

Minutes of the 5th Meeting of the Committee of Environmentalists, Social Scientists and other Experts on Interlinking of Rivers held on 24.07.2008 at New Delhi.

The 5th Meeting of the Committee of Environmentalists, Social Scientists and other Experts on Interlinking of Rivers was held on 24.07.08 at New Delhi. The meeting was initially chaired by Chairman, Central Water Commission as Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources was held up in another urgent meeting. Subsequently, it was chaired by Secretary, Water Resources who joined the meeting later.

The list of participants is at Annexure-I.

Chairman CWC welcomed all the members of the Committee, Special Invitees and other participants. Then, he requested Director General, NWDA and member Secretary of the Committee to take up the agenda Items for discussion.

Item 5.1 : Confirmation of the Minutes of the 4th meeting of the committee held on 8.1.2008 at New Delhi.

The Director General, NWDA mentioned that the minutes of the 4th meeting of the committee held on 8.1.2008 were circulated vide letter No. NWDA(SCILR)/Tech-I/200/3/2005/Vol.IV/30-51 dated 6.2.2008. Director General, NWDA also informed that Shri Himanshu Thakkar had sent a note through email on 25.1.2008 on the various issues raised by him during the meeting including comments/suggestions on the TOR of Ken-Betwa Environmental Impact Assessment Studies. By the time this note was received, the minutes were already finalised. However, views expressed in this note are similar to what he stated in the last meeting and had been duly incorporated in the minutes of the meeting issued. The note is also enclosed with the Agenda of this meeting as Annexure-I.

Director General, NWDA also informed the members about the communication received from Shri Ranjit Kumar, Learned Amicus Curiae suggesting slight mistake in the Minutes and corrigendum issued by NWDA on 28.2.08 (Annexure-II).

Shri Himanshu Thakkar mentioned that the NWDA did not respond to the issues raised by him. Director General, NWDA clarified that the issues raised/suggestions made by the members are welcome and duly incorporated in the NWDA studies. There are certain issues which are beyond the scope of work of NWDA. However, NWDA will respond to the issues raised by him related to NWDA work in due course of time.

Shri A.C. Kamaraj pointed out that in the minutes it was recorded that the Chairperson had requested him to make available copies of his proposal to the members of the Committee. In fact, neither he was requested by the Chairperson to make available the copies of his proposal to the members nor he did so.

The Chairman agreed to put his views on record.

The Minutes were confirmed by the Committee.

Item No. 5.2 : Follow up actions on the decisions taken during the previous meeting of the committee.

Item No. 4.2.1 : Visit of members to the Ken-Betwa link area.

As per decision of previous meeting, the members were requested to give the convenient date for visit to Ken-Betwa link area. Some members had already visited the Ken-Betwa project area and therefore didn't feel necessary to visit the area again. Shri A.C. Kamaraj, Shri Himanshu Thakkar and Prof. Vijay Paranjpye visited the area during 17th – 19th March, 2008. Shri Himanshu Thakkar has submitted his tour note on 22.7.2008 by email and desired that it may be circulated among the members. The same was distributed among the committee members.

Shri Rajendra Singh mentioned that he had earlier visited the area alongwith five experts and sent report of expert committee to NWDA & MOWR. The report was not circulated among the committee members and he has also not received any response from NWDA. Director General, NWDA informed that NWDA has not received the report and requested Shri Rajendra Singh to make available another copy of the report to NWDA for necessary action. Shri Z. Hasan requested Shri Rajendra Singh to circulate the report among the members through email.

Item No. 4.3 (a) : Circulation of letter of MoE&F dated 10.4.2007.

During the last meeting, the members desired that letter of MoE&F conveying the approval of ToR for EIA studies of Ken-Betwa link may be circulated among the members. Director General, NWDA informed the members that as a follow up action of the decision, the letter of MoE&F has been circulated among the members on 4.3.2008.

Item No. 4.3 (b) : Clearance from Supreme Court in respect of Panna Tiger Reserve coming under submergence of Daudhan dam.

During the last meeting, member from MoE&F mentioned that the submergence of Daudhan dam is in Panna Tiger Reserve and therefore, the clearance from Supreme Court/National Board for Wildlife is required. Director General, NWDA clarified that MoE&F has already given clearance for survey & investigation work. Now, the clearance from Supreme Court will be required for pre-construction/construction activity. After DPR is completed and specific MoUs/agreements are signed by the concerned State Govts., an appropriate institutional mechanism would approach the MoE&F for obtaining the clearance from Supreme Court.

Item No. 4.3 (c) : Organisation of seminar to consider the views of various NGOs/institutions/individuals on ILR.

