Government**

The Ministry is constantly monitoring the situation related to issuance of Machine Readable Passports in lieu of Non-Machine Readable Passports. The Hon'ble Committee's recommendations related to going for a media campaign and highlighting the issue at the social media in order to make the citizens aware have been noted for compliance. In accordance with Hon'ble Committee recommendation, the Ministry would flash this information (which was earlier circulated on the Passport Portal and also for Missions/Posts abroad vide circular dated 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2014) on the Passport Seva Portal, all websites of Ministry of External Affairs and of Mission/Posts abroad.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

**(Recommendation No. 23)**

The Committee note that major portion of Ministry's budget is earmarked for aid/loan to various countries. The Committee are also aware that assessment of development assistance projects is an ongoing process. A proposal for conducting a study of India's development cooperation is under finalization. The Committee, however, are of the view that such study should include the assessment of its overall policy of developmental engagement and make necessary amendments while formulating the Aid Policy for India and for improvement of existing mechanism. The Committee further suggest that the Ministry should also consider the

impact of delay in execution of project/extension of grants on the relations with the beneficiary country as well as the public perception should also be considered while making an objective assessment. In Committee's view the Policy and Planning Division within the Ministry may be assigned the work of conducting this assessment and if need be, the Division may involve various think tanks in this task. The Committee further suggest that this assessment should also incorporate an element of assessment of the standard and quality of the projects undertaken by the Ministry.

Furthermore, the Committee suggest that the Ministry should establish a mechanism in place and develop a programme for management of data and overall information of India's international aid/bilateral/developmental cooperation, rather than just depending upon the ITEC portal and comprehensive data base of the Lines of Credit maintained by the Exim Bank of India.

### **Reply of the Government**

As recommended by the Committee, the Policy Planning & Research Division has already initiated an exercise to evaluate India's development cooperation with foreign countries. The Division has initially sought assessments from the Indian Missions located in countries that are major recipients of India's development assistance. Missions have been asked to detail the current state of our development partnerships with their countries of accreditation, and also make recommendations for long-term planning of bilateral grant and credit based assistance projects. They have been asked to identify the areas where Indian assistance projects have been successful, and also identify the main problems faced in implementation of projects. The inputs from the Missions, which are in the process of being received, will be analysed and an effort will be made to pick out the best practices as well as the constraints in respect of our aid policy. On this basis, PP&R Division will suggest improvements at the policy and implementation levels that can help make our assistance projects more effective at advancing India's foreign policy goals in the beneficiary countries. The recommendations will also suggest ways to prevent delays in delivery of projects, and mechanisms to improve monitoring, evaluation and future maintenance of completed projects. The PP&R Division will seek inputs from relevant external think-tanks while carrying out this evaluation exercise.

2. The Ministry has established several mechanisms for monitoring projects undertaken in other countries. An assessment of factors affecting timely and effective implementation of projects is also made, which provides guidance on how our systems and procedures can be improved and future projects can be better prepared, appraised and delivered. Ministry's inputs have been provided to the Ministry of Finance which is presently undertaking a renewal of the IDEAS scheme and revision of the LoC Operational Guidelines.

3. The Hon'ble Committee's recommendation has been noted. Efforts will be made to develop an in-house Management Information System and comprehensive database on Lines of



Credits and grant projects in the Ministry. The Ministry regularly evaluates the training programmes under ITEC/SCAAP/TCS Colombo Plan. At present, it is in the process of upgrading its portal to make it an important and useful digital resource point for all its stakeholders.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

#### **(Recommendation No. 24)**

The Committee note that at the RE 2014-15 stage, the budgetary allocation for aid to countries was reduced while there was an overall increase under 'Aid to Afghanistan'. The Committee further note that during the supplementary grant stage, Rs. 400 crore were sought for various projects/programmes in Afghanistan. The Committee, however, specifically observe that there is very poor utilization of funds under the Object Head on 'Small Development Project'. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should also give due importance to these projects along with the big infrastructure projects. The Committee also take note of delay in the project of the construction of Parliament Building in Afghanistan as well as resultant cost and time overrun. The Committee now hope that the Ministry would resolve the issue of cross variation due to currency value fluctuation with CPWD and the project will be completed as per the target date of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

#### **Reply of the Government**

Implementation of Small Development Projects (SDPs) in Afghanistan remains a priority for us as they are community-based projects in vulnerable border areas with direct and visible impact on community life. While Ministry gives due importance to SDPs, the inadequate allocation of funds under "Aid to Afghanistan" is making it difficult to take up projects under phase III of SDP. However, efforts will be made to secure additional funds at RE stage. Besides regular monitoring and review of progress by Project Monitoring Committee (PMC), concerned line Ministries of Government of Afghanistan, which are responsible for implementation of SDPs, will be requested through our Mission to ensure better utilisation of funds. It may be added in this context that the budget allocated under the Head "Aid to Afghanistan" is not adequate to even finance the two on-going projects, viz., Parliament Building and Salma Dam, which entered the final phase of completion.

2. As regards Parliament Building project, the issue of cost escalation on account, inter alia, of currency fluctuation is being addressed. CPWD, the project executing agency, has been asked to submit a Revised Cost Estimate proposal at the earliest so that it can be processed for necessary approvals. The project has entered final phase of construction and according to CPWD, it is likely to be completed by December 2015.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

### **(Recommendation No. 26)**

The Committee note that a large part of budgetary allocation under 'Aid/loan to countries' is earmarked for 'Aid/loan to Bhutan'. The Committee are dismayed to note that allocation was decreased substantially during RE 2014-15 under all the three Sub-Heads. The Committee note that a reduction of Rs. 2002.41 crore has been made under this Head. The Committee are not convinced with the Ministry's reply that the project managements have made their best efforts to speed up construction. The Committee are further not supportive of Ministry's approach of postponing of payments to contractors due to shortage of funds, as it will unnecessarily lead to accumulation of liabilities for the next financial year. In view of higher allocation by Ministry of Finance under Plan allocation during BE 2015-16, the Committee recommend for an early settlement of pending bills and continue with progress of projects as per the fixed timeline.

Moreover, the Ministry in tandem with the Project Management should ensure that the work in the three ongoing HEPs namely, i.e., Punatsangchhu-I, Punatsangchhu-II and Mangdechhu projects is carried out as per schedule. The Committee note that construction work in these three projects is at peak stage and there are pending bills also. The Committee also recommend that if need be, the Ministry should approach the Ministry of Finance for more allocation at RE 2015-16 stage so that the progress in the project is not constrained due to lack of funds.

### **Reply of the Government**

Following PIB Consideration on 3 July 2015, Union Cabinet approval for the Revised Cost Estimate (RCE) for the ongoing 1200 MW Punatsangchu-I HEP for Rs. 9375.58 cr was obtained on 21 July 2015, to enable release of funds to the project. As regards the Punatsangchu-II and the Mangdechu HEPs, these are proceeding on schedule and their RCE is also expected to be processed in CFY 2015-16. Adequate budget allocation in CFY 2015-16 for the three projects has been obtained, and no shortfall of funds is expected in CFY 2015-16, barring any reduction at RE stage.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

### **(Recommendation No. 27)**

The Committee take note of budgetary reduction at RE 2014-15 stage as well as low utilization of funds till December 2014. The Committee take note of the further extension of project completion date regarding the Port and Inland Waterway Terminal (IWT). The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry must address the issues of concern with the contractor, if any, and engage with the Project Development Consultant to ensure that the pace of the project is maintained and there are no further delays. The Committee further recommend that

the Ministry should engage with competent authority for approval of the changed parameters and the revised estimated cost at the earliest, so as to ensure that the work for the road component of the project is completed as per the schedule and there is no further delay in awarding the contract.

### **Reply of the Government**

The Ministry as well as the Project Consultant are making all possible efforts to address the issues of concern raised by the Contractor so as to maintain the pace of the project and complete the Kaladan Port & IWT component of the project within the revised timeline.

2. The meeting of the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) to consider the Revised Cost Estimate (RCE) of the project was held on June 8, 2015. After securing EFC's concurrence, approval of the Cabinet will be requested before next steps can be taken including award of the work of the Road component as well as additional items under the Port & IWT component of the project. All efforts will be made to regularly monitor and review the implementation of both road and additional Port & IWT components of the project.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

### **(Recommendation No. 28)**

The Committee take note of the reduced allocation under the Head 'Aid to Nepal' despite the announcement for aid/assistance made at the Prime Ministerial level. The Committee further take note of the slow progress and lack of utilization of funds in the Terai Road Project. The Committee are not convinced with the reasons furnished by the Ministry for low utilization of funds in this regard. The Committee also note that there are pending legal cases relating to one of the contractors with regard to idling of resources relating to the project. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry must review its policy and procedure in context of Projects in Nepal and resolve this case expeditiously through arbitration process. The Committee further suggest that the Ministry should also engage with the Government of Nepal for early resolution of the issues.

