

# Parliamentary Question: National Action Plan on Climate Change

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To address challenges from climate change, the Government of India has taken a range of initiatives, including inclusive policy measures, focusing on adaptation, resilience-building, and social protection. Key programs linked to climate action include efforts to enhance climate-resilient housing and infrastructure in coastal, flood-prone, and drought-affected regions.

The National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) outlines a multipronged strategy to address the effects of climate change. As part of the NAPCC, the National Mission for Sustainable Habitat (NMSH) aims, *inter alia*, to build resilience of cities to climate change impacts and strengthen their capacities to ‘bounce back better’ from climate-related extreme events and the disaster risk.

National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) under NAPCC implements strategies to make Indian agriculture more resilient to the changing climate. Several schemes under NMSA deal with adverse climate situations in agriculture. Per Drop More Crop scheme increases water use efficiency at the farm level through Micro-Irrigation technologies, i.e., drip and sprinkler irrigation systems. The Rainfed Area Development scheme promotes the Integrated Farming System (IFS) for enhancing productivity and minimising risks associated with climatic variability.

Further, Thirty-four States /Union Territories (UTs) have prepared and some have updated their State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC) in line with NAPCC, taking into account the State-specific issues relating to climate change. These SAPCCs outline sector-specific and cross-sectoral priority actions, including adaptation and climate-resilient infrastructure.

The Government of India stands committed to conserve the biological resources of the country. The Government has implemented several measures to conserve important biodiversity hotspots such as the Western Ghats, Himalayas, and Northeast region, and to enhance community-led conservation efforts. These include the establishment of the National Biodiversity Authority, State Biodiversity Boards, and Union Territory Biodiversity Councils under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002; the declaration of 50 Biodiversity Heritage Sites; the creation of Biodiversity Management Committees; and the preparation of People’s Biodiversity Registers.

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) by adopting a ‘whole of government’ and ‘whole of society’ approach, etc. The updated NBSAP comprises 23 National Biodiversity Targets (NBTs) along with 142 indicators. It comprehensively addresses conservation, sustainable use, and benefit sharing and envisages protecting terrestrial and marine areas, restoring degraded ecosystems and reducing biodiversity threats. Additionally, the plan emphasises active community participation in biodiversity governance to ensure inclusive and sustainable outcomes.

Furthermore, organisations including the Botanical Survey of India and Zoological Survey of India aid in surveys, inventories, taxonomic validation, threat assessment of floral and faunal resources, along with ex-situ conservation through their regional centres across the country, including India’s four Biodiversity hotspots. In the Himalayas, flagship programmes such as the Snow Leopard Project, Himalayan Wildlife Project, and the recovery of hangul, musk deer, and Himalayan monal have been initiated as part of hotspot conservation.

The Ministry has notified Eco-Sensitive Zones around National Parks and Sanctuaries, under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. Eco-sensitive Zones around Protected Areas i.e. National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries are declared to create some kind of “Shock Absorber” for the specialized Ecosystem,

such as Protected Areas or other natural sites and is meant to act as a transition zone from areas of high protection to areas involving lesser protection. Eco-Sensitive Areas such as, Dahanu Taluka, Mahabaleshwar-Panchagani, Matheran, Bhagirathi and Doon valley and 120 Eco-Sensitive Zones have been notified in the biodiversity hotspots of North-East, Himalayas and Western Ghats.

Biosphere Reserves (BRs) are designated to deal with one of the most important questions of reconciling the conservation of biodiversity, the quest for economic and social development and maintenance of associated cultural values. There are 18 Biosphere Reserves in the country. Out of these, 12 BRs are under the World Network of Biosphere Reserve (WNBR) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), and the remaining 6 BRs are under consideration in WNBR of UNESCO.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has established policies and laws to conserve natural heritage. The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 provides for notification of Sanctuaries, National Parks, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves for the protection of wildlife and its habitats.

The Ministry is providing financial and technical assistance to State Governments/UTs Administrations under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme Project Tiger & Elephant (CSS-PT&E) for protection of elephants, their habitat and corridors, to address issues of human-elephant conflict and welfare of captive elephants in the country. Financial assistance is provided under the scheme as per the Annual Plan of Operations submitted by the State Governments/UTs Administration for management of wildlife and its habitat in the country.

The tiger population has increased as per the All India Tiger Estimation done in 2022, with an estimated number of 3682 (range 3167-3925) as compared to the 2018 estimation of 2967 (range 2603-3346) and 2014 estimation of 2226 (range 1945-2491). To conserve tigers, 58 tiger reserves have been notified in India, covering nearly 2.5% of the country's geographical area.

The Government of India, through the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), has advocated a three-pronged strategy to manage human-wildlife negative interactions, viz.,

- i. Providing material and logistical support;
- ii. Restricting habitat interventions and,
- iii. Three Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), which include, (a) to deal with emergency arising due to straying of tigers in human dominated landscapes; (b) to deal with tiger depredation on livestock and (c) for active management towards rehabilitation of tigers from source areas at the landscape level.

The three SOPs inter alia include the issue of managing dispersing tigers; managing livestock kills to reduce conflict, as well as relocating tigers from source areas to areas where the density of tigers is low, so that conflict in rich source areas does not occur. In addition, as per Tiger Conservation Plans, need-based and site-specific management interventions are undertaken by the tiger reserves.

The Project Elephant was started in the year 1992 with the objectives to protect elephants, their habitat and corridors, to address issues of man-elephant conflict and welfare of captive elephants in the country. Critical elephant habitats are notified as '*Elephant Reserve*' to enhance focus and synergy in elephant conservation and reduce conflict. The latest elephant estimation in the country was completed in 2017. The elephant population was estimated as 29,964 in 2017, as compared to the estimated range of 29,391-30,711 in 2012. For the conservation of elephants, 33 Elephant Reserves have been established across 14 elephant range States.

The management of wildlife including mitigation and management of human-elephant conflict (HEC) is primarily the responsibility of State Governments/UTs Administration. The State Forest Departments works with the local people to address the HEC issues through periodic awareness campaigns to sensitize guide and advise the general public on human-animal conflict including dissemination of information through various forms of media. Further, State Forest Departments engage with local communities to monitor the movement of elephants and to caution local people to avoid human-animal conflict, prevent damage or loss of human life, property and elephants. Further, the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 provides regulatory functions for dealing with human-wildlife situations.

Additionally, the Ministry has released Guidelines for Human-Elephant Conflict mitigation adopting a Harmonious Coexistence Approach (2023) to address human-elephant conflicts. Furthermore, the Field

Manual for Frontline Staff on Human-Elephant Conflict Management was also issued during the 16th Meeting of the Steering Committee on 29 April, 2022.

In addition to compensation schemes of the State Governments/UTs Administration, the Ministry also provides financial assistance to States/UTs under Centrally Sponsored Scheme, Project Tiger & Elephant, for ex-gratia relief, depending upon availability of funds.

This information was provided by UNION MINISTER OF STATE FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE, SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH, in a written reply to a question in Lok Sabha today.

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