

National food security scheme

1165. SHRIMATI WANSUK SYIEM: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether experts feel that implementation of the National Food Security Scheme will free up money elsewhere to spend on nutrition, health and education;

(b) whether the scheme is likely to reduce the burden of States on food expenditure currently being incurred by many States;

(c) whether the proposed scheme targets 67 percent of India's population, entitling them to subsidized foodgrains, and if so, how these beneficiaries will be identified; and

(d) whether the UN Special Appporteur on the Right to Food has backed the National Food Security Scheme as worth emulating by other nations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K. V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) There is no scheme of the Government named National Food Security Scheme. The Government has however promulgated the National Food Security Ordinance, 2013 on 05.07.2013, to provide for food and nutritional security in human life cycle approach. Under the Ordinance, upto 75% and 50% of the rural and urban population respectively, i.e. about 67% of the total population of the country, will be entitled to receive foodgrains at highly subsidized prices of Rs. 3/2/1 per kg for rice/wheat/ coarse grains. Within the coverage determined for each State/UT, the identification of households is to be done by States/ UTs in accordance with guidelines to be prescribed by them.

Highly subsidized prices of foodgrains is likely to result in additional disposable income in the hands of the people, which can be used for other facilities including better nutrition, health and education. As foodgrains under the Ordinance will be made available to States/UTs also at the abovementioned prices of Rs. 3/2/1 per kg for rice/wheat/coarse grains, which are significantly lower than the current Central Issue Prices for BPL and APL households, the burden of State Governments on buying TPDS foodgrains will reduce. Further, the Ordinance also contains a provision that the Central Government will provide assistance to the State Government in meeting the expenditure incurred by it towards intra-State movement, handling of foodgrains and margins paid to fair price shop dealers, in accordance with such norms and manner as may be prescribed by the Central Government.

(d) No formal communication has been received in this regard. However, as per media reports, Prof. Olivier de Schutter, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, has stated that India's food security law has global significance and it can inspire many countries to come up with similar legislation.

Implication of implementation of National Food Security Law

1166. SHRI NARESH AGRAWAL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government plans to introduce the National Food Security Bill;
- (b) whether Government has studied its implication on the present PDS system, foodgrains procurement system, farmers and the food industry;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) The Government promulgated the National Food Security Ordinance (NFSO) on 5.7.2013. Subsequently, the National Food Security Bill (NFSB), 2013 has been introduced in the Lok Sabha on 7.8.2013 to replace the Ordinance, and NFSB introduced in December, 2011 has been withdrawn.

(b) to (d) The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) will continue to be implemented, though with the changed parameters relating to coverage, foodgrain entitlements, prices etc. prescribed in the legislation on food security. The NFSO also prescribes measures for reforms in TPDS which Central and State Governments shall endeavour to progressively undertake.

As regards impact on procurement and farmers, the existing procurement policy of the Government will continue under which all the foodgrains conforming to prescribed specifications offered for sale at specified centres are purchased by the public procurement agencies at Minimum Support Price (MSP). This procurement is therefore open-ended and without any cap. Farmers will therefore continue to receive benefits of remunerative prices in the form of MSP. The Bill is not likely to have any impact on food industry.

Implementation of Food Security Law

1167. SHRI ARVIND KUMAR SINGH:

SHRI PRABHAT JHA:

SHRIMATI KUSUM RAI:

SHRI ALOK TIWARI: