



Parliamentary Forums

ESTABLISHMENT OF FORUMS

The first Parliamentary Forum on Water Conservation and Management was constituted in the year 2005.¹ Subsequently, seven more Parliamentary forums were constituted. At present, there are eight Parliamentary forums.²

1. Parliamentary Forum on Water Conservation and Management (2005)
2. Parliamentary Forum on Youth (2006)
3. Parliamentary Forum on Children (2006)
4. Parliamentary Forum on Population and Public Health (2006)
5. Parliamentary Forum on Global Warming and Climate Change (2008)
6. Parliamentary Forum on Disaster Management (2011)
7. Parliamentary Forum on Artisans and Crafts-people (2013)
8. Parliamentary Forum on Millennium Development Goals (2013)

OBJECTIVES OF THE FORUMS

The objectives behind the constitution of the Parliamentary forums are:

- (i) To provide a platform to the members to have interactions with the ministers concerned, experts and key officials from the nodal ministries with a view to have a focused and meaningful discussion on critical issues with a result-oriented approach for speeding up the implementation

process;

- (ii) To sensitise members about the key areas of concern and also about the ground level situation and equip them with the 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 the Departmentally-Related Standing Committees (DRSCs); and
- (iii) To prepare a data-base through collection of data on critical issues from ministries concerned, reliable NGOs, newspapers, United Nations, Internet, etc. and circulation thereof to the members so that they can meaningfully participate in the discussions of the forums and seek clarifications from experts or officials from the Ministry present in the meetings.

It has been mandated that the Parliamentary Fora will not interfere with or encroach upon the jurisdiction of the Departmentally-Related Standing Committees of the Ministry/Department concerned.

COMPOSITION OF THE FORUMS

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

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 the Lok Sabha and not more than 10 are from the Rajya Sabha.

Members (other than the President, Co-President and Vice-Presidents) of these forums are nominated by the Speaker/Chairman from amongst the leaders of various political parties/groups or their nominees, who have special knowledge/keen interest in the subject.³

The duration of the office of members of the forum is co-terminus with their membership in the respective Houses. A member may also resign from

the forum by writing to the Speaker/Chairman.

The President of the forum appoints a member-convener for each forum to conduct regular, approved programmes/meetings of the forum in consultation with the President. The meetings of the forums are held from time to time, as may be necessary, during Parliament sessions.

FUNCTIONS OF THE FORUMS

Parliamentary Forum on Water Conservation and Management

The functions of the forum are:

1. To identify problems relating to water and make suggestions/recommendations for consideration and appropriate action by Government/organisations concerned
2. To identify the ways of involving members of Parliament in conservation and augmentation of water resources in their respective states/constituencies
3. To organise seminars/workshops to create awareness for conservation and efficient management of water
4. To undertake such other related task as it may deem fit

Parliamentary Forum on Youth

The functions of this forum are:

1. To have focused deliberations on strategies to leverage human capital in the youth for accelerating development initiatives
2. To build greater awareness amongst public leaders and at the grass-roots level of the potential of youth for effecting socio-economic change
3. To interact on a regular basis with youth representatives and leaders, in order to better appreciate their hopes, aspirations, concerns and problems
4. To consider ways for improving Parliament's out-reach to different sections of youth, in order to reinforce their faith and commitment in democratic institutions and encourage their active participation therein
5. To hold consultations with experts, national and international

academicians and government agencies concerned on redesigning of public policy in the matter of youth empowerment.⁴

Parliamentary Forum on Children

The functions of the forum are:

1. To further enhance awareness and attention of Parliamentarians towards critical issues affecting children's well being so that they may provide due leadership to ensure their rightful place in the development process
2. To provide a platform to Parliamentarians to exchange ideas, views, experiences, expert practices in relation to children, in a structured manner, through workshops, seminars, orientation programmes, etc.
3. To provide Parliamentarians an interface with civil society for highlighting children's issues, including, *inter-alia*, the voluntary sector, media and corporate sector, and thereby to foster effective strategic partnerships in this regard
4. To enable Parliamentarians to interact, in an institutionalised manner with specialised UN agencies like the UNICEF and other comparable multilateral agencies on expert reports, studies, news and trend-analyses, etc., world-wide, which are germane to developments in the sector
5. To undertake any other tasks, projects, assignments, etc., as the Forum may deem fit.