### **Reply of the Government**

The Ministry has been reviewing policies and procedures with the Government of Nepal to ensure effective implementation of projects in Nepal. The Arbitration process, which commenced on January 9, 2015 in respect of the Terai Road Project Packages 2 & 6 and on February 9, 2015 in respect of Packages 3, 4 & 5, are being pursued with due diligence and care. So far, eight hearings of Arbitral Tribunal have been held on Packages 2 & 6 and two hearings on Packages 3, 4 & 5. A revised GOI-funded-GON-implemented modality for Packages 2-6 of the Terai Roads Phase-I project is being worked out by GOI, with GOI commitment to be limited as

per existing DPR. Arbitration proceedings of Packages 2-6 are underway. One road of Package 1 under the earlier modality has been completed.

2. The Ministry is working closely with the Government of Nepal to resolve issues, as may arise, for timely completion of all the ongoing projects.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

### **(Recommendation No. 29)**

The Committee note that the BE 2014-15, RE 2014-15 and BE 2015-16 have been kept constant at Rs 500 crore. The Committee observe that during the recent visit by the Prime Minister, in Sri Lanka several announcements were made. According to the Ministry, the economic implication of these announcements have been included in the BE 2015-16. The Committee are not convinced with Ministry's reply and doubt as to how the Ministry would be able to accommodate these announcements in the stagnant budgetary allocation especially, the grant of Line of Credit. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry must ensure that the implementation of the projects as well as Line of Credit is not be kept pending due to lack of funds at any stage. Furthermore, the Committee also desire that the Ministry should ensure the completion of the Housing Project for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) as per original timeline and hand over the houses to the beneficiaries.

### **Reply of the Government**

Government of India is committed to assisting the Government of Sri Lanka in resettlement and rehabilitation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka. In this regard, the Government has been implementing several developmental projects, particularly in the areas of development of rail and port infrastructure, connectivity and transportation, education, public health, housing, vocational training and economic revival and women's empowerment, particularly war widows.

2. In June 2010, India's flagship project for construction for 50,000 houses, mainly for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Sri Lanka, was announced. The first phase, a Pilot Project for the construction of 1000 houses, was completed in August 2012 and houses were handed over to the beneficiaries. The second phase for construction of 45,000 houses for the Northern and Eastern was launched on the ground on 2 October 2012 and as of end June 2015 a total of 30,352 houses have been completed, including achieving the target construction of 27,000 houses by end of 2014. The second phase of the project is expected to be completed by end 2015. As part of the project remaining 4000 houses will be constructed in the Central and Uva Province for the upcountry/plantation Tamils. Modalities for implementation of the project are being finalised.

3. Government of India, based on the capacity to absorb the assistance project on ground in Northern Sri Lanka, has been allocating funds every year under 'Aid to Sri Lanka' budget head of the Ministry. During the Financial Year 2014-15 the allocation was Rs 500 crores and the Ministry utilized the entire amount for implementation of several resettlement, rehabilitation and reconstruction projects for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka. During the Current Financial Year (2015-16) Government has allocated Rs 500 crores under BE. The Ministry is of the view that the housing and other developmental projects in Sri Lanka will be implemented as per schedule and request for additional funds would be made, if required, at RE stage of the CFY.

4. Government of India has extended Lines of Credit (LoC) of about US \$ 800 million for the restoration of Northern Railway Lines. Projects in this regard are progressing as per schedule. The railway line from Colombo to Jaffna has been restored and the 'Yal Devi' train from Colombo to Jaffna resumed service after a gap of several decades on 13 October 2014. This line was further extended up to Kankesanthurai in January 2015. Prime Minister during his visit to Sri Lanka from 13-14 March 2015, inaugurated the railway station at Talaimannar and flagged off the Talaimannar- Madhu Road train service. During his visit to Sri Lanka from 13-14 March 2015, Prime Minister announced a fresh LoC for the railway sector for USD 318 million. Agreements for utilization of the fresh LoC are yet to be concluded and funds will be disbursed by the EXIM Bank of India as being done in the case of US \$ 800 million LoC. It is also reiterated that in so far as Lines of Credit are concerned Government of India's liability is limited to providing Interest Equalization Support (IES) to the lending bank – EXIM Bank of India, which is met by the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance under the Indian Development and Economic Assistance Scheme (IDEAS). DEA had been consulted before the announcement was made.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

### **(Recommendation No. 33)**

The Committee note that BE 2014-15 was projected at Rs. 122.87 crore mainly to accommodate the Prime Minister's commitment of grant assistance of US\$ 10 million to Palestine. The Committee, however, are dismayed to note that the grant was not released in the wake of drastic reduction in Revised Estimates stage. The Committee are not convinced with the Ministry's reasoning and therefore, recommend that the grant assistance should be released during the first quarter of Financial Year 2015-16 itself to avoid further embarrassment.

### **Reply of the Government**

The Ministry projected US \$ 9 million for release of the committed Aid to Palestine in its RE 2014-15. Due to budgetary constraints in the FY 2014-15, Ministry was able to release USD

4 million (out of the balance USD 9 million) in December 2014. The balance of USD 5 million has since been released in June, 2015.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

**(Recommendation No. 34)**

The Committee over the years have been recommending an increased budgetary allocation to ICCR and expansion of the network of Indian Cultural Centres. In the light of the active foreign policy being pursued by the Government and attempts to engage the Indian Diaspora, the Committee had expected a greater vigour in expanding the footprint of India's soft power. The Committee, however, are concerned to note that due to economy cut during 2014-15, ICCR had to scale down its activities substantially, defer deployment of teachers in many cultural centres/Missions/Posts and even resort to closing of Indian Cultural Centres in Toronto, Abu Dhabi, Saudi Arabia and Sub-Centre at Lautoka. The Committee express their displeasure at the state of affairs with regard to India's projection of its soft power to the world at large. The Committee, therefore, would like to strongly recommend that the Government should make allocations to ICCR in consonance with the Foreign Policy objectives being pursued by the Government. Moreover, the Committee would also like to suggest that the Government should formulate a clear vision for expansion and consolidation of India's soft power and accordingly devise a strategy and prepare a blueprint with time line for expansion of network of Indian Cultural Centres and the activities conducted therein. The Committee urge the Government to ensure the speedy completion of the Centres at Bali, Paris and Washington where the properties have already been acquired.

**Reply of the Government**

The Ministry has noted recommendation of the Committee with regard to the need for increased allocations to ICCR. In spite of the meagre augmentation under Non Plan in BE 2015-16, allocation for ICCR has been augmented by about 15% as compared to RE 2014-15. Allocations under the head would be revisited at Revised Estimates stage, as per the needs, and subject to the ceiling of Ministry of Finance.

**UPDATED STATUS:**

**Indian Cultural Centre, Paris**

Ministry has appointed the architect-consultant for renovations of the property through Ministry's prescribed selection procedure. The concept design of the renovations as approved by the ICCR was further detailed/developed by the architect-consultant and had submitted the preliminary design which has been formally approved by the Ministry. The architect-consultant

has submitted the proposal for local body approvals in Paris which is expected by the end of September 2015.

2. The architect-consultant has prepared a time-line according to which the Renovations shall be completed by September 2016. Ministry is monitoring the project regularly.

### **Cultural Wing, Washington DC**

The Selection Committee appointed by the Ministry has finalised the Architect-Consultant for renovations of the property on July 11, 2015 and a formal letter of appointment is to be issued by the Mission by July 31, 2015 after approval by the Ministry.

2. As per the discussion held with the selected architectural firm, the renovations project can be completed by December 2016. The architect-consultant will prepare a time-line for the renovations accordingly which shall be monitored by the Ministry for firm implementation.

### **Indian Cultural Centre, Bali**

Architect-consultant for Design and Construction of New Cultural centre appointed on 13 January 2011. The Concept design and all the preliminary drawings have been approved by the Ministry after feedback from the ICCR. The architect-consultant has submitted the plans to Local body for their approval.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

### **(Recommendation No. 36)**

The Committee find that there is a need to expand footprints of ICCR in the countries with high proportion of People of Indian Origin (PIO) population. The Committee also desire that the Ministry/ICCR should also expand the base of their activities in the existing centres of these countries and take initiative to preserve and document Indian linkages to their heritage, language, script, cultural practices, traditions, the local heritage and the living heritage particularly in Caribbean region and South East Asian Region. Furthermore, the Committee suggest the Ministry dwell upon the ways to enhance linkages with Indian Diaspora and explore the possibility of coordinating with the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs on this issue and exploring the possibility of being associated with Know India Programme, Schemes for Scholarships etc.

### **Reply of the Government**

ICCR is organizing events in countries with high proportion of PIOs. For instance, in this year alone, a three-day international conference on “Indian Diaspora and Cultural Heritage: Past,

Present & Future” was organized by ICCR from 11-13 February 2015 in New Delhi, which was inaugurated by Hon’ble External Affairs Minister, Smt. Sushma Swaraj. The conference was attended by 43 scholars from 13 countries (Canada, Fiji, Guyana, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Mauritius, New Zealand, Singapore, St. Vincent, Trinidad & Tobago, UK, USA).

2. From 24-27 February 2015, ICCR organized an international Ramayana Mela, which was inaugurated by Hon’ble Prime Minister of India at FICCI auditorium, New Delhi. Troupes of 7 countries which have largest diaspora or with which we have historic linkages (Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Trinidad & Tobago) participated in the Mela. The troupes also performed in 14 different cities of India (Ahmedabad, Allahabad, Ayodhya, Bhopal, Chandigarh, Chennai, Chitrakoot, Delhi, Jaipur, Kolkata, Lucknow, Noida, Patna and Varanasi).

