

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1366

ANSWERED ON:28.07.2015

Conservation of Western Ghats

Chavan Shri Ashok Shankarrao; Dhruvanarayana Shri Rangaswamy; Gaikwad Dr. Sunil Baliram; Gupta Shri Sudheer; Karandlaje Km. Shobha; Kirtikar Shri Gajanan Chandrakant; Singh Shri Kunwar Haribansh; Udhayakumar Shri M.

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

- (a) whether the Union Government has convened a meeting with the State Ministers for Environment and Forests of the Western Ghats region, if so, the main issues discussed in the meeting and the outcome thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has received requests from some States to give them more time to undertake the demarcation of Ecologically Sensitive Area;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (d) the steps taken by the Government for the conservation of the fragile ecosystem of the Western Ghats and its biodiversity and the achievements made so far in this regard; and
- (e) the measures being adopted to provide adequate livelihood security to the local people residing in the Western Ghats region?

Answer

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

(a) to (c): A meeting of the State Environment and Forests Ministers of the Western Ghats region viz. Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu was convened on 7th July 2015 by the Ministry to review the progress of physical demarcation of Ecologically Sensitive Area in Western Ghats and to discuss the further course of action of protection and conservation of Western Ghats. In the meeting, the State Governments of Western Ghats region agreed to submit their proposals after demarcation of Ecologically Sensitive Area in Western Ghats by physical verification to the Ministry by 31st July 2015.

(d) The steps taken by the Government for the conservation of the fragile ecosystem of the Western Ghats and its biodiversity and the achievements made so far in this regard inter alia include the following:

(i) In order to provide immediate protection to the Western Ghats and to maintain its environmental integrity, the Ministry 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 granting environmental clearance in the Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) in the Western Ghats, as identified by the High Level Working Group.

(ii) The Ministry of Environment, Forest 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:

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

(iii) The Western Ghats has been recognized as a World Natural Heritage site by UNESCO. All 39 component sites and their 7 sub-clusters of Western Ghats World Heritage Sites are managed under specific management/working plans duly approved by State/Central Governments.

(e) Only identified activities which have significant adverse impacts on the environment are proposed to be prohibited/regulated in the notified Eco-sensitive Zones. The livelihood activities of local people are not to be impacted.