Director General, NWDA mentioned that NWDA would organize a seminar at appropriate time. Shri Z. Hasan suggested to prepare a list of the seminars held on ILR during the last 5 years alongwith the details of participants in these seminars. Shri M.N. Madhyastha stressed the need to organise a seminar in the Ken-Betwa link area in which all the stakeholders are invited. Chief Engineer (N), NWDA informed the members that recently NWDA organized a meet of Gram Pradhans/Sarpanchs, Block Pramukhs and representatives of local self Govt. to create mass awareness about the project in Jhansi district. Shri Rajendra Singh wanted that a favourable opinion for implementation of projects may be built in advance so that project execution is not held up. This will also avoid the future conflict and wastage of money in cost over run and delays caused due to public agitations. Huge money is blocked in these projects, so we should first explain the project from Panchayat level to have acceptance.

Director General, NWDA clarified that sincere efforts are being made to disseminate the information related to the ILR project including putting most of the materials on the website. The DPR of Ken-Betwa link will be circulated to concerned States and nothing is being kept secret. Sh. Himanshu Thakkar was of the view that executive summary of Ken-Betwa link may be translated in Hindi and sent to Panchayats for comments. Chief Engineer (HQ), NWDA mentioned that Hindi version of FR of Ken-Betwa link including Executive Summary is available on the website of NWDA and comments of Panchayats on this project will have to be obtained by the concerned State Govts.

Shri Rajendra Singh mentioned that the people who use the river, understand it better than the Govt. officials. He was of the opinion that project should also be viewed from the public perception point of view. He desired to initiate the debate about the existence of rivers and benefits being drawn from the rivers like irrigation & power generation. He stated that no study has been done on ecological aspect of the rivers in the country. Chairman, CWC clarified that all aspects including Environmental Impact Assessment are being considered while planning & implementing the water resources projects.

Shri Himanshu Thakkar mentioned that Govt. should take a view on ecological requirement of rivers for sustainable development. As per his knowledge Govt. has still not decided/fixed norms for requirement of downstream flow for ecological releases so Govt. is not serious about rivers' sustainable development.

Shri P. Sen mentioned that the Ken-Betwa link project is situated in drought prone area. Therefore, it is important not to disturb the existing water availability in the downstream area especially during lean season. A study needs to be done to meet the downstream requirement in a low rainfall year and protection from floods during a high rainfall year. He requested that this aspect may be covered in EIA study of Ken-Betwa link. Regarding his suggestion of setting a time frame of implementation of ILR, he clarified that the suggestion was for time frame for completion of DPR.

Item No. 4.3 (d) : First Interim Report on EIA studies of Ken-Betwa link.

Director General, NWDA informed that as desired by members during the last meeting, a copy of the Interim Report on EIA study of Ken-Betwa link is enclosed with the Agenda for discussion by the members.

The proposal of Sh. Kamaraj has been received in NWDA and the same was examined by the Independent Group of Experts constituted by Task Force on ILR. It was observed that proposal is similar to Captain Dastur proposal of Garland canal and technically unsound and incomplete and conceptual only, hence cannot be pursued in its present form. NWDA had also organized a technical workshop at Madurai entitled "To identify and discuss different alternatives in Peninsular India under ILR programme including proposal given by NAWAD Council" (of Sh. Kamaraj) on 11.2.2005.

He wanted to know the basis of working out the storage capacity of proposed Daudhan Dam as 2775 Mm³. He also observed that the storage capacity of the dam appears to be on the higher side for the quantity of water realized at the proposed dam site and this needs to be checked and redesigned if necessary. Based on the realization at the proposed dam site, the capacity of the dam can be reduced to say at least to 1650 Mm³.

He also mentioned that acquiring of 6400 ha forest area coming under submergence is not easy. The MoU signed for Ken-Betwa link is only a broad acceptance for taking up DPR work. There is no clear cut understanding on the quantity of water to be transferred. If the MoU is revised at later stage, the whole exercise of preparing the DPR will undergo revision. He further stated that the ILR in its present form is not acceptable to the States. The States of Orissa, Andhra Pradesh & Kerala are not accepting the NWDA proposals. The issue related to requirement of power and its recurring cost needs to be studied in depth. Moreover, the problem of sharing water among the States is another area to be considered with due care. Keeping these aspects in view, the ILR proposal of NWDA should be reviewed by an

Independent Group of Experts. Regarding his NWP proposal, he stressed that the proposal is very much different from that of Capt. Dastur. He then elaborated various aspects of NWP proposal which were different from Capt. Dastur's proposal.