3. ICCR held an international conference on ‘Gandhi and his legacy: From Lawyer to Mahatma – How South Africa Shaped his Thought and Action and Gandhi’s Impact on Africa’ in collaboration with the Centre for Indian Studies in Africa at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg from 27-28 February 2015. 17 scholars from 4 countries (India, South Africa, UK & USA) participated in this conference.

4. ICCR sponsored a delegation of Theravada Monks of Sri Lanka for a “Dialogue on Vinay” in New Delhi on 18-19 March 2015.

5. ICCR also supported a conference on “Indian Diaspora : Trajectories and Trans Nationalities” from 12-16 May at University of West Indies.

6. ICCR facilitated the participation of two Indian scholars to participate in an international Conference on “Indo-Cambodian Relations through Buddhism”, which was organized by the Embassy of India, Phnom Penh during 4-6 June, 2015.

7. ICCR is organizing an International Conference on “Shared Heritage as new Variable in the Indo-Korean Relations: Historicising the Legend of Princess from Ayodhya and its legacy” on 14-15 July, 2015 in New Delhi.

8. ICCR has extended its support to the ASEAN-India Centre at the Research and Information System for Developing Countries for organizing an international conference on “ASEAN-India Cultural Links” on 23-24 July, 2015 at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. 10 scholars each from South-East Asia and India will participate in the Conference.

9. Hindi Professors and Teachers have been deployed by ICCR in some countries which have large Indian diaspora (Trinidad & Tobago, Sri Lanka, Suriname and Thailand).



10. During the financial year 2014-15, cultural groups from South East Asian countries and diaspora countries, including Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Nepal, Trinidad & Tobago, Indonesia, Fiji, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, were hosted by ICCR. Similarly, performing arts groups were sponsored by ICCR to give performances in countries with large Indian diaspora as also in the South-East Asian Region on a regular basis. Indian Arrival Day is celebrated by our ICCR's Cultural Centres located in Port of Spain, Paramaribo, Georgetown, Fiji and Mauritius every year. During this financial year also, ICCR-sponsored groups will participate in major festivals/celebrations in countries with large Indian diaspora and ASEAN countries.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

### **(Recommendation No. 37)**

The Committee note that the ITP Division was created within the Ministry of External Affairs to give a definitive direction and focus to India's economic diplomacy strategy. While analysing various activities of the Division, the Committee are not convinced with its endeavours to promote India's interests and its role in conducting economic diplomacy. The Committee, therefore, want that the Ministry must strengthen the ITP Division and carry an assessment of its role and identify the ways in which the Division could be empowered to be an effective channel of India's economic diplomacy and also a facilitator for enhanced technology promotion and transfer. The Committee also recommend that this Division must be assigned the work of formulating an economic diplomacy strategy for India in consultation with the Policy Planning and Research Division of the Ministry for an effective role of India's Missions/Posts in carrying out market expansion activities with identifiable goals.

The Committee note that the ITP division had been allocated a budget of Rs. 5 crore for Market Expansion Activities which had been allocated to the Indian Missions to carry out investment promotion activities abroad. The Committee find it very inadequate for carrying out these activities by 183 Missions/Posts. The Committee, therefore, desire that sufficient allocation should be made in proportion to the activities assigned to this Division to be carried out through Indian Missions/Posts abroad.

### **Reply of the Government**

Ministry has initiated necessary measures to strengthen the ITP Division by clearly defining the role of the Division, which includes the following:

- 1) ITP Division will promote and facilitate foreign investment flows (FDI, FII, technology transfer and management) in coordination with Territorial Division, Missions and other Ministries in India.

- 2) Formulates strategies and programmes for carrying out investment promotion activities abroad. Actively participate in economic forums/exhibitions abroad which are aimed at promoting greater investments into India.
- 3) Provide information and back-up support to Missions/Posts business and investment promotion activities through fortnightly updates on the Indian Economy, topical faxes on all investment related matters and funding.
- 4) Collects feedback from Missions/Posts on foreign investor's perceptions of investment climate in India and share country/regional experiences with the nodal Ministry for formulation of policy.
- 5) Be the first port of call for foreign Investors visiting India. Assist investors in arranging meetings for foreign investors with relevant state governments / departments / Business chambers etc.
- 6) Assist foreign investors faced with procedure-related issues by liaising with relevant departments/agencies at the central and state governments.
- 7) Assists Missions/Posts in giving focus and direction to seminars, workshops, road shows, meetings on investment.
- 8) Work with Territorial Divisions on all bilateral economic-related issues, participate in relevant bilateral meetings, and undertake necessary follow up work.
- 9) Work closely with Foreign Embassies in India in arranging investment-related seminars, facilitating visits, and meetings with relevant departments/agencies; understanding bottlenecks faced by foreign enterprises in doing business in India and working with relevant stakeholders to resolve the issues.
- 10) Liaise with apex/regional industry chambers/associations, both in India and abroad, on matters relating to business promotion. Organize seminars and business events along with apex/regional industry chambers/associations not only abroad, but also in various cities of India.
- 11) Organize region/country-specific briefing sessions to the leadership of India's corporate houses/business delegations by Foreign Secretary and other Secretaries and Heads of Divisions prior to any VVIP visit.
- 12) Liaise with State Governments to ensure adequate and timely dissemination of information on incoming business/investment delegations. Actively work with the State Industrial Development Corporations and other related agencies to provide support when servicing foreign business/investment delegations.

- 13) Work with state governments by assisting them in preparing for investment road shows/seminars abroad; participation in trade/investment exhibitions and economic forums such as World Economic Forum in Davos, Boao Forum for Asia, St. Petersburg International Economic Forum etc.
- 14) Work with Public and Private-sector SEZs to help promote their zones internationally through Missions/Posts abroad.
- 15) Actively work with Indian enterprises to promote their interests overseas by coordinating with Indian Missions/Posts to help identify opportunities for mergers and acquisitions, sourcing of raw materials, arranging of meetings and networking events, participation in conferences etc.
- 16) Work closely with all economic ministries to gain clarity on policy proposals and prepare presentations which are then circulated to Missions/Posts.
- 17) To serve as knowledge platform on business environment and investment opportunities for Missions/Posts abroad through its flagship website [www.indiainbusiness.nic.in](http://www.indiainbusiness.nic.in).
- 18) Work with leading management institutions and consultancy firms to bring out case studies / write-ups / publications on successful experiences of foreign businesses in India for dissemination among Missions/Posts.
- 19) Provide funding to Missions/Posts under the “Market Expansion Activities Budget” to organize business seminars, advocacy-related activities, hire consultants, prepare market surveys, promote filmmaking in India, organize tourism events; and promotion of Yoga and traditional Indian medicine including Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani.
- 20) Work with international agencies and institutions such as the World Bank, ADB etc., to understand international best practices of doing business and benchmarking the same against practices in India.
- 21) Monitor, evaluate, and coordinate promotion of policies for attracting investments in sectors such as civil aviation, energy, transport, ports, highways, telecommunications, electronics, software, auto, tourism, food processing and other flagship projects.
- 22) Interact with Civil Aviation Ministry on all matters relating to civil aviation and air services agreements (ASAs) with foreign countries/airlines.
- 23) Servicing MEA’s representation on Foreign Investment Promotion Board, Inter-Departmental Committee of the Department of Financial Services, Committee of Directions of the Department of Commerce & Industry, Projects Export Promotion Council, Central Economic Intelligence Bureau, India Trade Promotion Organization,

Engineering Export Promotion Council, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, Invest India and Global Innovation and Technology Alliance.

24) Interacting with visiting business journalists and carrying out publicity on investment and economic-related issues through multi-media channels.

25) Liaise with UNIDO Investment Promotion Programme, the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies; and other investment

2. In addition to the above, the ITP Division, which was previously part of the Energy Security Division has now been made an independent Division. Efforts have also been made to strengthen the Division by bringing in officers on deputation from the Revenue and Economic Services. The Division plans to have a total of 5 Deputy Secretaries and 4 Under Secretaries. Currently 3 Deputy Secretaries and 3 Under Secretaries have already been recruited. Interviews for the remaining will be completed at the earliest. The addition of officers on deputation from other Ministries is expected to bring more line experience to the Division.

3. The 2015 HOMs Conference listed 13 action points for all our Missions/Posts worldwide. ITP Division has been made the nodal division for coordinating with our Missions/Posts on all these items. Indian Missions/Posts are expected to undertake the following:

- 1) Contribute directly to Flagship Projects of Govt. of India including “Make in India”, Digital India, Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan, Ganga Rejuvenation, Smart Cities, Skill India, GIAN etc.
- 2) Projecting India as an investment destination. ITP Division to assist Missions/Posts with concrete proposals to actively seek FDI and technology transfer to India
- 3) Developing MEA as a focal point for trade facilitation and trade queries and also for dispute resolution.
- 4) Identify companies with technological capabilities to assist India in developing a consortium approach towards Smart Cities.
- 5) Promote Indian success stories to balance out negative perceptions about doing business in India. ITP to regularly bring out e-books for circulation among Indian Missions/Posts.
- 6) Organizing events to provide networking opportunities, catalogue shows, product festivals to promote Indian tea, coffee, wine, mangoes etc.
- 7) Organizing awareness programmes to address the issue of work permits and visas for Indian professionals.

