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Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs
Government of India

94, Parliament House,
New Delhi-110001.

August 13, 2009

To

The Chief Secretaries of all states and
Union Territories.

The Hon'ble Minister for Parliamentary Affairs is convening a Conference of State Ministers in charge of Parliamentary Affairs in Parliament house at 10.00 AM on 31.08.2009. The venue will be Room No. 74 G, Parliament House Library, New Delhi. The agenda of the conference will be sent through the Resident Commissioners. The agenda is been also available on the web-site of the Ministry i.e. www.mpa.nic.in.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,



(P.J. Thomas)
Secretary

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A G E N D A

1 Review of implementations of the Recommendations of the 14th All India Whips' Conference (AIWC)

1.1 Sittings of Parliament and State Legislatures

1.1.1 Duration and Sittings of the Parliament and State Legislatures

The 13th AIWC recommended that Article 85 and 174 of the Constitution may be suitably amended so as to provide a minimum number of sittings of Houses of Parliament and State Legislatures, keeping in view the size of the State. The 14th AIWC reiterated the need for implementing this recommendation expeditiously.

1.1.2 Maintenance of Decorum in the House and Management of Business in Parliament/Legislature – Frequent disruptions in both Houses of Parliament and State Assemblies

The 13th AIWC recommends that concerted efforts should be made by all the Parties, to ensure that the proceedings are conducted in the House in a dignified manner. It is recognized that while the Government enjoying majority in the House has its way, the Opposition must have its say. Without compromising with the right to an effective and a forceful say, all the Parties must adopt a Code of Conduct as recommended by the Ethics Committee of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and some Legislative Assemblies. The 13th AIWC felt that notwithstanding any difference amongst the various political parties on an issue, it was in the interest of all that the Legislative and other Business in the House is transacted smoothly. Similarly, the 14th AIWC resolved that concerted efforts should be made by all concerned that there is no disruption in the proceedings of the House in both at the Central Legislature and State Legislatures and the sanctity of the Question Hour should be maintained under all circumstances.

1.2 Use of Technology

The 13th AIWC recommended that steps might be taken for regular and direct telecast of the proceedings of the State/UT Legislatures too, wherever it has not been done already. For this purpose necessary guidance and help of the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, if required, may also be sought and obtained.

The 14th AIWC recommended that progressive use of internet and computer technology be encouraged both at the State Legislatures and Parliament for movement towards internet savvy and environment friendly practices.

1.3 Training, Study Tours and Research Assistance for Members of Parliament/State Legislatures

The 13th AIWC recommended that respective Governments arrange seminars and workshops for the benefit of the members so that they have first-hand knowledge of the working of institutions and projects of importance and to inter-act with experts on different technical matters. Provision for such study tours and seminars may be made in the Budgets of the respective Governments. In all such cases, Reports of the activity undertaken must be prepared and presented to the House/Government. Besides, Orientation programmes should be organized for new Members.

The 14th AIWC recommended that all Members should be provided broadband internet facilities and also research support to the extent feasible.

1.4 Functions, Responsibility, Accountability, Status and Facilities of Chief Whips

Functions, Responsibility and Accountability: The 13th AIWC felt that to strengthen our democracy and democratic values, all concerned should take active steps to promote greater interaction between the Government and Chief Whips of all parties. Greater understanding could develop if meetings between the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs/Government Chief Whips and Chief Whips of different parties

were held at least on alternative days during the session and at least once during every inter-session period. An occasional informal meeting with the Prime Minister/Chief Minister would also be immensely beneficial to foster greater mutual understanding. The Conference resolved that attendance in the House to maintain the prescribed quorum must be accorded top most priority and Chief Whips/Whips of all parties should make special efforts to ensure good attendance in the House at all times. A roster system could be worked out by all the Parties for their Members. The 14th AIWC recommended that a model role and responsibilities of the Whips should be evolved for the guidance of the Whips.

Status: The 13th AIWC recommended that the Chief Whips of the ruling party and the main opposition party should be given the rank at least of Minister of State. The 14th AIWC recommended that the status of the Chief Whips of the Opposition should be same as the status of the Chief Whips of the ruling party.

Facilities: The 13th AIWC felt that it was essential that to enable them to function efficiently and effectively, as a part of the Legislature itself, Chief Whips be provided necessary secretarial assistance in the form of Steno, telephone in the office and at residence, a computer and a fax. The Conference also felt that there was also need to provide some travel and transport facility to the Chief Whips of recognized Parties i.e. parties with a strength of more than 1/10th of the total membership. The 14th AIWC recommended that Chief Whip of any party according to the strength recognized by the respective Centre and State Legislatures, should be given assistance from the respective State or Central Legislature to the extent possible.

1.5 Setting up of Committees and their membership

The 13th AIWC recommended that Consultative Committees should be set up in all the States/Union Territories. The 14th AIWC recommended that Rules should be amended in the State and Central Legislatures pertaining to the involvement of members in important Committees where the conflict of interest, both real and perceived, would vitiate the transparency and objectivity of legislative arrangement or other activities both in the Legislative and Parliamentary Committee.

