

Ministers was constituted as decided in the Chief Ministers Conference held on 06.02.2010. The first meeting of the Core Group was held on 08.04.2010 under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister. It was decided in the meeting to set up *inter-alia* a Working Group on Consumer Affairs with following composition:

Group on Consumer Affairs

Chief Minister, Gujarat - Chair

Chief Minister, Andhra Pradesh

Chief Minister, Maharashtra

Chief Minister, Tamil Nadu

The Working Group on Consumer Affairs is required to suggest strategies/plan of action on reducing the gap between farmgate and retail prices and better implementation and amendment to Essential Commodities Act including suggestion of strategies/plan of action *inter alia* for:

- (i) Increasing efficiency of distribution channels from farm to consumers.
- (ii) Reducing intermediation costs and for reducing gap between farmgate and retail prices.
- (iii) State intervention for retailing essential commodities at reasonable prices.
- (iv) Enforcement of statutory provisions to improve availability of essential commodities at reasonable prices.

The first meeting of the Working Group on Consumer Affairs was held on 21.10.2010. The report of the Working Group is yet to be finalized.

**Penal provision for wastage of foodgrains**

3466. SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to include wastage of foodgrains due to negligence at Government storage as a crime under Indian Penal Code; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.