- 8) Missions to be storehouse of information for Indian companies wanting to engage with foreign countries.
  - 9) Identify, facilitate, and keep track of important business houses/persons visiting India.
  - 10) Take concrete steps to leverage India's medical tourism – promote Ayush and other traditional systems of medicine.
  - 11) Facilitate regular videoconferencing of major local companies and chambers with Indian chambers at the national and state level and also with line Ministries and MEA as required.
  - 12) Involve Persons of Indian Origin in Flagship projects of Government of India.
  - 13) Leverage diaspora skills including for hiring top international faculty to teach for 3-6 months in Indian institutions.
4. As recommended by the Standing Committee on External Affairs, ITP Division will be working with the Policy Planning and Research Division to come up with an economic diplomacy strategy.
5. Regarding the budgetary requirements of the Division, the recommendations of the Committee have been duly noted. The allocation would be revisited at Revised Estimates stage, as per the needs, and subject to the ceiling of Ministry of Finance.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

**(Recommendation No. 38)**

The Committee take note that the Policy, Planning and Research Division of the Ministry is not directly engaged with the defining of long term strategic doctrine for India as well as road map for India's Foreign policy apparatus. The Committee are not convinced with the procedure being followed by the Division for strategic doctrine as well as in defining the national interests of India based on the feedback from concerned Territorial Divisions. The Committee feel that isolated views of the Territorial Divisions may not contemplate the overall scenario and adopt a holistic approach. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Policy Planning and Research Division be strengthened and used as a think tank within the Ministry to define the strategic doctrine for India as well as to formulate a road map for India's foreign policy apparatus. The Committee further suggest that the Ministry should receive inputs from ICWA and RIS or other think tanks in defining and expounding to overall interests, goals and strategic doctrines for India.

## **Reply of the Government**

As recommended by the Committee, the Ministry of External Affairs has initiated a major effort to strengthen the Policy Planning & Research Division, so that the Division can play its envisaged role of defining the long-term strategic doctrines of India's foreign policy. The Division's strength has been enhanced by deploying additional Foreign Service officers. An effort is also underway to bring in officers from specialised arms/departments of GOI on deputation to the PP&R Division, in order to benefit from their domain expertise in areas. In addition, the PP&R Division is also in the process of recruiting 4 external international-relations experts as consultants to improve the Ministry's ability to monitor the strategic literature covering foreign policy issues and to deepen the Ministry's interface with the think tank community.

2. PP&R Division has been tasked with developing India's policy stance vis-a-vis key partner countries, suggesting the pace and sequence of our engagement with different countries over the coming years, and undertaking a continuous and forward-looking analysis of our principal foreign policy initiatives from a holistic and long-term perspective. PP&R Division has also been mandated to increase MEA's outreach with domestic and international think-tanks, to facilitate the building of partnerships between Indian and foreign think-tanks, and to steer Track-2 dialogues with key partner countries. PP&R Division would also be initiating broader policy-planning dialogues with our key bilateral partners. For carrying out these tasks, the PP&R Division would be working closely with relevant Territorial Divisions, but with an attempt to rise above the limited perspective of any particular Territorial Division.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

### **(Recommendation No. 40)**

The Committee are concerned over the growing instances of Indian fishermen being apprehended and imprisoned as well as firing being resorted by the security forces of neighbouring countries. Moreover, the Committee also express their concern over the plight of twelve Indian fishermen who are in jails of Bangladesh and 383 Indian Fishermen in jails of Pakistan. The Committee also take note of the efforts made by the Government of India in this regard and desire that more concerted efforts should be made by the Government at the highest level for release of imprisoned fishermen in the jails of Bangladesh and Pakistan. The matter relating to acknowledgement of the imprisonment of 80 Fishermen by Pakistan should also be taken as priority. The Committee desire to be furnished with a status note in this regard.

The Committee also note that there are existing joint mechanisms with Sri Lanka but there is a need to hold regular meetings of the fishermen's associations of India and that of neighbouring countries. The Committee also recommend that the Government should take initiative to establish similar Joint Working Groups, with Bangladesh and Pakistan. Moreover,

the Committee suggest that the Ministry must engage the State Governments and local administration in the border areas so as to avert the possibility of such incidents.

## **Reply of the Government**

### **Sri Lanka**

Government of India (GoI) attaches the highest importance to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. Keeping in mind the humanitarian and livelihood dimension of the issue, GoI has impressed upon the Sri Lankan Navy to act with restraint, not to fire on our fishermen and treat our fishermen in a humane manner.

2. As soon as reports of apprehensions of Indian fishermen by Sri Lankan Navy are received, the Government immediately takes up the matter with the Government of Sri Lanka through diplomatic channels for expeditious release and repatriation of apprehended Indian fishermen. The number of Indian fishermen apprehended by Sri Lanka in 2012 was 197, in 2013 it was 676 and in 2014 it stood at 787. As a result of the Government's steadfast efforts, all these fishermen were subsequently released and repatriated to India. Since January 2015, a total of 217 Indian fishermen have been apprehended by Sri Lankan authorities. This includes the 14 Indian fishermen apprehended on 1 June 2015 and 26 apprehended on 20 June 2015. Due to efforts of the Government, 177 of the apprehended 217 Indian fishermen have been released by the Government of Sri Lanka and repatriated to India. Government, through our High Commission in Colombo, is in touch with Sri Lankan authorities for expeditious release and repatriation of these 40 Indian fishermen. No cases of deaths of Indian fishermen in Sri Lankan waters have been reported since April 2011.

3. There are several mechanisms in place to ensure cooperation and understanding between India and Sri Lanka in resolving the fishermen issue, such as the Joint Working Group, October 2008 Understanding, Joint Committee on Fisheries and Fishermen Association Talks.

4. In our bilateral meetings, including at the highest levels, we have strongly taken up the matter of apprehension of Indian fishermen. Immediately after the visit of External Affairs Minister (6-7 March 2015) and prior to the visit of the Prime Minister (13-14 March 2015) to Sri Lanka, all the Indian fishermen then in the custody of Government of Sri Lanka were released.

5. Prime Minister, during his meeting with the President of Sri Lanka in Colombo on 13 March 2015, pointed out that the issue of fishermen was a complex issue involving livelihood and humanitarian concerns on both sides and that India and Sri Lanka need to find a long term solution. As agreed during the meeting, the representatives of Fishermen's Associations of India and Sri Lanka met on 24-25 March 2015 in Chennai. The representatives of Fishermen's Associations had also met earlier on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2014 and 12<sup>th</sup> May 2014. Officials from the Government of India, the State Governments of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry were also present as

observers during these meetings. During the meeting on 24 March 2015, the Indian fishermen made several proposals to address this problem, including the phasing out of unsustainable fishing practices. However, the Sri Lankan side has recently conveyed its inability to accept these proposals on the ground that Indian fishermen fishing in Sri Lankan waters would affect their livelihood.

6. The need for creating greater awareness among our fishermen to avoid crossing over into Sri Lankan waters for their own safety and security has been felt. In this context, the Government is working with the concerned State Governments on the need to sensitise Indian fishermen to respect the International Maritime Boundary Line and to find a long term solution to the issue.

7. Government of India remains engaged with the Government of Sri Lanka to ensure that fishermen on both sides can continue to pursue their livelihood in a safe, secure and sustainable manner.

### **Bangladesh**

There are several instances of fishermen from India and Bangladesh straying into each other's territory. Our Mission in Dhaka is continuously in contact with the Home Ministry and Foreign Ministry of Bangladesh for the release of Indian fishermen whenever they are arrested in Bangladesh waters. Out of 117 fishermen arrested by Bangladesh Navy in 2015, Mission has got 74 fishermen repatriated to India till date. There are, therefore, 43 Indian fishermen in Bangladesh jails, waiting to be released and repatriated. Mission is in constant touch with the local authorities in this regard.

2. Fishermen's issues have been discussed in the Joint Consultative Commission, Foreign Office Consultations and Home Secretary Level Talks, and have always been resolved amicably. A MoU on cooperation between the two coast guards was signed during Prime Minister's visit to Bangladesh in June, 2015. This MoU provides a framework for better coordination and understanding between our coast guards and we expect that fishermen related issues will also be addressed.

### **Pakistan**

As per the list of prisoners and fishermen exchanged with Pakistan on 1 July 2015, under India-Pakistan Agreement on Consular Access 2008, there are 355 fishermen believed to be Indian in Pakistani custody. *(Subsequently, 163 fishermen were released on 3 August – See Below).*

2. Government regularly takes up with the Government of Pakistan the issue of early release and repatriation of Indian fishermen detained in Pakistani jails including at the highest levels.



Two recent high level engagements, at the level of Prime Minister by India, secured the release of 277 Indian fishermen in a period of two months.

