

## **Press Release**

### **Meeting of Inter ministerial Central Team for assessment of drought with Hon'ble Chief Minister - 23.01.2017**

The Inter ministerial Central team for assessment of drought called on the Hon'ble Chief minister Thiru O. Panneerselvam today at Secretariat. The team was headed by Smt. Vasudha Mishra, Managing Director, National Co-operative Development Corporation, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister informed that he had written to the Hon'ble Prime Minister on 16.1.2017, enclosing a detailed Memorandum on the Drought situation in Tamil Nadu and also met the Prime Minister personally on 19.1.2017. He thanked the Hon'ble Prime Minister for having promptly deputed the Central Team to Tamil Nadu.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister pointed out that Tamil Nadu relies mainly on the North-East monsoon in the months of October to December for its rainfall. The State received only 168.3 mm of rainfall during the North-East monsoon as against the normal rainfall of 440.4 mm - a deficit of 62%. Earlier even in the South-West monsoon a deficit of 20% was recorded. All the 32 Districts have received deficit rainfall and the deficit ranges from 35% to 81%. The drought situation in Tamil Nadu has worsened by the non-release of Cauvery water by Karnataka in accordance with the Tribunal order.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister pointed out that a detailed assessment of the drought conditions was carried out based on the guidelines contained in the Manual for Drought Management, 2016. Out of 16,682 Revenue villages in the State, 13,305 villages have been identified as Drought affected. In 87% of the area, the extent of damage is estimated to be more than 50%. The drought is 'severe' in a large majority of villages. The situation is likely to worsen in the ensuing months. The State has been declared as drought affected on 10.1.2017.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister pointed out that the water storage position in all the reservoirs is at a critical level. In 15 major irrigation reservoirs in the State, the water available as on 31.12.2016 is only 13%. The combined storage in the 4 drinking water reservoirs of Chennai City is only 1.347 TMC feet as on 21.1.2017 as compared to 9.503 TMC feet in 2016. Funds are needed for providing relief to the farmers for crop damage, Drinking water supply and ensuring adequate fodder and water needs for live stock. Employment generation programmes have to be taken up. Water and feed have to be provided for wildlife.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister requested the team to tour the State extensively and see for themselves the severity of the situation and the extent of losses. The Hon'ble Chief Minister stated that the officers of the State Government have been directed to accompany the team and provide all necessary assistance. The Hon'ble Chief Minister that the team should also keep in view the fact that the State was badly affected by VARDHA cyclone in December, 2016.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister pointed out that the State Government has immediately taken up relief and rehabilitation measures, including provision of drinking water supply at a cost of Rs.510 crore and the funds in the State Disaster Response Fund have been exhausted. Relief assistance for crop damages has been provided. Rs.78 crore has been provided for fodder, Rs.25 crore for water conservation works and Rs.3400 crore for employment generation in rural areas. Crop loans have been rescheduled and land revenue has been waived.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister requested liberal assistance from the Central Government to tackle the situation and requested the team to complete their in depth assessment and submit their report to the Ministry of Agriculture at the earliest.

The team leader Smt. Vasudha Mishra said that the team empathised with the farmers and people of Tamil Nadu in the time of severe drought caused by the unprecedented deficit of Rainfall during the North East and South West monsoons. She assured that the central team would extensively tour the state and submit their assessment report at the earliest. She commended the efforts of the State Government in taking up immediate relief and rehabilitation measures to mitigate the distress caused by the drought. The Central Team split into four groups and left for the Districts. The Central Team will visit all parts of the State and return to Chennai on 25.1.2017.

The meeting was attended by the Hon'ble Minister for Public Works, Highways and Minor Ports, Thiru. Edappadi K Palaniswami, Hon'ble Minister for Electricity, Prohibition and Excise, Thiru. P Thangamani, Hon'ble Minister for Municipal Administration, Rural Development and Special Programme implementation Thiru S.P. Velumani, Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture, Thiru R. Duraikannu and Hon'ble Minister for Revenue Thiru. R.B. Udhaya Kumar.

The Central team consists of team leader Smt. Vasudha Mishra, Managing Director, National Cooperative Development Corporation and Members Shri. Deena Nath, Consultant, Finance Commission Division, Dr. Ganesh Ram, Research Officer, Agriculture, Shri. Santosh, Assistant Adviser, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Shri. S. B. Tiwari, Under Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, Shri.

Sumeet Kumar, Deputy Director, Ministry of Power, Shri. R. Azhagesan, Director, Ministry of Water Resources, Shri. Ratna Prasad, Dept of Food & Public Distribution, Dr. Paul Pandian, Fisheries Development Commissioner and Shri Vijay Rajmohan, CSS Director, Department of Agriculture.

From the State Government, Chief Secretary to Government Tmt. Girija Vaidyanathan, Adviser to Government Tmt. Sheela Balakrishnan, Addl. Chief Secretary to Government, Finance Department Thiru. K. Shanmugam, Addl. Chief Secretary to Government, Highways and Minor Ports Department, Dr. Rajeev Ranjan, Principal Secretary to Government, MA & WS Department, K. Phanindra Reddy, Principal Secretary to Government, RD&PR Department Thiru. Hans Raj Verma, Agriculture Production Commissioner and Secretary to Government, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Dairying and fisheries department, Thiru. Gagandeep Singh Bedi, Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Dr. Chandra Mohan B and Principal Secretary / Commissioner of Revenue Administration Dr. K. Satyagopal attended the meeting.

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