1.6 Setting aside one full day in a week exclusively for general discussion on issues raised by Members

The 14th AIWC recommended that in a week, more time should be allotted to raise issues which concern the Members most.

1.7 Youth Parliament Scheme

The 13th AIWC desired that the Union Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs should extend technical and financial assistance to the States/Union Territories for the purpose. It also made the following recommendations:

- (i) A separate directorate of Youth Parliament be set up under aegis of the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.
- (ii) The quantum of assistance provided by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs to the States/Union territories for organizing the Competition should be increased from the present level of rupees one lakh to three lakhs.
- (iii) A plan scheme may be drawn up by the Ministry of Human Resource Development to impart training and provide experience to University students in legislative procedures, and drafting, and to undertake research.

The 14th AIWC made the following observations:

The increase in the financial assistance to States for conducting Youth Parliament should be in the following order:

- | | |
|--|------------|
| (a) Legislatures having members upto 100 | Rs. 3 lacs |
| (b) Legislatures having members between
100 - 200 | Rs. 4 lacs |

(c) Legislatures having members above 200 Rs. 5 lacs

Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs has already implemented the scheme of financial assistance as recommended by the 13th and 14th AIWC.

A post of Director has been created in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs to deal with the Youth Parliament Scheme. Further a new scheme to target rural youth in the States in the age group of 14 – 25 years is being drawn up by Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs. These are steps initiated by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs in implementing the recommendations of the 13th AIWC under the Youth Parliament Scheme.

2 Youth Parliament Scheme

2.1 The idea of organizing Youth Parliament was first mooted in the All India Whips' Conference held in Mumbai in 1962 which made the following recommendation:

“This Committee recommends that Government should encourage holding of Mock Parliament in educational institutions and through Panchayats in rural areas.”

2.2 In accordance with the recommendation, the Ministry commenced implementing the scheme in 1966 and started the same in the Delhi Schools. The move was widely appreciated and the All India Whips' Conference at Shimla in 1967 and Madras in 1969 further emphasized the need for continuing the scheme. The 14th All India Whips' Conference in February 2008 also reiterated the recommendation. The Ministry continued implementing the scheme based on these recommendations.

2.3 Later the programme was extended to Kendriya Vidyalayas, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas and the schools under the State Governments. Assistance is also being released to the States for the Youth Parliament based on the number of seats in the Assembly. The amount allotted to each state is as follows:-

(i) Legislatures having members upto 100	Rs.3 lacs
(ii) Legislatures having members between 100-200	Rs.4 lacs
(iii) Legislatures having members above 200	Rs.5 lacs

The expenditure on the scheme is initially incurred by the State Governments and later reimbursed by the Government of India. A copy of the scheme is attached as Annexure to this agenda.

2.4 The Ministry now envisages expansion of the scheme in the States with increased financial assistance. The Conference will discuss the *modus operandi* of bringing maximum educational institutions located in the States within the Scheme with the active participation of the State Governments.

3. New initiative in Youth Parliament Scheme – expansion in the rural areas

3.1 The Ministry proposes to extend the Scheme to cover the youth population, especially in the rural areas, including those who are deprived of formal education. This has not been attempted so far even though recommended by successive All India Whips Conference. The meeting may discuss ways and means to reach the Scheme to all youth population through Panchayats and other local bodies. The broad outline for this flagship initiative would be as under:

- (i) The existing Field Agencies of the State Government and NGOs wherever feasible may identify the participants at the Panchayat Level.
- (ii) The target youth is to be in the age group of 14-25 years. A mixture of Youth who are undergoing formal education and also those who are outside the ambit of formal education are to be selected.
- (iii) *In order to familiarise the stake holders with the scheme and to make it popular among the target group, there is a need for preparation of a table Calendar or like material having a write up in Hindi/regional language giving details of the parliamentary and the constitutional remedies available to redress the grievances of the problems of rural areas. This would form the material based on which the Youth Parliament is organised.*
- (iv) Assigning this body of Youth Parliament in rural areas a *fixed tenure* to sustain the interest of rural youth, regular meetings/sessions of such Youth Parliament is to be held at least *once in every month*. To begin with, the tenure may be for a period of one year. Fresh body of office bearers are

to be elected every quarter. The initial constitution of the Panchayat Level Youth Parliament would be through a democratic process of election from among themselves.

- (v) For effective implementation of the scheme, the District Administration/Panchayat would constitute an executive body having a representation from three or four local agencies like (list indicative not exhaustive) :

- A) Local School Teacher
- B) Member of Sakshar Mahila Samiti
- C) Gram Sewak/Panchayat Secretary
- D) Village Level Education Committee(VLEC)Youth Club(NEHRU YUVA KENDRA)

A Nodal Officer appointed by District Administration would act as a Coordinating Authority between Central Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and the agencies involved at panchayat level in implementing the scheme. The above body would be trained by the Officials of this Ministry and would be provided with the materials/literature prepared by core-group constituted by Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs. The executive body would implement the scheme in coordination with District Administration and Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.