- 1) Following Prime Minister's telephone call to Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on 16 June 2015 to convey Ramzan greetings and our decision to release 88 Pakistani fishermen detained in Indian jails, Pakistan reciprocated by release of 113 Indian fishermen on 19 June 2015.
  - 2) During Prime Minister's meeting with Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in Ufa (Russia) on 10 July 2015, India proposed to establish a mechanism for release of fishermen in each other's custody, along with their boats, within a period of 15 days by both sides. Following the meeting, 163 Indian fishermen were released by Pakistan on 3 August 2015.
3. Several bilateral arrangements have also been put in place.
- 1) A Memorandum of Understanding signed on 03 October 2005 in Islamabad provides for establishing a communication link between Indian coast guard (ICG) and Pakistan Maritime Security agency (PMSA). The hotline is operational since 14 November 2006.
  - 2) An India Pakistan Judicial Committee on Prisoners, comprising four retired judges from each side, set up in February 2008, recommend steps to be taken for humane treatment and expeditious release of prisoners of the respective countries in each other's jails. The committee last visited the Central Jails in Amritsar and Jaipur and Tihar Jail in New Delhi from 25-31 October 2013; it is Pakistan's turn to convene the next meeting.
  - 3) The Consular Access Agreement signed on 21 May 2008 provides for notification of arrest, detention or imprisonment of national of one country to the other and providing for Consular Access within three months.
  - 4) During the Home/Interior Secretary talks held in 2011 and 2012 in New Delhi and Islamabad respectively, it was agreed to set up a Joint Working Group (JWG) chaired by Director Generals of ICG and PMSA. The JWG meets annually and the last meeting was held from 18-20 December 2014 in New Delhi.
4. Government regularly takes up with the Pakistan authorities the issue of the early release and repatriation of apprehended Indian fishermen as well as providing regular consular access to them. The Government also, on a continuing basis, monitors the status of all such Indian prisoners in Pakistani jails.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

## **CHAPTER – III**

### **OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT'S REPLIES**

#### **(Recommendation No. 32)**

The Committee take note of reduced allocation during RE 2014-15 under the Head 'Eurasian Countries' as well as dismally low utilization of funds. The Committee, however, are of the view that the nomenclature of the Head itself is not very clear. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Head as well as Division in the Ministry be renamed as 'Eurasia and Central Asia' so that it is more clearly defined. The Committee also take note of the status of the Central Asia Network for Tele-Education and Tele-Medicine which was announced in March 2011 and observe that after completion of the DPRs the feedback received from some of the countries indicate that the tele-education component may not be very useful from their perspective. Now, the Ministry proposed to set up only tele-medicine projects which have quick gestation. The Committee, therefore, treat this as a failure of planning, which could have been prevented if the Ministry could have engaged in a consultation process regarding the project and sought opinion of concerned countries before initiating the process and seeking DPRs. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that at the stage of identification of the projects itself the Ministry must conduct necessary ground work particularly in technical projects with engagement of the concerned beneficiary countries and finalize the design of the project before announcement.

#### **Reply of the Government**

It is submitted that the name Eurasia Division and the Budget Head 'Aid to Eurasia' have been arrived after due consideration. Eurasia Division deals with Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia as well as the five Central Asian Republics. Central Asian countries are widely acknowledged to be a part of the Eurasian region. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are members of the 'Eurasian Economic Union' a regional economic grouping which also includes Russia, Belarus and Armenia. The term 'Eurasia' therefore has a wider connotation as it refers to countries such as Russia as well as Central Asian countries and countries of Caucasus region. Renaming the Division could create confusion as to India's policy approach which is sought to be holistically developed for the entire Eurasian region.

2. On the Central Asia e-Network for Tele-Education and Tele-Medicine, the first link has been commissioned during the visit of the Prime Minister to Kyrgyz Republic in July 2015. Depending on availability of budget, other countries are also being connected through similar e-medicine networks. The possibility of developing Tele Education Networks also continues to be pursued actively and it requires sustained engagement with local stakeholders to elaborate the

benefits of such linkages. It is submitted that Ministry is following a planned approach in this regard.

3. Ministry will, as strongly recommended by the Committee, in future consider announcement of projects only after completion of necessary engagement with the beneficiary countries. However, finalising the design of the project may not be feasible in all cases before the project is announced, especially in cases where initial political acceptance through a high level announcement would be desirable to enable the local government to complete necessary internal procedures based on which the design of the project(s) would be finalised.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

## CHAPTER – IV

### OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE AND REQUIRE REITERATION

#### (Recommendation No. 17)

The Committee have taken note of the efforts being made by the Ministry to ensure reach of application collection/submission services to every nook and corner of the country and involvement of Common Service Centres. The Committee are happy to note that the Ministry, along with India Post had launched a pilot project in Ahmedabad and Head Post Office Ahmedabad has commenced online filing of Passport application. The Committee are hopeful that based on the outcome of this pilot project, the matter would be taken up for roll out across other post offices in the country. The Committee, however, suggest to the Ministry to pursue the matter with India Post so as to ensure online filing of applications not only at the Head Post-Office but also that this facility should be made available at all the post offices across India particularly in the hinterland and rural areas. The Committee would also like to suggest that the possibility of reputed Travel Agents/Agencies to providing assistance in cities may be considered to applicants on the similar fixed charges as being done by CSCs in cities may also be considered sincerely with a view to stop exploitation of passport seekers by internet cafe operators and Travel Agents. These may be identified as places where citizens could get the facility on payment of nominal fixed charges with suitable penal provisions in case irregularities.

#### Reply of the Government

It is submitted that despite Ministry's best efforts, India Post have expressed inability for providing facility of online filing of passport applications @Rs.100/- per application. India Post also seems to have dearth of manpower and technical resources. As regards authorising travel agents, it is reiterated that the Passport Portal ([www.passportindia.gov.in](http://www.passportindia.gov.in)) is accessible by anyone, anywhere at anytime. The travel agents are free to assist passport seekers in filing passport applications online just like any Common Service Centres (CSCs), internet cafe operators or any other person. At no stage the Ministry has stated or held that such assistance by travel agents of any standing, is illegal. Moreover, authorising or giving license to a few travel agents and regulating their service charges, would also go against the tenet of 'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance'.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

#### (Recommendation No. 20)

The Committee note that over the years, there is vast gap in Budgetary Estimates, the amount released and amount utilised under the Head 'Nalanda University'. The Committee observe that even in BE 2015-16, the University had sought a sum of Rs. 313.21 crore, while the proposed BE

2015-16 is Rs. 100 crore. The Ministry has justified the BE 2015-16 on account of commencement of teaching since September 2014, admissions to the new academic session, issue of letter of intent to successful bidder. The Committee note the extraordinary delay in commencement of construction activities and the delays in execution of construction project for which no responsibility has been fixed so far. The Committee, therefore, suggest to the Ministry to fix the responsibility for the delay and take necessary action to streamline the construction process in a time bound manner. The Committee further recommend that the Ministry should ensure that budgetary projection process is streamlined in the University so that realistic budgetary projections are made. The Committee also desire that a blueprint regarding commencement and status report of the construction project along with timelines should be furnished to the Committee on regular basis.

### **Reply of the Government**

The Ministry shares the Hon'ble Committee's concern at the extraordinary delay in the commencement of construction activities. Reasons for delay have already been explained in detail. As mentioned earlier, the stake holders faced various challenges in establishing a new institution and there was constant evolution of parameters for the execution of the Nalanda Project. As such, it is difficult to fix responsibility.

2. The tender for preliminary work (Phase 1A), issued on 17 February 2015 had to be abandoned since it attracted only a single bid at a higher than estimated cost. The Ministry had to advise the University to re-tender work for the entire Phase 1 and issue a composite tender which was floated on 6 July 2015. The University proposes to award the Letter of Intent to the successful bidder soon following which the work on site is expected to commence. A copy of the Schedule of Events provided by the University during the Governing Board's meeting held on 5 July 2015 is attached at **Annexure**.

3. The University has also re-assessed its requirement of funds for the current financial year and made a realistic projection of Rs. 172.37 crore as against the earlier estimate of Rs. 313.21 crore. The Ministry will henceforth keep the Committee informed of commencement of construction and status of the project on regular basis.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

### **(Recommendation No. 22)**

The Committee note that over 60% of the budget of the Ministry is earmarked for developmental engagement with other countries via allocation under aid/loans. The Committee, however, are dismayed to note that during RE 2014-15, a reduction of Rs. 2190 crore was made in budgetary allocation under aid and loans to countries, though an allocation of Rs. 400 crore was sought at the supplementary stage under the Head 'Aid to Afghanistan'. The Committee note that matching savings made under various Sub-Heads was used for allocation for utilization

within the Ministry under the Heads Special Diplomatic Expenditure, Embassies and Missions, etc. The Committee express their concern over the Ministry's approach of cutting on international commitments towards maintaining relations with friendly countries and towards countries' commitments and developmental engagement with these countries in order to fulfil the internal needs of the Ministry and desire that such practice should not continue because it directly affects the bilateral relation and prestige of the country.

