

Bhutan, Comoros, India, Lao PDR, Maldives, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam met to review the implementation of the 1st RIMES Ministerial Conference recommendations, and adopt RIMES Master Plan 2016-2020.

(c) and (d) While accepting to serve as the Chair of the RIMES Executive Council, India announced its commitment to RIMES as a leading knowledge partner through its institutions - ESSO-Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), ESSO-Indian National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF), and ESSO-India Meteorological Department (IMD) along with other global partners in building and implementation of various prioritized program initiatives.

The Ministers reiterated their continued and unwavering commitment to sustain and expand RIMES delivery of core services and support the Master Plan implementation in adopting Master Plan 2016-2020, the Ministers encouraged Member States to support resource mobilization for Plan implementation through: voluntary contribution, as modeled by India; in-kind contribution by making national scientific expertise available; and associating RIMES as technical implementing partner in country projects that align with Master Plan priorities.

In supplementing Member States' resource mobilization efforts, the Conference called for organizing a meeting of donors so as to encourage multilateral institutions to engage with RIMES core activities and programs. The Conference recommended pursuing Papua New Guinea's proposal to implement RIMES programs and projects through appropriate sub-regional mechanisms, and requested WMO to leverage RIMES mechanism in maximizing the objectives of its Global Framework for Climate Services.

Accuracy of monsoon forecast by private agency

2734. DR. K. V. P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Governments is aware that the monsoon forecast by a private agency this year has proved more accurate than the IMD predictions;
- (b) if so, will there be steps to revisit the IMD prognosis;
- (c) how was the monsoon behavior this year;
- (d) whether Government still worry about drought like conditions; and
- (e) if so, what plans are underway to help the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES (SHRI Y. S. CHOWDARY): (a) No Sir. Government is aware that a private agency has predicted seasonal rainfall of 102% of Long Period Average (LPA) for the 2015 southwest monsoon, whereas Earth System Science Organisation-India Meteorological Department (ESSO-IMD) has predicted monsoon 2015 seasonal rainfall of 88% of LPA $\pm 4\%$ model error. The cumulative rainfall received so far (1st June to 7th August 2015) is 93% of LPA. As about two more months are left for the present (2015) monsoon season (June to September) to complete, it will be early to say which forecast is accurate.

(b) ESSO-IMD stands by its seasonal Long Range Forecast (LRF) of monsoon 2015 issued in June 2015, which was 88% of LPA $\pm 4\%$ model error.

(c) The cumulative rainfall situation for the period 1st June to 7th August, 2015 is 93%. The actual rainfall in July was 84% of LPA which is well within the forecast range issued by ESSO-IMD model and far off the target of the forecast issued by private agency. The rainfall during 2nd half for the country as a whole is likely to be 84% of LPA with a model error of $\pm 8\%$. The rainfall during August is likely to be $90 \pm 9\%$ of LPA as was forecasted in June.

(d) and (e) Government is closely and continuously monitoring the rainfall situation over the country. ESSO-IMD is issuing weather forecast/outlook with a lead period of 5 to 20 days. Gramin Krishi Seva Scheme (GKMS) is rendered on twice-weekly basis in collaboration with State Agricultural Universities (SAUs), institutions of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) etc. Realized weather of the previous week and quantitative district level weather forecast for next 5 days in respect of rainfall, maximum temperature, minimum temperature, wind speed, wind direction, relative humidity and clouds as well as weekly cumulative rainfall forecast are provided. Further, crop specific advisories, generated in partnership with SAUs and ICAR, to help the farmers are issued and widely disseminated for planning possible contingency actions.

The GKMS of Earth System Science Organization -India Meteorological Department (ESSO-IMD) has been successful in providing the crop specific advisories to the farmers at the district/agro-climatic zone level twice weekly through different print/visual/Radio/ IT based wider dissemination media including short message service (SMS) and Interactive Voice Response Service (IVRS) facilitating for appropriate field level actions.

Weekly rainfall forecast scenario followed by 15-day outlook is issued on every Thursday during the months of June-September for planning appropriate actions.

The Crop Weather Watch Group of Ministry of Agriculture coordinates with ESSO-IMD, Central Water Commission, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) institutions and the State Governments to review on a weekly basis (on every Friday) the weather forecast scenario as it impacts on agriculture, level in Water Reservoirs monitored by the Central Water Commission (CWC), Progress of Sowing, crop health including incidence of Pest Attacks and availability of inputs etc. The steps suggested under this process are available at www.agricoop.nic.in/weather.html.

Diseases due to pollution

†2735. SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether many diseases are spreading fast in the country due to pollution;
- (b) if so, the details thereof especially with regard to Maharashtra; and
- (c) whether Government is preparing any action plan to control pollution and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR): (a) and (b) Pollution is one of the factors which may affect human health. Air pollution is known to be one of the aggravating factors for respiratory ailments and cardiovascular diseases. Central Pollution Control Board and this Ministry have no information on spread of diseases due to pollution in the country including the State of Maharashtra.

(c) To minimize the impact of environmental pollution the Government has *inter-alia* taken the following actions:

- Notification of National Ambient Air Quality Standards 2009, envisaging 12 pollutants;
- Formulation of regulations/statutes bring down the levels of environmental pollution in the country;
- Setting up of monitoring network for assessment of ambient air quality;
- Introduction of cleaner/alternate fuel like CNG, LPG etc. and promotion of public transport network including Metro;
- Creation of infrastructure for industrial pollution control incorporating cleaner production processes, setting up of common pollution control facilities;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.