

Clearance of forest land under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980

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

- (a) the percentage of forest land cleared between 2014-15 and 2015-16 under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980;
- (b) the details of compensatory afforestation measures undertaken;
- (c) in what manner these measures would address the loss of biodiversity in forest lands prior to their destruction; and
- (d) the details of all the measures taken by Government to avert the biodiversity crisis?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE): (a) During the year 2014-15 and 2015-16, 17217.75 Ha. and 13946.05 Ha. of forest land respectively, has been diverted for non forest purposes under the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act. These constitute 0.815% and 0.6601% of the Recorded Forest Area respectively.

(b) The total Compensatory Afforestation in lieu of forest land diverted for non-forestry purposes, carried out by the States/UTs upto 31/03/2016 on non-forest land and degraded forest land is 826,770.30 Ha.

(c) and (d) Non-forestry activities including mining invariably have an impact on the biodiversity of the area under diversion. Deforestation for non-forest use can *inter alia* lead to soil erosion, and water pollution, impact flora and fauna etc. However whenever forest clearances are given for use of forest land for non-forestry purposes under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, mitigative measures in the form of general, standard and specific conditions are mandated with every clearance granted. General conditions *inter-alia* include raising of Compensatory Afforestation (CA), imposition of Net Present Value (NPV) to reduce the adverse impact of the diversion of forest land, the demarcation of boundary of the diverted forest land, minimum tree felling etc.

Further, standard conditions including phasing of mining operations, management of safety zone, reclamation of quarry, conservation of topsoil, the preparation and implementation of Catchment Area Treatment Plan, muck disposal plan, maintenance of prescribed Right of Way (RoW) etc. are stipulated. In addition to general and standard conditions, project specific conditions are also stipulated in the approval based on the recommendation made by the Forest Advisory Committee and State Government.