### **Reply of the Government**

Due to reduction in overall allocation at RE stage during 2014-15, almost all heads of account under 'Major Head 3605 - Technical and Economic Cooperation' had to be reduced in order to comply with the ceiling mandated by the Ministry of Finance. Ministry, however, had to provide for the mandatory establishment expenses of the Missions/Posts abroad, and under the Special Diplomatic Expenditure which is discretionary in nature. These expenses could not be withheld, being mandatory in nature. However, to the extent possible, it was ensured that implementation of key projects would not suffer and important commitments were met by rolling over expenditure to next financial year.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

### **(Recommendation No. 39)**

Capacity building through defence and civilian training programme under ITEC, SCAAP and Technical Cooperation Scheme under Colombo Plan is an integral part of India's developmental cooperation. The Committee note that the ITEC Programme has completed 50 years in operation. In Committee's view it is the appropriate occasion to conduct a comprehensive review of the programme including the decision making process, types of training, identification of institutions, etc. and carry out an objective assessment of the programme from the perspective of achievement of India's foreign policy goals. It is also necessary to evaluate whether our programme meets the needs and expectations of the beneficiary countries. Furthermore, the Committee suggest that the Ministry should critically analyse the requests received for training from the beneficiary countries and accordingly review the type of training provided to include new and emerging areas of technology as per their requirements. The Committee recommend that the Ministry must develop SOPs regarding each step from the stage of receipt of request from the beneficiary country up to the final conclusion and post-conclusion feedback from the beneficiary country. The Committee also note that the last review regarding inclusion of institutions was done in 2008. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should review the list of institutions and incorporate or exclude the institutions as per their performance and altered requirements.

## **Reply of the Government**

ITEC programme consists of capacity building courses conducted for partner countries. The programme has completed 50 years of operation in 2014. The capacity building courses are conducted at the request of partner countries. There is a system of regular and continuous review. No overall structural review seems to have been carried out, as the requirement for this was not felt. The reason being, under ITEC, training in diverse areas such as Accounts, Audit, Banking and Finance courses, IT, Telecommunication and English Courses, Management Courses, SME/Rural Development Courses, Specialized Courses, Technical Courses and Environment and Renewable Energy Courses are already being covered and special courses are also conducted at specific request of ITEC partner countries.

2. Ministry regularly evaluates the training programmes under ITEC/SCAAP/TCS Colombo Plan. The feedback from participants are carefully analyzed to evaluate training courses. Inputs are examined to assess the course contents, duration and requirement of practical exercises/project works. The courses are evaluated on a yearly basis based on the popularity of the course, i.e., number of participants received during that training period, feedback of the participants who attended the course, etc. Depending on the response received, the popular courses are continued and unpopular courses are discontinued in the next academic year.

3. A feedback mechanism is in place to assess the quality, relevance and impact of the programme. After completion of each course, feedback is obtained from the participants on the course content, teaching methodology, infrastructure, facilities, etc. Feedback is also given by the Institutes about the participants attending the courses. Besides, feedback is also received from the Indian Missions who stay in touch with the participants upon their return from India. Based on these feedback, training programmes/courses are assessed at the end of each training year. It has been the constant endeavour of the Ministry to align the programme with the requirements of partner developing countries.

4. The popularity of ITEC Programme is also assessed during the discussions at mechanisms such as Foreign Office Consultations, Joint Commission Meetings, and HOMs Conferences and during the incoming and outgoing visits of VVIPs, when Government of India receives requests for capacity building, upgradation of skills and human resource development from the partner countries."

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

## **CHAPTER V**

### **OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED**

#### **(Recommendation No. 3)**

The Committee note that due to the lack of resources available with the Ministry of External Affairs, expenditure under several Heads relating to aid to various countries had been reduced and the payments were curtailed/deferred to the next Financial Year i.e. 2015-16. The Committee are concerned to take note of the lack of additional allocation during BE 2015-16 to the Ministry of External Affairs to accommodate for last year's payment as well as any provision for new announcements/commitments to be made at international fora. The Committee are concerned at the paradox of pursuing an active foreign policy and simultaneously, cutting the allocations of Ministry of External Affairs. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government should ensure that the Ministry's allocation is in tune with the Government's policy and under no circumstance the Ministry is forced to adhere to the economy cut at RE stage on lines of other Ministries/Departments in view of peculiar character of the Ministry's expenditure. The Committee further recommend a substantial enhancement of the budgetary allocation at RE 2015-16 stage in tune with the requirements and commitments for aid/assistance being made internationally. The Committee further recommend that if new international commitments are made during the first three quarters of the financial year then the Ministry must be provided additional grants at the Supplementary Grants stage and the cash supplementary may be provided to the Ministry for fulfilment of those international commitments. The Committee reiterate that the Ministry of Finance must not jeopardize the nation's prestige in this manner.

#### **Reply of the Government**

The Ministry will continue its efforts with the Ministry of Finance to secure additional funds in order to give effect to the various foreign policy initiatives made at the highest levels.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

#### **(Recommendation No. 5)**

The Committee note that several commitments were made by the Prime Minister during Financial year 2014-15, but the economic implications were not factored in the allocations at RE 2014-15 stage. The Committee are doubtful whether the full financial implication of Prime Minister's announcement for aid/assistance have been accommodated in the budgetary allocation during BE 2015-16. The Committee are concerned about such lack of allocation by the Ministry of Finance. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry should engage with the Ministry of



Finance for obtaining additional resources and give due priority to execution of the international commitments made at the highest levels.

Furthermore, in view of the several international commitments made at the level of Head of State/Head of Government/External Affairs Minister, the Committee suggest that the Ministry must keep the concerned offices apprised about the pace of the project as well as constraints, if any, in implementation of the projects including the financial constraints due to lack of allocation by the Ministry of Finance. In the Committee's view, involvement of the concerned high offices may facilitate taking up the issue of lack of allocation with the Ministry of Finance.

### **Reply of the Government**

The advice of the Hon'ble Committee has been taken note of. Ministry would continue to engage with the Ministry of Finance in order to obtain additional funds to further the commitments made. Ministry would also continue to appraise the Ministry of Finance about these commitments and the pace of the projects, and also involve the high offices concerned in taking up the issue of augmentation of resources with the Ministry of Finance.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

### **(Recommendation No. 6)**

The Committee take note of the budgetary cuts during RE 2014-15 for aid/assistance to countries under various Heads. The Committee note that provision for grants/projects were made in allocation during BE 2014-15, yet grant assistance to Bangladesh, Myanmar and Palestine was deferred to the Financial Year 2015-16 due to budgetary cuts during RE 2014-15. The Committee are of the view that such delays in execution of commitments/project adversely reflects upon India's credibility. In the context of the severe financial constraints faced by the Ministry over the years and its impact on execution of the projects abroad, the Committee in their previous Report had suggested to create a separate Head for announcement of aid/assistance made by Head of State/Head of Government/Minister of External Affairs. The Committee observe that not much progress has been made in this regard except for issuing of a letter and a reminder by the Ministry. The Committee, therefore, would like to reiterate that Ministry should pursue the matter with the Ministry of Finance for creation of this Head and ensure availability of sufficient funds under this Head.

The Committee would further like to suggest to the Ministry to engage with Ministry of Finance to explore the possibility of bifurcation of Ministry's budget to include allocations earmarked for the internal usage of the Ministry in one part while a separate budget for all the international/bilateral commitments for aid and assistance so that the aid and assistance programme are not affected by the economy cut by the Ministry of Finance, which has over the years become a regular feature at RE stage.

## **Reply of the Government**

Ministry has taken up the matter of opening a new head of account to accommodate the budget relating to high level commitments once again with the Ministry of Finance by flagging the issue to the Joint Secretary (Budget).

2. The possibility of bifurcating the Ministry's budget as suggested by the Hon'ble Committee would also be explored in consultation with the Ministry of Finance. The Hon'ble Committee would be apprised of the outcome in due course.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

### **(Recommendation No. 14)**

The Committee observe that requests are being received by the Ministry for opening of new Indian Missions/Posts and are being processed and considered by territorial divisions concerned without any coherent policy. The Committee are of the view that Government should consider these proposals positively and strive to have representation of India in all the countries, and that limitations in terms of finances and human resources should not be a constraint while opening India's new Missions/Posts in those countries where India is currently unrepresented. The Committee also suggest that the Ministry should come up with a concrete policy regarding establishment of new Embassies/Missions abroad.

Furthermore, the Committee desire that the Ministry should take up the long pending issue of the proposed new Diplomatic Enclave with the Delhi Development Authority. The Committee recommend that the Ministry should also formulate a policy regarding allotment of land to Foreign Missions/Posts as per international conventions and also suggest to dwell upon the practice regarding provision of reciprocity in this regard.

## **Reply of the Government**

The Ministry of External Affairs is committed to expanding ties with other countries through opening new Embassies and Consulates in consultation with the Host Government. The recommendations of the Committee in this regard have been noted.

