

## CELL ON PARLIAMENTARY FORUMS

In the Fourteenth Lok Sabha, the Speaker, Lok Sabha on 12 May, 2005 made an observation relating to constitution of a Parliamentary Forum on Water Conservation & Management to enable Members to discuss the critical issues relating to water in a structured manner and also to raise the issue more effectively in the House and during the meetings of the Committees. The first Parliamentary Forum on Water Conservation & Management was constituted on 12 August, 2005. Thereafter, four more Parliamentary Forums on Children, Youth, Population & Public Health and Global Warming & Climate Change were also constituted in the Fourteenth Lok Sabha.

2. Upon constitution of the Fifteenth Lok Sabha in May, 2009, all the above Parliamentary Forums were reconstituted on 21 January, 2010. During the term of the Fifteenth Lok Sabha, the Speaker, Lok Sabha constituted three more Parliamentary Forums on Disaster Management on 8 December, 2011, Artisans & Craftspeople on 26 April, 2013 and Millennium Development Goals on 11 December, 2013 there by increasing the number of Parliamentary Forums to eight. These Forums are:

1. Parliamentary Forum on Water Conservation and Management

2. Parliamentary Forum on Children
3. Parliamentary Forum on Youth
4. Parliamentary Forum on Population and Public Health
5. Parliamentary Forum on Global Warming and Climate Change
6. Parliamentary Forum on Disaster Management
7. Parliamentary Forum on Artisans and Craftspeople
8. Parliamentary Forum on Millennium Development Goals

The Parliamentary Forums do not interfere with and encroach upon the jurisdiction of the Departmentally Related Standing Committees and the respective Ministry/Department.

**Objectives of Parliamentary Forums**

3. The objectives behind constitution of these Parliamentary Forums are to:
  - a. provide a platform to the Members of Parliament to have interaction with the concerned Ministers, Experts and key officials from the nodal Ministries with a view to have

- a focussed and meaningful discussion on critical issues with a result-oriented approach for speeding up the implementation process;
- b. sensitize the Members of Parliament about the key areas of concern as well as the ground-level situation and equip them with latest information, knowledge, technical know-how and valuable inputs from experts both from the country and abroad for enabling them to raise these issues effectively on the Floor of the House and in the meetings of Parliamentary Committees; and
- c. prepare a data-base through collection of data/information on critical issues from the concerned Ministries, Internet, NGOs, newspapers, United Nations, etc. and circulation thereof to the Members of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha so that they can meaningfully participate in the deliberations at the meetings of the Forums and seek clarifications from the experts or officials from the Ministry present in the Meetings.

#### **Composition**

4. The guidelines of the respective Forum provide that the Speaker, Lok Sabha is the *ex-officio* President

of all the Parliamentary Forums except the Parliamentary Forum on Population and Public Health where the Chairman, Rajya Sabha is the *ex-officio* President and the Speaker, Lok Sabha is the *ex-officio* Co-President of the Forum. Apart from President, Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Deputy Speaker, Lok Sabha, the concerned Ministers and Chairpersons of the respective Departmentally Related Standing Committees are *ex-officio* Vice-Presidents of the Forum.

5. Each Forum consists of not more than 31 members (excluding the President, Co-President and Vice-Presidents) out of whom not more than 21 are from Lok Sabha and not more than 10 are from Rajya Sabha. The members of the Forums are nominated by the Speaker, Lok Sabha, and the Chairman, Rajya Sabha, as the case may be, from amongst the Leaders of Parties and Groups, or their nominees who have special knowledge/keen interest in the subject.

Experts in their respective fields are also associated with the Forums as Special Invitees who share their views/present papers during the meetings/seminars of the Forum.

Secretary-General, Lok Sabha is the Secretary of these Forums and these Forums are serviced by the Lok Sabha Secretariat.

**Term of Office**

6. The term of office of the Members of the Forum is co-terminus with their membership in the respective Houses.

A Member may resign from the Forum by writing under one's own hand, addressed to the Chairman, Rajya Sabha or the Speaker, Lok Sabha, as the case may be.

**Briefs of Meetings**

7. Unlike the Parliamentary Committees which deliberate on a subject selected by them for examination and report during their term, the meetings of the Parliamentary Forums provide an informal platform to Members to acquaint themselves with topical issues of interest which would help them to participate effectively in the debates in the Houses or the sittings of Parliamentary Committees. Therefore, the Parliamentary Forums do not prepare or present any Report to the House.

The briefs of the deliberations of each of the Parliamentary Forums prepared by the Secretariat, however, are uploaded on the Lok Sabha website and actionable points culled out therefrom are forwarded to the concerned Ministries/Departments for taking necessary action under intimation to the Lok Sabha Secretariat.

### **Achievements of the Forums**

8. The Parliamentary Forums hold meetings regularly during Parliament Sessions wherein experts make presentations on critical issues under the jurisdiction of the respective Forums. A total of 76 meetings were held during the Fifteenth Lok Sabha. Some of the prominent experts who made presentation during the Fifteenth Lok Sabha are as follows:

Ms. Sunita Narain, Director, Centre for Science and Environment; Mr. Aidan Cronin, Water and Environmental Sanitation Specialist, UNICEF India; Shri Rajesh Kumar, Chairperson, Central Water Commission; and Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak, Founder, Sulabh International Social Organisation under Parliamentary Forum on Water Conservation and Management.

Prof. Sukhadeo Thorat, Chairman, University Grants Commission; and Shri Dilip Chenoy, MD and CEO, National Skill Development Corporation under Parliamentary Forum on Youth.

Shri Vineet Joshi, Chairperson, Central Board of Secondary Education; Mr. Jose Bergua, Chief, Child Protection in UNICEF, India; Ms. Shireen Vakil Miller, Director—Policy and Advocacy, Save the Children; Professor Arvind Panagariya, Professor in Columbia University; and Shri Amod Kanth, Prayas Institute of Juvenile Justice under Parliamentary Forum on Children.

Dr. Nata Menabde, WHO Representative to India; Dr. Antonio Duran, Coordinator, International Health Policy, Andalusian School of Public Health, Spain; Dr. Tarun Sharma, Director, Sankara Nethralaya, Chennai; and Shri Devesh Chaturvedi, Commissioner, Allahabad under Parliamentary Forum on Population and Public Health.

Mr. Nicholas Dunlop, Secretary-General, Climate Parliament; Prof. Sir David King, Climate Change Expert; and Ms. Baroness Bryony Worthington, Opposition Spokesperson on Energy/Climate in the House of Lords, British Government and Vice President, GLOBE International under Parliamentary Forum on Global Warming and Climate Change.

Shri M. Shashidhar Reddy, Vice-Chairman, National Disaster Management Authority; and Shri Krishna S. Vats, Regional Disaster Reductions Advisor, UNDP under Parliamentary Forum on Disaster Management.

Further, the Parliamentary Forum on Artisans and Craftspeople organized a Workshop-cum-Exhibition in association with the Ministry of Textiles from 18 to 20 December, 2013 on the theme “Handlooms and Handicrafts—Challenges ahead”.