

**Road-map for development of minority communities**

\*285 SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have identified both the short-term and long-term measures, aiming at all round development of minority communities in the country, and have formulated road-map for 2007-08 towards the respective goals;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any review of the status of implementation of the said road-map at the end of the first quarter of the year has been carried out;

(d) if so, the findings thereof, indicating the quantum of funds allocated, goal-wise, *vis-a-vis* the sum spent, as on June 30, 2007; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) and (b) The Prime Minister's New 15 Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities, announced in June, 2006, *inter-alia*, provides for enhancing opportunities for education and ensuring an equitable share for minorities in economic activities and employment by up-gradation of skills through technical training and enhanced credit support for self-employment and special consideration to minorities in recruitment to government jobs. The 15 Point Programme provides for earmarking for the minorities, wherever possible, 15% of outlays and targets of schemes included in the programme and considered amenable to earmarking.

In addition, a number of schemes have been formulated exclusively for the minorities *viz.* a merit-cum-means scholarship scheme for technical and professional courses at under-graduate and post-graduate levels, a pre-matric and a post-matric scholarship scheme. The merit-cum-means scholarship scheme has already been approved. Besides, an exclusive free-coaching and allied scheme has been approved for the minorities. The corpus of the Maulana Azad Education Foundation has been augmented and the equity of the National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation is being increased further in 2007-08 to enable it to expand its operations and coverage.

A multi-sectoral development programme is being formulated to provide basic amenities and improve opportunities for employment in the identified backward minority concentration districts.

(c) to (e) The progress of implementation of the Prime Minister's New 15 Point Programme is reviewed by the Committee of Secretaries and then by the Cabinet on a half-yearly basis. The first progress report was reviewed by the Cabinet on 21st June, 2007. The second report has also been submitted and is scheduled to be considered by the Committee of Secretaries shortly.

For 2007-08, an amount of Rs. 1 024.66 crores has been earmarked under the 15 Point Programme for the minorities under schemes included in the programme and considered amenable to earmarking. Targets have been finalized and communicated

to the Ministries/Departments concerned and progress will be monitored *vis-a-vis* these and reviewed as indicated above.

**Criteria for defining 'minority community'**

\*286. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have evolved any definition of the term minority community; -

(b) if not, whether Government propose to do the same; and

(c) the details of present criteria Government have adopted for the purpose of implementation of various schemes or otherwise?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) and (b) Section 2(c) of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992, pertaining to 'Definitions' states: 'minority' for the purpose of this Act means a community notified as such by the Central Government".

(c) For purposes of implementation of various schemes for the welfare of minorities, the criterion adopted is the notification dated 23rd October, 1993, which notified Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Parsis) as minority communities.

**Team for research in arctic circle**

\*287. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have sent recently a team to the Arctic circle for research purposes;

(b) if so, researches they are supposed to do;

(c) how many such delegations have been sent to the Arctic circle earlier during the last five years;

(d) whether Government would make a claim to the resources of the Arctic circle; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EARTH SCIENCES (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The first expedition to Arctic region was launched on 3rd August, 2007 from New Delhi. A team of five (5) Indian Scientists has gone to the international research facility at Ny-Alesund at Spitsbergen Island in Svalbard Archipelago of Norway. The scientists belonging to National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCAOR), Goa; Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad; Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune; and Lucknow University, have initiated research in the fields of atmospheric sciences, microbiology, geology