Sh. Hasan was of the view that Shri A.C. Kamaraj has brought out an important point about the disagreement of States on ILR. He was of the view that the proposal of Shri Kamaraj is not the same as that of Capt. Dastur and needs detailed examination by the experts. He was of the view that proposal of Sh. Kamaraj has some merits. The canals in the proposal of Shri Kamaraj may be used as storage. He suggested that the ILR proposal to be divided in two parts:

First, the projects for which DPR has already been prepared long ago and the projects stand on their merit, should be first considered for creation of storages on priority. These projects like Inchampalli, Pulichintala, Manibhadra, Polavaram etc. may be considered for interlinking of rivers by providing some additional storage.

Second, the Interlinking of Rivers with various options may be considered by the experts. The proposal of Sh. Kamaraj could be examined by experts or apex organization like CWC.

Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources mentioned that it is not true that agreements are not coming forth. An agreement for preparation of DPR of Ken-Betwa link has already been signed. Similar agreements are likely to come soon in respect of Par-Tapi-Narmada, Damanganga-Pinjal and Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal links. Detailed Project Report of links are being prepared to see the viability of the projects. He also desired that the proposal of Shri Kamaraj may be examined by CWC. Chairman, CWC

requested Shri Kamaraj to make available his updated proposal with more technical details for examination by CWC.

Sh. Thakkar informed that he will make his presentation on Ken-Betwa link in the next meeting of the Committee. He suggested a number of issues to be covered in EIA Study.

Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources desired that he could forward his suggestions in writing.

Prof. Vijay Paranjpye mentioned that the total utilization from Daudhan project is 3254 Mm³ while live storage capacity is only 2775 Mm³. He also mentioned that water balance study is required to be done in a comprehensive manner as there are certain discrepancies noticed in the salient features of the project in the EIA report as compared to the feasibility report of the Ken-Betwa link. He also pointed out that the area to be brought under irrigation is on higher side considering the delta and availability of water. Prof. Paranjpye also requested for a copy of water balance study of Ken-Betwa as it will help them to convince the people about the benefits of the projects.

Director General, NWDA clarified that NWDA has carried out the water balance study of basins/sub-basins/at diversion point before formulating the project. He also mentioned that the utilization figures are bound to be more than the live storage as the water is kept on releasing as the flows are received. Also, all the parameters are being studied in detail while preparing the DPR of Ken-Betwa link.

Sh. Z.Hasan explained that NWDA has prepared water balance studies of almost all major basins/sub basins of Peninsular Components and also at diversion

points. These studies were carried out as per guidelines approved by TAC. The input of these studies are taken from various State Govts. and Central Govt. agencies/departments. These reports are also prepared for Himalayan Component.

Chairman desired the discrepancies, if any, in the report must be rectified. He appreciated the efforts of Prof. Paranjpye to go through the report and to make suggestions for improvement. He desired that Prof. Paranjpye could forward his suggestions in writing.

Item No. 4.3 (e) : Holding the meetings of the Committee on quarterly basis.

Director General, NWDA informed the members that as decided in the 4th meeting of the Committee, the meetings will be organized on quarterly basis.

Item No. 4.3 (f) : Uploading the NCAER report on the website .

Director General, NWDA informed that NCAER report has been received. It is under finalization in MOWR. The Secretary (WR), desired that it should be uploaded on the website of NWDA at the earliest.

Item No 4.4 : Suggestions of Shri P. Sen.

Director General, NWDA informed the members that the work of preparation of maps of drought prone area vis-à-vis link command for superimposition is under progress. It is a lengthy work and will take some time for completion.

Item No. 4.6 : Provision of online discussion forum in the website of NWDA.

Director General, NWDA informed the members that the work of redesign of the website of NWDA for providing online discussion forum is entrusted to NIC and they are expected to send ToR/estimate to NWDA shortly. The Secretary (WR) desired that online discussion forum may be made functional by October, 2008.

Item No. 5.3 : Suggestions made by the members during the previous meeting/vide subsequent communication and status of the same.

Shri A.C. Kamaraj thanked for arrangements made by NWDA officers during the field visit of Ken-Betwa link area. He mentioned that Daudhan dam site is an ideal site.

Director General, NWDA thanked Shri Thakkar for his extensive remarks during field visit and the interim report. He assured that the suggestions will be sent to the committee constituted for evaluation, award & monitoring of EIA studies of Ken-Betwa link. Chief Engineer (N), NWDA informed that suggestions have been made by NWDA for incorporation in the Second Interim Report. Prof. Vijay Paranjpye mentioned that he will send a detailed note on examination of interim report and requested to make available copy of second interim report to the members of the committee. For detailed studies and economic analysis, the data of water availability and command area are must. All options for increasing the irrigation including ILR are to be examined. Increase in irrigation area on one side and losses on O & M, siltation etc. on the other side have not proved productive and fruitful. He also requested for a copy of a good water balance study of any basin carried out by any organization under MOWR. Chief Engineer (BP&MO), CWC clarified that water balance studies are carried out projectwise. Only NWDA has carried out water balance study basinwise. Chairman, CWC mentioned that Govt. of Madhya Pradesh has carried out a water balance study of Narmada and other for Mahanadi basin.

