

III

Agricultural Inputs

Irrigation and Water Resources

8.24 The Ultimate Irrigation Potential (UIP) for the country has been reassessed as 139.89 million hectares. The Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) was launched by the Central Government in 1996-97 in order to harness UIP through early completion of irrigation projects. Under this programme, the Centre provides additional central assistance by way of loans to the States for early completion of selected large irrigation and multi-purposes projects. Rs 5,878 crore have been released under AIBP as Central Loan Assistance (CLA) to the States during the financial years 1996-97 to 2000-01. In addition, CLA of Rs 983 crore have been released till the end of November, 2001.

8.25 By 1999-2000, the country's created irrigation potential is estimated to have gone up to about 94.7 million hectares, which is about 68 per cent of UIP. This comprises of 35.3 million hectares (37 per cent) through major and medium projects and 59.4 million hectares (63 per cent) through minor irrigation schemes. It is anticipated that the cumulative total of created irrigation potential by using all types of sources would go up to almost 100 million hectares by the end of the Ninth Plan (1997-2002).

8.26 Despite significant progress in the creation of irrigation potential, under-utilisation continues to persist. The Command Area Development Programme (CADP), in operation since 1974-75, particularly aims at bridging the gap between potential created and its utilisation. The programme also includes measures to

promote better water management practices, installation of sprinkler & drip irrigation and farmers' participation in irrigation water management. During 2000-01, Rs 144.96 crore was released to States as Central Assistance under the programme.

8.27 The average annual surface water flow available in the country is around 1,869 Billion Cubic Metre (BCM). However, because of the topographical, hydrological and other constraints, only about 690 BCM of the available surface water can be utilised, in addition to the annual replenishable ground water resources of 432 BCM. Thus, the total utilisable water in the country is assessed as 1,122 BCM. The average annual per capita water availability is estimated to be about 1,829 cubic meters (cu.m) in 2001 at the national level. The per capita availability is likely to decline to about 1,342 cu.m by 2025 AD owing to the increase in population. At present, irrigation constitutes about 84 per cent of the water used. With the increase in demand of water for other uses, the share of water used for irrigation is likely to go down to about 73 per cent by 2025.

8.28 Considering the number of challenges that have emerged in the development and management of water resources since the adoption of National Water Policy in 1987, so that no water goes waste and the water resources can be cleaned up, the existing National Water Policy needed to be reviewed and updated. The draft updated National Water Policy has been finalised by the Working Group of the National Water Resources Council (NWRC) and the same is to be considered by NWRC for its adoption.