2. Ministry is in constant touch with DDA and has sent letters No. 2832/COP/2015 dated 24th June and 9th July 2015 to Chief Engineer (Dwarka) requesting confirmation that the rates of offer of land conveyed by them to this Ministry are valid for the financial year 2015-16. The policy to determine the terms and conditions based on which land will be offered to Foreign Diplomatic Missions/ International Organisations in the 2nd Diplomatic Enclave is in final stages of approval. As soon as the policy is firmed up, Ministry will conduct an outreach programme involving Missions and International Organisations based in New Delhi. While framing the

policy, Ministry has noted the recommendations of the Standing Committee regarding the provision of the principle of reciprocity to be invoked in each case.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

**(Recommendation No. 15)**

The Committee note that approximately one crore services are rendered by the CPO annually. The Committee also note that an allocation of Rs. 591.72 crore has been made during BE 2015-16 for Passport and other services while the already pending amount for the bills to be settled as on March 2015 is Rs. 438.86 crore which includes the payments to be made to various agencies for procurement of passport booklets, police authorities, apart from payment to be made to NIC, TCS and Post Office, etc. The Committee are of the view that this is a public service delivered by the Ministry which generates revenue and the Government and the Ministry has not made provision under this Head for allocations even to pay for expenditures on procurement of booklets, printers, etc. In the context of the forthcoming expenditure, the Committee express their concern as to how the Ministry would be able to manage with this budgetary allocation. The Committee, therefore, recommend to the Ministry to pursue the question of enhanced allocation under this Head, with the Ministry of Finance in view of the inherent expenditure involved and the increased requirement due to procurement of hardware, improving of services and recruitment of 450 Data Entry Operators.

**Reply of the Government**

It is submitted that this requirement has been consistently projected as part of Ministry's overall BE and RE demands to the Ministry of Finance. However, due to insufficient allocations received over several years, pending payments have accumulated. This requirement has also been a part of Ministry's demand under the First Batch of Supplementary Demand for Grants for 2015-16 forwarded to the Ministry of Finance. The requirement of additional funds will also be projected at the time of submission of Revised Estimates (RE) 2015-16.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

**(Recommendation No. 16)**

The Committee take note of very slow progress in the integration process of Missions/ Posts abroad with the Passport Seva Portal. The Committee further note that some part of the application/system required for Missions/Posts integration would be kept in Public Cloud Platform. The Committee are of the view that the proposal requires in-depth analysis and particularly about the safety of the stored data available on cloud platform and desire that the Ministry should engage experts from the Ministry of Information Technology as well as NIC before taking a final decision in the matter on the issue.

## **Reply of the Government**

It is submitted that the Missions/Posts integration was not part of the original scope of RFP/Master Service Agreement relating to Passport Seva Project. In view of high cost involved of approximately Rs. 50 crore in the first year and total of Rs. 100 crore over a period of subsequent 3 years, it requires detailed analysis for its technical and commercial justification. The proposal is under internal evaluation and approval process. As regards the use of public cloud for Missions/Posts integration, it is submitted that only static content and html pages would be cached into public-cloud-platform and the source database would continue to be accessed from Passport Seva data centers located in India. Even for caching the desired static/html contents, all the security requirements would be taken care of. As recommended by the Hon'ble Committee, the proposal would be vetted by a technical committee consisting of members from DeitY, Ministry of Communications & IT and NIC.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

### **(Recommendation No. 18)**

The Committee have been following the progress of e-passport project. The Committee are aware that the issuance of e-passport for the diplomatic category was launched in June 2008 and the Ministry had drawn up a programme for full roll out of e-passports in the ordinary passport category by September, 2009. The Committee during Examination of Demands for Grants 2013-14 were informed about the issues regarding security vetting of firms which had participated in the international bid floated by ISP. Now the whole process was reviewed by the Inter-Ministerial Task Force and ISP, Nashik was authorised to float a Global Tender for procurement of electronic contactless inlays required for e-passports. But the work of tendering and procurement is not being undertaken as per any timeline. Pre-Qualification Bid was floated by ISP, Nasik back in July 2014 but the Ministry is not able to give any time frame for generation and availability of e-passports for general citizens. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should pursue the matter with urgency through the Inter-Ministerial Task Force so that the long pending project may see the light of the day. The Committee may be apprised about the time frame fixed in this regard.

## **Reply of the Government**

It is submitted that in November, 2013, with the approval of External Affairs Minister, an Inter-Ministerial Task Force was constituted to implement the e-Passport Project. Subsequently the ISP, Nashik, floated a global Pre-Qualification Bid (PQB) in July, 2014 for procurement of electronic contactless inlays (15 million pieces) along with its operating system required for manufacturing of Indian e-passport. The Technical Committee constituted to finalize the technical

specifications has had held many meetings and is in the final stage in order to issue Request for Proposal (RFP) to the security cleared companies.

2. Meanwhile, in view of the directives of Ministry of Communications & Information Technology, Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY) for giving preference to the Domestically Manufactured Electronic Products (DMEP) in Government procurement, the ISP, Nashik is in the process of floating a development tender separately for the domestic manufacturers, which is also in accordance with Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India Limited (SPMCIL) procurement manual.

3. As regards timeline, it is submitted that the supply of first batch of inlays was earlier expected to commence by February 2016, subject to completion of all formalities/documentation and approval from competent authorities. However, on account of delay in receipt of security clearance of potential manufacturers from Ministry of Home Affairs and the new developments on account of preference for domestic manufacturers, the project is now expected to be completed by December, 2016.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

#### **(Recommendation No. 21)**

The Committee note that apart from Budgetary allocation of Rs. 302.89 crore during the BE 2014-15, an additional allocation of Rs. 141.00 crore was sought during supplementary grants in anticipation of the South Asian University construction project. The Committee wonder as to why the additional resources were augmented when basic necessary clearances were awaited. The Committee do not support the approach being followed by SAU when a major portion of the land is in their possession since long, leaving small patches awaiting clearances. The Committee, therefore, desire that the construction plan should be modified at the earliest on the plot available with a view to commence the activities. Simultaneously, they may continue their pursuit of the case with concerned authorities to get clearances of the remaining portion of the land.

#### **Reply of the Government**

Government of India is committed to provide full capital costs including 100 acres of land for construction of the permanent campus of the South Asian University. Delhi Development Authority has transferred unencumbered land measuring 90.96 acres so far.

2. The university has informed that they have obtained the statutory approvals for its master plan of the project from Delhi Urban Arts Commission, South Delhi Municipal Corporation and the Airports Authority. They have also obtained the necessary environmental clearance. Permission for felling trees is under process with the Department of Forest and Wild Life.

3. The additional allocation of Rs. 141 crores was asked for on the premise that all clearances and permission would be in place soon and the project would require fresh infusion of funds to take off successfully. In fact, construction activity commenced on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2015 with a ground breaking ceremony. A Legal notice has, however, been served by some individuals claiming the land to be under their ownership. Necessary action is being taken to deal with the matter through inter-departmental consultations and legal counsel.

4. The recommendation of the Hon'ble Committee to prepare fresh lay out plan by making necessary changes with reference to land available for construction without any encumbrances has been noted. This may, however, require fresh approval from SDMC, CPWD etc. for the revised lay out plan. However, the Ministry is in consultation with the stakeholders and would exercise the best available option for completion of the project at the earliest.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

### **(Recommendation No. 25)**

The Committee are concerned to note that due to the ceiling communicated by the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry had to reprioritize its budgetary resources and the fourth and final instalment of US \$25 million cash grant to Bangladesh could not be released and it is proposed to provide it in the ensuing financial year 2015-16. But the Ministry has not explained how do they propose to do the same. The Committee, therefore, desire that this amount should be released in the first quarter of 2015-16 in order to honour the commitment.

The Committee also note that there is a significant progress in the implementation of the Akhaura-Agartala Rail Link Project. But there is no mention of progress on financing of the Indian portion of the project. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should pursue the matter vigorously with the Ministry of Development of North East Region for confirmation on financing the cost of the project and ensure that due clearances are taken from the concerned authorities for commencement of construction on the Indian side simultaneously.

### **Reply of the Government**

The fourth and final installment of US\$ 25 million cash grant to Bangladesh was released in full in April 2015 and formally handed over to Govt. of Bangladesh on 12 May 2015.

2. The financing of the Indian portion of the Akhaura-Agartala rail Link project is being pursued vigorously. DoNER has expressed its inability to finance this, owing to lack of jurisdictional mandate (land acquisition in States) and budgetary constraints on their side. Thereafter, M/o Railways[MoR] was requested by MEA to consider the implementation of Indian portion as a Project of National Importance. MoR has conveyed its inability to add any more such projects of national importance to its existing list of twelve. The matter was discussed in a Committee of Secretaries meeting on 23 July 2015, chaired by Cabinet Secretary, where it was

decided that MEA will move a note to the Ministry of Finance which would approve the funding and designate the Ministry to which these will accrue. Construction of the Indian portion will commence thereafter.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

**(Recommendation No. 30)**

The Committee note under the Head 'Aid to African Countries' the BE for 2014-15 was Rs. 350 crore which was reduced to Rs. 145 crore while the BE for 2015-16 has been pegged at Rs. 200 crore. The Committee are concerned to note that in spite of pendency of several projects and zero allocation for several projects under this Head, the allocation has been reduced at BE 2015-16 as compared to BE 2014-15. Furthermore, the Committee are concerned about this slow or no progress in implementation of projects announced under India Africa Forum Summit I and II. The Committee, therefore, suggest that the Government should engage with African Union regarding the constraints being faced in implementation of the projects and get them expedited. The Ministry has stated that the announcements/identification of projects are demand driven and an important factor in India's political relations but it does not appear to be true when the failure percentage of projects under IAFS-I and II are analysed. The Committee, therefore, strongly desire that while identifying the projects under IAFS III, the Ministry must ensure that projects are actually demand driven. In the Committee's view this is possible through more extensive ground work before the IAFS III, better engagement with African Union as well as the intended beneficiary countries at the stage of identification of project itself.