Prof. M.N. Madhyastha mentioned that flow data has not been properly presented in the First Interim Report. He also desired to send a detailed note. He also informed that Govt. of Karnataka has provided Rs.50 crore for ILR. Compensation for

water to donor State may lead to consensus for ILR. Shri Z. Hasan mentioned that under air pollution studies given in EIA report no mention has been made about the impact during construction stage of huge reservoir. Also its impact on ground water should be covered. The report should also include the benefits of potable water and increase in vegetation.

Shri Himanshu Thakkar mentioned that the Second Interim Report has been received. The same should have also been circulated. He also wanted to know the status of intra-state links being studied by NWDA.

Secretary (WR) mentioned that it should have a win-win situation for donor and donee States. The committee responsible to examine the EIA report of Ken-Betwa link has given suggestions to improve the report, so it will be better to supply a copy of modified EIA report after receipt from the consultant. He agreed to the suggestion of Shri Thakkar for providing the status of intra-state links being studied by NWDA in next meeting. Secretary, Water Resources also requested the members to send their views in writing. He also informed Prof. Paranjpye that a water balance study report prepared by NWDA will be made available to him.

The meeting ended with a Vote of thanks to the Chair.

Annexure-I

List of Participants of the 5th Meeting of the Committee of Environmentalists, Social Scientists and other Experts on Interlinking of Rivers held on 24.07.2008 at New Delhi.

Shri U.N.Panjiar, Secretary (WR)

In Chair

Members of the Committee:

- | | | |
|----|--|------------------|
| 1. | Sh. A.K.Bajaj, Chairman, CWC | Member |
| 2. | Sh. Z. Hasan | Member |
| 3. | Sh. P.Sen | Member |
| 4. | Prof. M.N. Madhyastha | Member |
| 5. | Sh. Rajendra Singh | Member |
| 6. | Prof. Vijay Paranjpye | Member |
| 7. | Sh. Himanshu Thakkar | Member |
| 8. | Sh. A.C.Kamaraj | Member |
| 9. | Sh. A.D.Bhardwaj, Director General, NWDA | Member-Secretary |

Apology:

1. Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.
2. Secretary, Ministry of Environmental & Forests.
3. Dr.(Mrs.) Mala Kapur Shankardass

Special Invitees:

1. Shri Indra Raj, Commissioner (PR), Ministry of Water Resources.

Apology:

1. Additional Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources.
2. Sh. Ranjit Kumar, Learned Amicus Curiae.

Other participants:

1. Air Vice Marshal S. Sahni (From the o/o. Dr. Ashok Khosla, Member of the Committee)
2. Sh. A.K.Ganju, Member (WP&P), CWC.
3. Sh. S.K.Sinha, Chief Engineer, (BP&MO), CWC.
4. Sh. M.K.Sinha, Chief Engineer (N), NWDA, Lucknow.
5. Sh. P.R.Rao, Chief Engineer (S), NWDA, Hyderabad.
6. Sh. N.K. Bhandari, Chief Engineer (HQ), New Delhi.
7. Sh. Muzaffar Ahmad, Superintending Engineer-I, NWDA, New Delhi.
8. Sh. S.C.Awasthi, Dy.Director, NWDA, New Delhi.
9. Sh. Jabbar Ali, Dy. Director, NWDA, New Delhi.

Annexure-II

No. NWDA(SCILR)/Tech-1/200/3/05 (Vol-IV)

Dated: 28.2.2008

To

As per list enclosed.

**Sub: Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the Committee of Environmentalists,
Social Scientists and other Experts on Interlinking of Rivers.**

Ref: No. NWDA(SCILR)/Tech-1/200/3/05 (Vol-IV)/30-51 dated 6/2/08

Sir/Madam,

Kindly refer to the letter No. NWDA(SCILR)/Tech-1/200/3/05 (Vol-IV)/30-51 dated 6/2/08 wherein the minutes of the 4th Meeting of the Committee of Environmentalists, Social Scientists and other Experts on Interlinking of Rivers held on 8.1.2008 at New Delhi were sent. On page 2 (para-2, last line), the word "list-II" may please be read as "list-I". The inconvenience caused is regretted.

Yours faithfully,

Sd/-
(Muzaffar Ahmad)
Superintending Engineer

Copy for information & necessary action to:

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