

### **Environmental issues**

7.50 Polluting industries, including thermal power plants, have been a significant source of air and water pollution. Monitoring of designated cities/towns for air pollution revealed that while the levels of sulphur dioxide were within the standard limits, those of oxides of nitrogen exceeded the limits in many cities, with high levels of suspended particle matter (SPM) being the more prevalent form of air pollution in almost all the metro-cities. Similarly, recent assessment of water quality of aquatic resources reveal that while organic pollution continued to be the predominant pollutant, there is a gradual improvement in this indicator of water quality over time. Flyash, phospho-gypsum and iron & steel slags comprise the main forms of solid wastes generated in India.

7.51 The challenge of sustainable development requires integration of the quest for economic development with environmental concerns. Traditional energy- and resource-intensive and waste-generating models of industrialization not only impose a heavy cost on society in terms of pollution and deteriorating quality of life, but also is unsustainable in the medium to long run, particularly with exhaustible natural resources.

7.52 Government has put in place necessary legislative and regulatory measures, both preventive and promotive, for protection, conservation and development of the environment, an effective implementation of which is expected to harmonize the demands of development and environment. Major thrust areas, ongoing and proposed, for abatement of pollution are summarized in Box 7.4.

#### **Box 7.4 : Initiatives to control environmental pollution**

- Existing policy initiatives to improve environment like the National Conservation Strategy and Policy Statement for Environment & Development, 1992, Policy Statement for Abatement of Pollution, 1992 and National Forest Policy, 1988;
- Stipulation of ambient and industry specific emission and effluent standards;
- Setting up of clean technology mechanisms in polluting industries;
- Setting up of Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs) in industrial estates;
- Establishing waste minimisation circles (WMC) in clusters of small scale industries;
- Implementing recommendations of Charter of Corporate Responsibility for Environmental Protection (CREP) in 17 categories of highly polluting industries;
- Prior environmental clearance of development projects based on impact assessment;
- Implementation of an Eco-mark scheme to encourage production/consumption of environment - friendly products;
- For controlling vehicular pollution, progressive emission norms at the manufacturing stage have been notified, cleaner fuels like unleaded petrol, low sulphur diesel and compressed natural gas (CNG) introduced;
- Promotion of economic instruments to internalize the costs of pollution and fiscal incentives for pollution control equipment; and
- Monitoring of ambient air and water quality, bio-monitoring of rivers/lakes and identification of hazardous wastes streams in various sectors/processes.

#### **New Policy Initiatives:**

- Formulation of a National Environment Policy;
- Setting up of National Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) Authority as per Kyoto Protocol;
- Reengineering of environmental clearance process with a view to bringing greater transparency and efficiency in the clearance process;
- Revisiting the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification to enable environmentally sustainable use of coastal resources; and
- Developing a National Chemical Management profile for the country.