Parliamentary Forum on Population and Public Health

The functions of the forum are:

1. To have focused deliberations on strategies relating to population stabilisation and matters connected therewith
2. To discuss and prepare strategies on issues concerning public health
3. To build greater awareness in all sections of the society, particularly at the grass-root level, regarding population control and public health
4. To hold comprehensive dialogue and discussion in the matter of population and public health with experts at the national and international levels and to have interactions with multilateral organisations like WHO, United Nations Population Fund, and academicians and government

agencies concerned.

Parliamentary Forum on Global Warming and Climate Change

The functions of the forum are:

1. To identify problems relating to global warming and climate change and make suggestions/recommendations for consideration and appropriate action by the government/organisations concerned to reduce the extent of global warming
2. To identify the ways of involving members of Parliament to interact with specialists of national and international bodies working on global warming and climate change with increased effort to develop new technologies to mitigate global warming
3. To organise seminars/workshops to create awareness about the causes and effects of global warming and climate change among the members of Parliament
4. To identify the ways of involving members of Parliament to spread awareness to prevent global warming and climate change
5. To undertake such other related task as it may deem fit

Parliamentary Forum on Disaster Management

The functions of the forum are:

1. To identify problems relating to Disaster Management and make suggestions / recommendations for consideration and appropriate action by the Government / Organizations concerned to reduce the effects of disasters.
2. To identify the ways of involving Members of Parliament to interact with specialists of National and International Bodies working on Disaster Management with increased effort to develop new technologies to mitigate the effect of disasters.
3. To organize seminars / workshops to create awareness about the causes and effects of disasters among the Members of Parliament.
4. To identify the ways of involving Members of Parliament to spread

- awareness about disaster management.
5. To undertake such other related task as it may deem fit.

Parliamentary Forum on Artisans and Craftspeople

The functions of the forum are:

1. To further enhance awareness and attention to Parliamentarians towards critical issues affecting artisans and craftspeople so as to preserve and promote traditional art and crafts through various mechanisms.
2. To provide a platform to Parliamentarians to exchange ideas, views, experiences, expertise and best practices in relation to artisans and craftspeople, in a structured manner, through Workshops, Seminars, Orientation Programmes, etc.
3. To provide Parliamentarians an interface with civil society for highlighting issues related to craftspeople and artisans, including *inter alia*, the Voluntary Sector, Media and Corporate Sector and thereby to foster effective strategic partnerships in this regard
4. To enable Parliamentarians to interact, in an institutionalized manner with representatives of various Union Ministries, Government Organizations like Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), Coir Board, The Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART) and other related Organizations/ Bodies.
5. To hold comprehensive dialogue and discussion on the matters relating to preservation of art and traditional craft and the promotion of artisans and craftspeople with experts/Organizations at the national and international levels.
6. To undertake any other Tasks, Projects, Assignments, etc. as the Forum may deem fit.

Parliamentary Forum on Millennium Development Goals

The functions of the forum are:

1. To review and enhance awareness and attention of Parliamentarians towards critical issues which have bearing on achievement of goals/targets set under Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

2. To provide a platform to Parliamentarians to exchange ideas, views, experiences, expertise and best practices in relation to implementation of Millennium Development Goals in a structured manner, through Workshops, Seminars, Orientation Programmes, etc.
3. To provide Parliamentarians an interface with civil society for highlighting issues related to Millennium Development Goals, viz. eradication of poverty; hunger; achievement of universal primary education; promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women; reduction of child mortality; improving maternal health; combating HIV/AIDS; Malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development.
4. To enable parliamentarians to interact, in an institutionalized manner with specialized UN Agencies and other comparable Multilateral Agencies, Expert Report, Studies, News and Trend-analyses, etc. regarding achievement of Millennium Development Goals.
5. To undertake any other Tasks, Projects, Assignments, etc. as the Forum may deem fit.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. On 12th May 2005, the then Speaker of Lok Sabha, Somnath Chatterjee informed the House of his decision to constitute a Parliamentary forum on water conservation and management so that the members of Parliament may discuss the critical issue of water in a structured manner and also to raise the issue more effectively on the floor of the House. Accordingly, the forum was constituted on 12th August, 2005.
2. The years mentioned in the brackets indicate the years of their establishment.
3. The Secretary-General of Lok Sabha is the Secretary to the forums.
4. The Speaker also constituted four sub-forums of the Parliamentary Forum on Youth, viz. (i) Sub-Forum on Sports and Youth Development (ii) Sub-Forum on Health (iii) Sub-Forum on Education (iv) Sub-Forum on Employment. Each Sub-Forum has its own convener.