

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1300
ANSWERED ON:03.03.2015
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF WESTERN GHATS
Raghavan Shri M. K.

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

- (a) whether the Government has drawn up any action plan for sustainable development in the fragile Western Ghats, especially after the Uttarakhand disaster;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) & (b) : The steps taken by the Central Government in the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change for the conservation of Western Ghats ecology while allowing livelihood security of local people inter alia include the following:

(i) In order to provide immediate protection to the Western Ghats and to maintain its environmental integrity, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change issued directions under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 on 13th November 2013. As per the directions, five categories of new and/or expansion projects/ activities which have maximum interventionist and damaging impacts on ecosystems shall not be considered for grant of Environmental Clearance in the Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA), as identified by the High Level Working Group, in the Western Ghats.

(ii) The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change has notified the following six ecologically sensitive zones in the Western Ghats to regulate certain identified developmental activities unless specifically prohibited in the respective notifications:

- # Eco-sensitive Zone around Purna Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat
- # Eco-sensitive Zone around Vansda Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat
- # Mahabaleshwar-Panchgani, Maharashtra
- # Matheran, Maharashtra,
- # Dahanu Taluka, Maharashtra,
- # Eco-sensitive Zone around Bandipur National Park, Karnataka

(iii) The Western Ghats have been recognized as World Natural Heritage site by UNESCO. A Western Ghats Natural Heritage Management Committee (WGNHMC) is already functional under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India to deal with coordination and integration issues related to World Heritage Sites in Western Ghats. All 39 components and 7 sub-clusters of Western Ghats World Heritage Sites are managed under specific management/ working plans duly approved by State/Central Governments.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change provides funds under various Plan Schemes/ Programmes, which inter alia include Biosphere Reserves, Biodiversity Programmes, Protected Area Network, and conservation of aquatic ecosystems programme for protection of environment and conservation of natural resources across the country including in Sahyadri.

(c): Does not arise.