

Statement of the Chairman at the conclusion of the 218th Session

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon'ble Members, the Two Hundred and Eighteenth Session of Rajya Sabha comes to a close today. It commenced on 19th November, 2009. A fair amount of legislative business was transacted and useful discussions were held on questions of public concern.

Some of the matters discussed at great length in the course of Calling Attention notices as well as Short Duration Discussions related to internal security, rise in prices of essential commodities, Report of Liberhan Commission, climate change, disinvestment, WTO negotiations etc. On the other hand, 17 Government Bills were also passed during the period. Members were also provided regular opportunity to raise matters with permission, and to make Special Mentions on matters of public importance.

Despite the above, the Question Hour was lost on five days due to disruptions. Hon'ble Members do need to think about this because Questions in the House are an important instrumentality through which information is elicited and Government's accountability ensured.

A significant achievement of this Session was the decision of the Rules Committee to streamline the Question Hour procedure in order to ensure a greater coverage of the Questions with wider opportunities to Members to raise Supplementaries.

I have directed the Secretary-General to make available statistical information regarding the Session.

Three new Members joined the House during the Session. I am sure, they would make rich and valuable contributions to the House in the days to come.

I thank the Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition, the leaders of various parties and groups and the Hon'ble Members for the cooperation extended by them to facilitate smooth functioning of the House.

I also thank the Deputy Chairman, the Members on the Panel of Vice-Chairmen and the officers and staff of the Secretariat for their help and cooperation.