

17.52 hrs.

RESOLUTION RE: APPROVAL
OF NATIONAL HOUSING POLICY

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now we shall go to item No. 14 regarding the National Housing Policy.

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI SHEILA KAUL): Sir, I beg to Move:

"That this House approves the National Housing Policy' laid on the Table of the House on the 9th July, 1992."

Sir, it is my proud privilege to initiate discussion on the National Housing Policy, which was tabled by me in this august House on the 9th July, 1992. As the House had to deliberate on a number of other issues, it has not been possible to discuss this policy document during the last two years. In the meanwhile, the Standing Committee of Parliament on Urban and Rural Development has thoroughly examined this policy document and submitted its Report to the House on the 21st December, 1993. The recommendations contained in the Report have been considered in my Ministry and necessary action taken notes have been prepared.

Along with food and clothing, housing is a basic human need. At the same time, it is a productive activity which contributes to the attainment of several national policy goals. It stimulates savings and investment, creates additional employment opportunities, increases productivity, creates conditions conducive to the achievement of social objectives

in the health, sanitation, education and welfare sectors and improves generally the quality of life. Apart from being an end in itself, housing, thus, is the means to achieve several other ends and has therefore, come to be recognised worldwide as a major engine of growth and development.

The National Housing Policy, which is now before this august House for endorsement, has to be viewed in this context. Till the mid-Eighties, we did not have a national-level housing policy. The Estimates Committee of the Eighth Lok Sabha recommended in the Report for the year 1985-86 that Government should evolve a National Housing Policy for a planned development of liveable human settlement. Accordingly, the first National Housing Policy was formulated and placed before Parliament in May, 1988. The Action Plan announced by Government in January, 1990 envisaged reformulation of the national Housing Policy with specific programmes directed towards the poor and for improving the housing finance system. The National Housing Policy was accordingly reformulated by Government after broad-based consultations and also taking into consideration the several new developments at the national and international levels since 1988 and, in particular, the adoption by the United Nations in 1989 of the Global Strategy for Shelter for the Year 2000.

The Policy Document which is now before the House for consideration has been formulated to address the challenges of the housing crisis, manifested in a large number of houseless households, over 50 million persons living in slums, spiralling prices and rents of land and houses, rampant speculation in urban lands, deficient availability of drinking water, sanitation and other services, and the increasing struggle of the poorer and

[Shrimati Sheila Kaul]

vulnerable sections of the society to acquire affordable shelter.

I am sure that the hon. Members have studied the National Housing Policy document circulated by my Ministry. Without going into its details, therefore, I would like to touch on the main features of the Policy.

Firstly, the Policy aims at reaching out of people who need the support of the State most, namely, the houseless and vulnerable sections. It is designed to enable these target groups to secure for themselves affordable shelter through access to developed land, finance, appropriate building materials, cost-effective building technology and increased infrastructure facilities.

Secondly, the Policy envisages a major shift in the role of Government from that of a builder of houses to facilitator of housing activities, with responsibility for creating an enabling environment by eliminating constraints and developing an efficient system for the delivery of various housing inputs.

Thirdly, the Policy reiterates the commitment of Government to assist disadvantaged groups, like economically weaker sections, Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes, physically handicapped, households affected by natural calamities, poor widows and single women, in securing affordable shelter.

Lastly, the Policy fully recognises the role of non-government and community-based organisations in assisting the under-privileged sections of

society to secure adequate and affordable shelter.

In keeping with the National Housing Policy, several initiatives have already been taken in the shelter sector.

The Constitution (Seventy fourth) Amendment Act, 1992 has been passed. It provides for more democratic decentralisation of powers to urban local bodies, which is bound to give a new impetus to housing and urban development.

A Model Rent Control Legislation has been formulated and tabled in Parliament and circulated among the States for adoption. This is expected to improve the rental housing market in the country, particularly in the larger cities.

A Model Apartment Ownership Bill and a Model Bill for regulation of activities of builders/developers have been formulated and circulated among the States for adoption.

The Constitution (Seventy fifth) Amendment Act, 1994, which has come into force with effect from the 15th May, 1994, will enable the State Government to establish State-level rent tribunals for expeditious disposal of tenancy litigations.

The Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Amendment Act, 1993 will enable public authorities to secure summary eviction of unauthorised occupants from public premises.

In addition, concrete action has been taken to augment the flow of institutional finance, NRI investment and the Central and State budgetary support in the housing sector. Various fiscal concessions have been accorded in

regard to custom and excise duty which will encourage entrepreneurs to set up manufacturing units for the production of low-cost building materials by utilising agro-industrial wastes.

Before I conclude, I would like to assure the House that the Central Government is determined to implement the National Housing Policy in letter and spirit through the effective and wholehearted participation of the State Governments, which are ultimately responsible for the formulation of time-bound action plans and execution of the housing schemes for the various target groups in accordance with their priorities and resources.

With these words, I request the House to consider and endorse this historic document.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Motion moved:

"That this House approves the National Housing Policy, laid on the Table of the House on the 9th July, 1992."

The time allotted to this subject is four hours. If every Member speaks for eight to 10 minutes. I think many

Members can speak in this debate. As on today, 27 names are there before the Chair. Now, Shri B.K. Handique to speak.

18.01 hrs.

SHRI BIJOY KRISHNA HANDIQUE (Jorhat): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the National Housing Policy which has been tabled by the hon. Minister, Shrimati Sheila Kaul. The National Housing Policy with all its laudable objectives and pious wishes set against the bleak and grim housing scenario is, however, no solace in the face of overwhelming ground realities.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Mr. Handique, you can continue your speech tomorrow.

Now, the House stands adjourned to meet tomorrow, the 17th August, 1994, at 11.00 a.m.

18.00 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Wednesday. August 17, 1994/Sravana 26, 1916 (Saka).
