

dispute in accordance with accepted principles of international law, including the United Nations' Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982.

(c) During the recent State visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping, both sides agreed to build a Closer Developmental Partnership which would form a core component of the Strategic and Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Prosperity. A closer relationship between India and China will be conducive not only to the common interests of both sides, but also to stability and prosperity of the region and the world.

Training of Pakistani soldiers by China along Indian border

*165. SHRI ALOK TIWARI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Pakistani soldiers are being trained by Chinese army along Indian border as per the recent reports, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether heavy guns, mortars and sniping equipments have also been deployed along Indian border by Chinese and Pakistani forces in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) and border along Rajasthan, if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has taken up the matter with Chinese and Pakistani Governments; and

(d) if so, the details thereof along with the response of Chinese and Pakistani Governments, if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ):
(a) and (b) China and Pakistan have stated that their bilateral defence cooperation is an important component of their strategic cooperation. China has long been providing Pakistan with military assistance and equipment. Chinese persons have been visiting Pakistan for conducting acceptance tests on the military equipment supplied by them and subsequently training Pakistani soldiers on the same. Both countries regularly hold joint exercises between their Armies, Navies and Air Forces.

(c) and (d) Government has clearly conveyed India's consistent position that Pakistan is in illegal occupation of parts of the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir since 1947 and has conveyed its concerns to China about their activities in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir and asked them to cease such activities. China has conveyed that it regards Kashmir as a bilateral matter to be settled between India and Pakistan.

Government keeps a constant watch on all developments having a bearing on India's security and takes all necessary measures to safeguard it.

Convergence of ECE with primary education

*166. SHRI DEREK OBRIEN: Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the steps being taken for convergence of Early Childhood Education (ECE) with primary education to ensure easy transition for the child from pre-school to mainstream education and to arrest drop-outs;

(b) whether any minimum specifications have been laid down for ECE centres if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the measures being taken to improve working conditions of existing Anganwadi workers engaged in imparting ECE under ICDS?

THE MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA SANJAY GANDHI): (a) and (b) The common goal of Early Childhood Education (ECE) and primary education is to prepare the child for further advancement in the educational system. The curriculum and pedagogy in Early Childhood Education are intended to provide opportunities to stimulate the different domains of development and to facilitate transition to the formal education system.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Ministry of Human Resource Development and the State Governments have worked closely with each other to develop the National ECCE Policy with the National Curriculum Framework and a Quality Standard Framework for ECCE. The latter provides minimum specifications for infrastructure, indoor and outdoor spaces, developmentally and age appropriate curriculum, adequate play materials, trained staff and facilities for drinking water, toilets and safety in the ECCE centres.

At the implementation level, the respective Departments are expected to build on the conceptual synergies and promote approaches that will enable children to make the transition easily from the Anganwadis to the school system and to make them better learners.

The convergence in many instances has been facilitated by co-location of Anganwadi Centres and primary school campus or establishment of Anganwadi Centres in close proximity with schools.