

(v) Survival of forests is inter-linked with the forest-dwelling communities as well as the forest-dependent villagers in and around the forests. A future afforestation and forest rehabilitation strategy through JFM must recognise and duly support the identity, culture and the rights of such communities enabling them to have a stake in the development, conservation and sustainable utilisation of forest resources.

(vi) In any future strategy of development of the degraded forest lands and other wastelands as sustainable and environmentally sound sources of renewable energy, fodder, wood and timber must be recognised. The contribution to the maintenance of ecological processes to offset pressure on good natural high forests and to provide rural employment and development with adequate involvement of local inhabitants should be encouraged and enhanced.

(vii) The approach of afforestation and rehabilitation of degraded forest lands, public and private wastelands should be multisectoral and operations in such other sectors as agriculture, animal husbandry, rural development, tribal development and infrastructure should be obliged to consider implications of their actions on the strategy.

(viii) A future strategy of afforestation and rehabilitation of degraded forest lands must take into consideration the role of all acknowledged stakeholders and ensure their participation and encourage their involvement.

(ix) Efforts should be made to maximise assistance from international agencies for forestry specially under Agenda 21 & GEF in the context of conventions on Biodiversity, Climate change, combating desertification, etc.

(x) Control of forest fire for betterment of forests.

(xi) Regulation of grazing in forest area to prevent degradation.

(xii) Proper assessment and identification of wastelands in the entire country.

(d) After consideration, the Ministry has decided to initiate action on the following issues :-

(i) Strengthening Joint Forest Management regime and making it more effective.

(ii) Preparation of appropriate Action Plan on Forestry.

(iii) Involving villages situated on the periphery of forest areas in the development of degraded forest lands as well as areas adjoining the forest land.

(iv) Facilitating NABARD for providing soft loans to farmers, cooperatives, State Forest Corporations, etc., for rehabilitation of the waste lands in the country.

[English]

Lok Adalats for DVB

1262. SHRI C. KUPPUSAMI : Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Lok Adalats for the Delhi Vidyut Board have been set up on the direction of Delhi High Court;

(b) if so, whether such Lok Adalats are proposed to be set up for other public utility services like MTNL, MCD, DDA, NDMC etc., which would save a lot of litigational expenses and also speedy resolving of the disputes;

(c) if so, whether the Government propose to issue directions to all such public utility services to set up Lok Adalats so as to reduce pressure on the courts and tribunals;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. M. THAMBI DURAI) : (a) The Delhi Vidyut Board in due compliance of the directions of the Delhi High Court has initiated action in coordination with the Delhi Legal Services Authority for setting up permanent and continuous Lok Adalats in DVB.

(b) The Hon'ble High Court of Delhi has issued notices to DDA, NDMC, MCD, MTNL and GIC in order to elicit their views with regard to the setting up of permanent Lok Adalats for resolution of the cases in which they are parties.

(c) and (d) The 1st Annual Meet of the State Legal Authorities held on 12th September, 1998 in New Delhi under the aegis of the NALSA, has adopted a resolution recommending that the Central Government should impress upon all the Departments of the Central Government/State Governments and Public Sector Undertakings to refer as many cases

as possible to Lok Adalats for conciliatory settlement and to also examine the feasibility of establishing separate Lok Adalats. Efforts are also afoot to establish permanent and continuous Lok Adalats in the Government Departments, Statutory Bodies and Public Sector Undertaking.

(e) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Illegal Trade of Wildlife Products

1263. SHRI VITHAL TUPE :

SHRI ABHAYSINH S. BHONSLE :

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

(a) whether the Government have taken any steps at the national level to prevent illegal trade of wildlife and their products;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have set up any Committee in this regard;

(d) if so, the details of the recommendations made by the Committee; and

(e) the steps being taken by the Government to implement its recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The steps taken at the national level to prevent illegal trade of wildlife and their products is given in the attached statement.

(c) A special Inter-departmental Coordination and Enforcement Committee for strengthening measures for control of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife has been set up in the Ministry under the Chairmanship of Secretary (E & F) and representatives from Ministry of Home Affairs, CBI & CBE&C as members.

(d) The Committee held its first meeting in October, 1998 and has given following recommendations :

(i) Inter-ministerial co-ordination to control the poaching and illegal trade in wildlife products.

(ii) Setting up of state level coordination Committee comprising Police, Forest Department and other enforcement agencies and a district Coordination Committee.

(iii) Taking necessary assistance from Police, CBI & Para military forces to curb illegal wildlife trade and apprehending; the kingpins and master-minds involved in illegal trafficking of wildlife products;

(iv) Frequent interaction with all enforcement agencies.

(v) Training to wildlife officials on the latest investigation techniques; and crime investigations.

(e) The State Governments have been instructed to set up the co-ordination Committees and other concerning agencies have also been advised to take action as per recommendations of the Committee.

Statement

(i) Hunting of wild animals included in schedules I to IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, has been banned by law.

(ii) Special measures for protection and conservation of tiger, elephants and rhinos and their habitat are being implemented.

(iii) Raids are carried out by the wildlife authorities, whenever information of illegal trade in wild animals reaches them.

(iv) International trade in endangered Species of animals and articles made thereof is regulated under the provisions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

(v) Regional and Sub-regional offices of Wildlife Preservation have been set-up mostly at the main export centres of the country to prevent smuggling of wildlife products.

(vi) Interdepartmental coordination has been enhanced with other enforcement organisations like Police, BSF, Customs, ITBP, Coast Guards etc. Training programme on wildlife enforcement and implementation were also conducted for all these organisations at New Delhi and Dehradun during, 1995 & 1996.

(vii) Staff in National Parks and Sanctuaries are being provided modern arms, wireless equipments and communication facilities to check poaching in the National Parks and Sanctuaries.

(viii) Analogous to the Centre, the states have also been asked to set up co-ordination