**Reply of the Government**

Recommendation of the Hon'ble Committee has been noted. A comprehensive review of all the projects announced so far under India-Africa Forum Summit-I & II is currently underway in consultation with all the concerned Ministries/departments. Based on this, a decision will be taken on the project that can be continued or dropped. Ministry had consulted the African Union on the projects announced during IAFS-III.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

**(Recommendation No. 31)**

The Committee observe that our bilateral engagements with countries of Latin America and Caribbean Region have grown in the last few years and our political engagements have also intensified at the highest level. Almost all the countries of the region have been supporting India at the International fora and many of them look up to Indian development assistance. The Committee are really concerned that a very small component of funds have been allocated under 'Aid to Latin American countries' and that too is reduced drastically at RE stage. The Committee

note that during the recent visit of the President of Guyana, the Prime Minister had conveyed the Government of India's decision to give US \$ 10 million Line of Credit which had been approved by the Inter-Ministerial Standing Committee. However, sanction of Line of Credit of US \$ 8 million had been held in abeyance pending availability of funds. The Committee are concerned at the Ministry's own admission that in absence of funds under the 'Aid to Latin American countries' budget, this politically important project cannot be implemented despite announcement at Prime Minister's level. The Committee disapprove such approach of the Government on the issue of funds and recommend that due priority should be given to the projects announced at the highest level especially when it relates to strategically important countries.

Furthermore, the Committee also take note of the status regarding implementation of another politically very important Project pertaining to assistance to upgrade and overhaul the ICT (Information, Communication and Technology) system of Caricom Secretariat, which was originally set up by India, the implementation of which is also dependent upon the availability of funds in the financial year 2015-16. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry must take up the project on priority basis particularly, in view of the political significance of the project and budgetary requirement of only Rs. 15 crore over the span of two years.

### **Reply of the Government**

The recommendations of the Hon'ble Committee regarding budgetary requirements under this Head as well as the Project pertaining to assistance to upgrade and overhaul the ICT (Information, Communication and Technology) system of Caricom Secretariat have been noted. Additional funds required under the Head will be sought at the RE stage and through Supplementary Demand for Grants. A technical evaluation team from the Ministry of Information Technology and Communication has held discussions with the officials of the CARICOM Secretariat when it visited Georgetown in the second half of May 2015. Report of the Team is awaited. The Ministry would be undertaking up gradation of ICT system of CARICOM Secretariat on priority basis in a time bound manner.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

### **(Recommendation No. 35)**

In view of lack of desired budgetary resources and Ministry's response regarding lack of avenues to make Indian Cultural Centres self sufficient, the Committee are of the view that ICCR should explore the possibility of generating additional resources. The Committee take note of the initiatives undertaken by the Ministry/ICCR for partners and public private partnership. The Committee, therefore, recommend to ICCR to explore the possibility and study the matter in depth regarding engagement with the local associations of Indians/PIOs for organising the events as well as for sponsorship of events. Moreover, the Committee suggest that the Ministry/ICCR



should develop basic parameters, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) etc. with regard to engagement of local Indians/Indian Diaspora organisations.

### **Reply of the Government**

Indian Missions/ Posts/ Cultural Centres abroad typically have to arrange for local hospitality for ICCR-sponsored cultural groups/delegates, i.e. boarding, lodging, and transport within the foreign country, venue and technical support for their performance, talk or other activities, and publicity. In countries where we have large diaspora this is generally done through Indian community and/or local associations. As recommended by the Committee, ICCR is consulting Indian Missions/Posts/Cultural Centres regarding developing basic parameters and procedures for engagement with Indian Diaspora organizations.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/71/2015]

**NEW DELHI**  
21 December, 2015  
30 Agrahayana, 1937 (Saka)

**DR. SHASHI THAROOR,**  
*Chairperson,*  
*Standing Committee on External Affairs*

**Annexure**

**Schedule of Events for Tendering Process of Package 1 Tender of Phase I Construction of Nalanda University's Master Plan**

| <b>SI No</b> | <b>Detail of Event</b>   | <b>Event Date</b> | <b>Remarks</b>  |
|--------------|--|-------------------|---|
| 1            | Submission of Notice Inviting Tender to MEA  | 25-मई-15          |   |
| 2            | Submission of Draft Tender Document along with complete quantity estimates, their take off sheets, technical specifications, market rate analysis, complete Bill of Quantities, complete tender drawings for Package 1 Tender. | 10-जून-15         |   |
| 3            | 6th Building Works & Committee Meeting for review and consideration of the complete Tender Documents   | 22-जून-15         | Venue: New Delhi  |
| 4            | Post incorporation of all the suitable comments and suggestions <b>sign off</b> the Tender Documents by the University   | 22-जून-15         |   |
| 5            | Uploading/Publication of Notice Inviting Tender with printed and electronic media  | 06-जुलाई-15       |   |
| 6            | Last Date of receiving queries from interested bidders   | 20-जुलाई-15       | 14 Days from day of uploading Tender  |
| 7            | Pre-bid Meeting at Delhi   | 22-जुलाई-15       | Venue: IIC, New Delhi   |
| 8            | Uploading of Corrigendum based on pre-bid queries  | 27-जुलाई-15       |   |
| 9            | Last Date & Time of Submission/uploading of Tender   | 20-अगस्त-15       | 45 Days from Publication of Tender<br>Venue: New Delhi Office<br>Time: 1530 Hours   |
| 10           | Opening of Technical Bids  | 20-अगस्त-15       | Venue: New Delhi Office<br>Time: 1600 Hours   |
| 11           | Submission of evaluation reports of Technical Bid to the Tender Evaluation and Selection Committee   | 03-सितम्बर-15     | 14 Days for evaluation process  |
| 12           | Obtaining approval from the Tender Evaluation and Selection Committee  | 04-सितम्बर-15     | Venue: New Delhi Office   |
| 13           | Uploading list of technically qualified bidders  | 04-सितम्बर-15     |   |
| 14           | Opening of Financial Bids in presence of authorized representatives of respective Bidders  | 07-सितम्बर-15     |   |
| 15           | Submission of evaluation reports of Financial Bids to the Tender Evaluation and Selection Committee  | 21-सितम्बर-15     | 14 Days for evaluation process  |
| 16           | Obtaining approval from the Tender Evaluation and Selection Committee  | 24-सितम्बर-15     | Venue: New Delhi Office   |
| 17           | Award of Letter of Intent (LoI) to the Successful Bidder   | 25-सितम्बर-15     |   |
| 18           | Commencement of works at site  | 25-अक्तूबर-15     | 30 days from LoI<br>Start of Durga Puja 15 October 2015<br>Dussera: 22 October 2015 |

**MINUTES OF THE SEVENTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2015-16) HELD ON 21<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER, 2015**

The Committee sat on Monday, the 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2015 from 1500 hrs. to 1530 hrs. in Committee Room 'C', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

**PRESENT**

Dr. Shashi Tharoor – Chairperson

**MEMBERS**

**Lok Sabha**

2. Prof (Dr) Sugata Bose
3. Shri Arka Keshari Deo
4. Shri Venkateswara Rao Magannti
5. Shri Jose K. Mani
6. Prof. (Dr.) Mamta Sanghamita
7. Shri P.R. Senthilnathan
8. Shrimati Supriya Sule
9. Shri Sharad Tripathi

**Rajya Sabha**

10. Shrimati Kanimozhi
11. Shri Ram Kumar Kashyap
12. Dr. Karan Singh
13. Shri D.P. Tripathi

**Secretariat**

1. Dr. Ram Raj Rai - Director
2. Smt. Jyochnamayi Sinha - Additional Director

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee.
3. The Committee took up for consideration the draft Report on action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Sixth Report on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the year 2015-16.

4. The Chairperson invited the Members to offer their suggestions, if any, for incorporation in the draft Report. The Members suggested some minor modifications. The Committee adopted the draft Report with these minor modifications.

5. The Committee then authorized the Chairperson to finalize the Action Taken Report incorporating the suggestions made by the Members and present the same to Parliament.

*The Committee then adjourned.*

*(Vide Para 4 of Introduction of Report)*

**ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE  
RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS CONTAINED IN  
THE SIXTH REPORT OF THE  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (16<sup>TH</sup> LOK SABHA)**

- (i) **Total Number of Recommendations** **40**
- (ii) **Recommendations/Observations, which have been accepted by the Government.**
- Recommendation Nos. 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 19, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38 and 40
- Total-23**  
**Percentage: 57.50%**
- (iii) **Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies.**
- Recommendation Nos. 32
- Total-01**  
**Percentage: 2.50%**
- (iv) **Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration.**
- Recommendation Nos. 17, 20, 22 and 39
- Total- 04**  
**Percentage: 10.00 %**
- (v) **Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited.**
- Recommendation Nos 3, 5, 6, 14, 15, 16, 18, 21, 25, 30, 31 and 35
- Total- 12**  
**Percentage: 30.00%**