

Agreement with Gulf Co-operation Council

*269. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have signed a framework agreement on economic cooperation to give fillip to the existing commercial and economic ties between the two countries;

(b) if so, whether his Ministry and the Foreign Minister of Kuwait, who is the Chairman of the GCC, signed an agreement in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) to what extent India and Gulf Cooperation Council have started implementing this agreement?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have signed a Framework Agreement on Economic Cooperation (FAC). The Agreement was jointly signed by the Minister of Commerce and Industry, the Foreign Minister of Kuwait, in his capacity of President of GCC and Secretary-General of GCC on the 25th August, 2004 in New Delhi. The Agreement aims at expansion and liberalisation of trade and enhancement of the level of economic cooperation between India and the GCC.

(d) As a follow-up of the signing of the Agreement, research institutions have been entrusted with conducting studies on various aspects of the Framework Agreement on Economic Cooperation (FAC). Discussions were held with a GCC delegation in New Delhi on 19th November, 2004, in which both sides *inter alia* agreed to continue the process of dialogue in the context of the provisions of the Agreement.

Comprehensive Action Plan for Urban Housing

*270. SHRI SANJAY RAUT:
SHRI AJAY SINGH CHAUTALA:

Will the Minister of URBAN EMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to formulate a comprehensive action plan to solve housing problems faced by the urban poor and also those living in the slums; and

[20 December, 2004]

RAJYASABHA

(b) if so, the details thereof and by when it would be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF URBAN EMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION (KUMARI SELJA): (a) and (b) The Government is already implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme called Valmiki Ambedkar Awas Yojana (VAMBAY) with effect from 2.12.2001, with a view to ameliorating the conditions of urban slum dwellers living below poverty line, who do not possess adequate shelter. The scheme has the primary objective to facilitate construction and upgradation of dwelling units and to provide health and enabling urban environment through community toHets.

In addition, through National Slum Development Programme (NSDP), launched in August, 1996, as an Additional Central Assistance programme, basic infrastructure amenities such as water supply, storm water drains, community baths, paving of existing lanes, sewers, community toilets, street lights, etc. are provided.

New Trade Policy

*271. SHRI AJAY SINGH CHAUTALA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a)whether Government have recently declared the New Trade Policy;

(b)if so, whether farm sector has been covered therein;

(c)if so, the details thereof;

(d)the sectors identified for employment generation and export promotion;

(e)whether Government have proposed any new incentives for export oriented units to boost the exports in 2005-06 and 2006-07; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMALNATH):
(a) Yes, Sir. A Foreign Trade Policy was released on 31st August, 2004.

(b) Yes, Sir. Agriculture has been identified as one of the focus areas.

(c) to (f) A Statement is enclosed.