

7. A Calamity Relief Scheme may be introduced to provide support for purchase of handlooms and other accessories, subsidy on purchase of Hank Yarn under Hank Yarn Subsidy Scheme, enhanced availability of credit, ensured buy-back of production and to provide immediate relief under various ongoing schemes of the State Governments.

The New Insurance Scheme has been introduced wherein calamity relief together— with accidental death, loss and damage of dwelling units due to flood, fire and earthquake has been included.

8. Welfare schemes may include all handloom workers and not just weavers. Coverage of Handloom workers under the Welfare Schemes of the Handlooms should be substantially stepped up both in cooperative and outside the cooperative fold.

Under the Category of Welfare Scheme, all types of handloom weavers can be covered under the New Insurance Scheme. It would include weavers in both cooperative fold and outside.

9. Special thrust under ongoing schemes of handlooms sector may be given for overall development of North-Eastern States, by providing additional financial input, where required.

North Eastern States are being given special attention. More than 10% of the total funds had been released to N.E. States. Special dispensation is being given under different existing schemes to N.E. States.

#### India Brand Equity Fund

1679. SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Karnataka Soaps and Detergents Limited has sought any Central assistance under the India Brand Equity Fund (IBEF) to promote Indian brands in foreign markets;

(b) if so, the amount of assistance sought; and

(c) the reaction of the Union Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Karnataka a Soaps and Detergents Limited has sought soft loan of about Rs. 5 crores to improve the packing and presentation of Mysore Sandal Soap to suit International requirements, carry out effective sales promotion and participation in trade exhibitions with special emphasis on 'Made in India' theme.

(c) M/s. Karnataka Soaps and Detergents Limited have been requested to send their proposal with the details required to be furnished for consideration by the IBEF trust.

[Translation]

#### Amount Spent on VRS

1680. SHRI HARI KEWAL PRASAD : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the details of amount received by his Ministry from the Union Government under the "Voluntary Retirement Scheme" during each of the last three years;

(b) the number of employees sought retirement under the Voluntary Retirement Scheme during the above period, as on date;

(c) whether the amount provided for voluntary retirement scheme has been spent on other heads; and

(d) if so, the amount provided for VRS and spent on other heads alongwith the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA) : (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

#### New Forum for Economic Crisis

1681. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to form new forum to prevent economic crisis on the existing economic forum which met in February 1999;