

at 1:500,000 scale using Indian Remote Sensing Satellite data of 2003-2005 time frame following the classification systems of Thematic Programme Network-I (TPN-I) of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and published "Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas of India" in 2007. The copy of the Atlas is available at the website (<http://envfor.nic.in/division/desertification-atlas>) of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.

The mapping shows that the total land degradation area of the country is 105.48 million hectare out of which 81.45 million hectare area of the country (25 % of the country's geographical area) is undergoing the process of desertification. The various processes of desertification are water erosion, vegetal degradation, wind erosion, frost shattering, salinity/alkalinity, mass movement, water logging, rocky area barren and others (man-made mining etc.)

(b) India's New National Action Programme to Combat Desertification is under formulation with an aspirational goal of making the country land degradation neutral by 2030 and thereby maintaining and improving the condition of land resources to meet the requirements of increasing population.

Degradation of forest cover due to forest fires

3110. DR. K. V. P. RAMACHANDRARAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that forest fires cause degradation of forest cover and soil and endanger the flora and fauna and adjoining human habitations;

(b) if so, whether any study has been conducted on the losses caused by the forest fires in the country, if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action being taken on the suggestions made in the studies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR): (a) It is a fact that forest fires cause degradation of forest cover and soil, endanger the flora and fauna and adjoining human habitations. However, most of the forest fires in the country are ground fires due to which dried fallen material on the forest floor gets burnt. The forest regenerates after rainfall subsequently.

(b) and (c) No such study has been conducted on the losses caused by the forest fires in the country. However, the forest survey of India has come out with a report on vulnerability of India's forests to fires. Management and protection of forests is primarily the responsibility of the respective State/Union Territory Governments. The information pertaining to the extent of damage due to forest fires is not compiled in the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.