

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government to allow felling of such trees and their replacement across the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has not issued any guidelines about phasing out and replacing old outlived trees.

(c) and (d) As per some published research work, old trees are not net 'Carbon dioxide generators'.

Handing over of degraded forests to private companies

33. PROF. M.V. RAJEEV GOWDA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHNAGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry has issued guidelines allowing degraded forests to be handed over to private companies;

(b) whether the Ministry has also waived off the requirement for permission from Gram Sabha for such transfer;

(c) whether the Ministry has evaluated the environmental risks or assessed the possible misuse of this provision for mining or land grabbing; and

(d) if so, the reasons thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has not issued any guidelines allowing degraded forests to be handed over to private companies so far. However, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is working on draft policy guidelines for encouraging participation of private/public sector in afforestation of degraded forest with a view to improving the forest condition and decrease import of wood products. The proposed guidelines titled "Guidelines for Public Participation in Afforestation of Degraded Forests" provide for consultation with the Gram Panchayat/Village Panchayat/ Joint forest management Committee, wherever necessary and obtain their consent in respect of forest land identified under the scheme before inviting Expression of Interest (EoI).

(c) and (d) To ensure that ecological, environmental and Social security of the people dependent on forests is not compromised, the draft guidelines provide for adequate safeguards.