

Demand for a separate Statutory Development Board for North Maharashtra

SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE (Maharashtra): Sir, the Maharashtra Government had submitted a proposal for a separate Statutory Development Board for North Maharashtra on 26.2.2007 to the Government of India. Both the Houses of the State Legislature, on 13th July, 2006 had unanimously passed a resolution for establishment of a separate Statutory Development Board for five districts of North Maharashtra viz., Dhule, Jalgaon, Nandurbar, Nashik and Ahmednagar. Accordingly, a proposal to amend article 371(2)(a) of the Indian Constitution was forwarded to the Union Home Ministry by the Maharashtra Government on 26.2.2007. In spite of the reminders sent to the Union Home Ministry on 6.7.2007 and 18.9.2007, no action has been taken so far in this proposal.

I, therefore, urge upon the Government to kindly initiate the action by amending the Constitution so that the proposal of the Maharashtra Government is immediately accepted.

Demand to Ban trials on B.T. Brinjal

SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE (West Bengal): India has six years of experience now with BT Cotton, a GE/GM crop. Even from official reports, it is apparent that the technology has not delivered on its promises. Worse, it has created new problems like allergies experienced by people harvesting BT cotton or deaths and illnesses of animals that have grazed on BT cotton fields. Newer pests and diseases are reported, including increase in sucking pests. More inputs like chemical fertilizers and irrigation are being applied on BT cotton, further eroding natural resources. All of this is seen in India even as more and more countries are banning GM crops elsewhere, adopting the precautionary principle. Emerging scientific data is constantly establishing and reiterating the hazards of GM crops.

In India, the Government is considering approval for the second year large-scale trials of BT brinjal, the first ever GM vegetable crop anywhere with the BT gene in it, being pushed into India by the U.S. companies. The impact of this BT brinjal are unpredictable and unknown. Biosafety data has been withheld from public scrutiny. There is no independent research done by the Government. ICAR research data shows better results with IPM based methods than with BT brinjal trials. Lakhs of organic farmers are controlling pests without the use of pesticides or GE seeds. Why then is the Government keen on allowing BT brinjal? What will happen to consumer and farmer choices if they wish to remain GM-free? Who will be accountable for the potential hazards of this experimentation with all Indians? We demand that the Government disallow all trials on BT brinjal.

Demand for construction of houses under the Indira Awas Yojana and increasing the annual allocation of funds under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana

SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI (Andhra Pradesh): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, Andhra Pradesh has been severely affected due to cyclone and floods in two spells in August and October, 2006. Sixteen districts have been seriously affected and five districts had extensive damages in the month of October-November, 2006. The Prime Minister was also requested to sanction four lakh houses under Indira Awas Yojana on 23.8.2006 for those who have lost their houses and about one lakh houses also to be additionally sanctioned for the BPL households who have lost their houses. The State has also drawn the attention of the Government that in the past similar sanctions have been given to the States, that is, Orissa and Bihar.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh in consultation with the financial institution submitted a proposal to the Government of India for leveraging the PMGSY to the tune of Rs. 900 crores in the State. Definite sanctions have been obtained from the Banks for Rs. 500 crores and the projects have already been submitted to the Government of India. The Government