

(b) whether the UN Secretary General has sent a team to visit India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka;

(c) whether India has made it clear to the United Nations that there is no scope for third party involvement of any nature in respect to India's relations with Pakistan and that India-Pakistan issues are purely bilateral, to be resolved through bilateral dialogue; and

(d) if so, the reaction of the UN Secretary General thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE) :

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The UN Assistant Secretary General, Mr. Alvaro De Soto, visited Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in the last week of June 1998.

(c) and (d) Government have reiterated that there is no scope for third party involvement of any nature whatsoever in respect of India's bilateral relations with Pakistan. India remains committed to building a relationship of trust, friendship and co-operation with Pakistan through the process of direct bilateral dialogue. The UN Secretary General, in his recent communication to the Security Council, has said that he had been encouraged by indications from both India and Pakistan of their readiness to enter into a dialogue.

Restructuring of Planning Commission

5161. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the complete structural overhauling of the Planning Commission is being considered;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have appointed any full time member to advise the Government to strengthen the technical base of the Commission;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the measures being taken by the Government for the proper functions of the Planning Commission?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK) : (a) and (b) It is proposed to bring in functional changes in the working of the Planning Commission in the context of implementation of the Economic Reforms so that the Commission could concentrate more on new emerging areas/trends.

(c) to (e) No, Sir. Planning Commission exists as per the Government of India's Resolution of 15th March, 1950 and is discharging its assigned functions.

Investment in Food Processing Sector

5162. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have taken any policy initiative to encourage investment in the food processing sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the response to those initiate by National and International Companies;

(d) whether the areas have been earmarked for small scale sector; and

(e) the latest position with regard to the export of processed food?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) and (b) Towards its goal of building up a balanced, rapidly growing and self-reliant processed food industry, the Ministry provides policy support for creating a favourable business environment for food processing industries, including fiscal and financial incentives, providing financial assistance through the Ministry's Plan Schemes for industrial investments in the setting up by public, private and joint sector companies involving both the Central and State Governments, Cooperatives, NGOs, of processed food plants, specialised technical infrastructure for the processed food industry including the Cold Chain from the farm to rural, semi-urban and urban consumers analytical quality control, safety and hygiene-related laboratories R & D, and technology development laboratories and projects, Human Resource Development for all sectors of the processed food industry, Total quality Management (TQM) including ISO-9000 and other quality assurance and control measures an marketing support.

(c) From August 1991 to March 1998; around 4500 Industrial Entrepreneurs Memoranda involving an investment of setting up of food processing units. In addition 1071 proposals for Joint Ventures 100% Export Oriented Units in the Export Processing Zone involving a total investment of Rs. 18600 crores including foreign investment of around Rs. 9000 crores, have been approved by the Government.

(d) The industries in the food processing sector reserved for the small scale sector are Pickles and Chutneys, Bread, Pastry, Confection (excluding chocolates, toffees and chewing gum), Groundnut oil (except solvent extracted), Sweetened Cashew nut products, Ground and processed spices (other than spice oil and spice oleoresins) Tapioca sago, Tapioca flour, and Saccharin.