

Minutes of the 6th Meeting of the Committee of Environmentalists, Social Scientists and other Experts on Interlinking of Rivers held on 13.1.2009 at New Delhi.

The 6th Meeting of the Committee of Environmentalists, Social Scientists and other Experts on Interlinking of Rivers (ILR) was held on 13.1.2009 at New Delhi. The meeting was chaired by Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources.

The list of participants of the Meeting is given at Appendix-I.

At the outset, Secretary (WR) welcomed all the members of the Committee, Special Invitees and other participants and wished them a very happy new year and thanked the members for their valuable suggestions on the ILR programme in general and on preparation of DPR of Ken-Betwa link including EIA studies in particular. He informed the members that the suggestions made by them have been considered by NWDA while preparing the DPR of Ken-Betwa link. He expressed satisfaction on the completion of the DPR of Ken-Betwa link as per schedule. He also informed that the work on the preparation of DPR of Par-Tapi-Narmada link and Damanganga-Pinjal link has also been started by NWDA as the concurrence of the concerned States of Maharashtra & Gujarat for the preparation of DPR of these two links has been received. The work is scheduled to be completed by December, 2011. He then requested Director General, NWDA & Member-Secretary of the Committee to take up the agenda items for discussion.

Item No. 6.1: Confirmation of the minutes of the 5th Meeting of the Committee held on 24.7.2008 at New Delhi.

Director General informed the members about the comments on the minutes of the 5th meeting received from Shri Himanshu Thakkar and Shri A.C. Kamaraj. It was decided that the views of Shri Himanshu Thakkar received vide letters dated 22.8.08, 30.7.08 & 25.1.08 already circulated amongst the members may be treated as taken on record. In regard to the comments of Shri A.C. Kamaraj, Director General, NWDA explained that the matter regarding review of NWP proposal by CWC was recorded in the minutes as per the decision taken by the Committee in the last meeting. Regarding the details of differences in NWP and Dastur's Plan as explained in detail by Shri Kamaraj in the last meeting, Chairman desired that the same may be taken on record.

The minutes of the 5th meeting with above modifications were confirmed by the Committee.

Item No. 6.2 : Follow up action on the decisions taken during the previous meeting of the Committee.

Director General, NWDA informed the members about the follow up action taken on the decisions of the 5th meeting. The same were discussed by the members and following decisions were taken.

1. The information requested by Shri Kamaraj regarding reservoir capacity and the working tables of Daudhan Dam would be provided by NWDA.
2. Shri Rajendra Singh may be again requested to make available a copy of the report of the field visit of 5 experts to the Ken-Betwa link area to NWDA for circulation amongst the members.
3. Shri Kamaraj may send a copy of his updated proposal with more technical details to CWC for examination.
4. The presentation on Ken-Betwa link of Shri Thakkar may be scheduled for the next meeting of the Committee.
5. Members may send the details such as User Login ID etc. for providing them password for using the Discussion Forum.

Item No. 6.3 : EIA studies of Ken-Betwa link.

Director General, NWDA informed the members that EIA studies of Ken-Betwa link have been completed and the draft final report has been circulated amongst the members of the Committee for their comments. Shri Z. Hasan desired that the effect on the downstream area of dams likely to be benefited due to reduced intensity of the floods due to the construction of the Daudhan reservoir and other dams may be included in the Volume-IV of the report. Prof. Paranjpye wanted that the impact of the project on the local climate may be covered in the future EIA studies. He cited the example of certain area of the Krishna basin where abnormal increase in rainfall in some areas and decreasing pattern in some other areas have been noticed. He was of the opinion that hydrological studies may be based on established norms using long term data. However, the issues like recent trends in rainfall pattern, climate change etc. should not be ignored completely. These issues should be a matter of concern for planners and decision makers

as the surplus and deficit worked out by NWDA in its various studies may undergo change.

Director General, NWDA explained that the hydrological studies have been carried out on the basis of the long term data only. Commissioner (PR), MOWR also explained that as per IMD data, there is no significant change in the rainfall pattern of the country and changes in 3-4 years can not be generalized. Due to climate change the extreme events are likely to increase in the long term and to take care of such events we should plan more storages. Shri Thakkar mentioned that on the website of CWC, there is a report of a detailed study on the climate change including the changes in rainfall pattern. This information may be utilized.

Chairman mentioned that the impact of climate change and its assessment on water resources projects is under consideration in MOWR and a cognizance of such issues needs to be taken. However, in the absence of long term data required for hydrological studies, the same may be done as per the accepted scientific and engineering principles.

Shri Thakkar mentioned that NWDA has forwarded a copy of his comments on First Interim Report of EIA studies to M/s AFC Ltd. (consultant for EIA studies) so a copy of the response of M/s AFC may be made available to him. He also desired that the consultant can make a presentation before the Committee on the EIA studies of Ken-Betwa link. Also, a copy of the DPR of Ken-Betwa link may be provided to the members as without hydrological data no environmental impact can be studied. Director General, NWDA responding to the request of Shri Thakkar informed that as per present policy of Govt. in regard to hydrological data of Ganga basin, raw data cannot be provided, however, processed information of Ken-Betwa hydrological studies can be provided to members.

Chairman mentioned that the DPR of the Ken-Betwa link is likely to be modified as per the comments received from the State Govts. The members may study the draft final EIA report of Ken-Betwa link and send their views to the NWDA at the earliest. A presentation to the Committee on the EIA studies of Ken-Betwa link can be arranged by NWDA in the first week of February, 2009. Regarding making available the hydrological data to the members, Chairman clarified that all important parameters pertaining to the hydrological data are available in the EIA report.

Shri Thakkar mentioned that as per the MoU of Ken-Betwa link, UP & MP have to utilize the quantum of water as given in the MoU. As MP has not created infrastructure, UP can utilize water over and above the allocated quantity of 1700 MCM. He wanted to know the status of present utilization by UP and plan of Govt. of Uttar Pradesh to utilize extra water. For further studies in this respect, he requested NWDA to provide the data of 50%, 75% & 90% dependable yield including the storage capacity of Daudhan dam and the simulation studies carried out by NWDA.

Shri Kamaraj mentioned that EIA studies of Ken-Betwa link have been done appropriately. However, the reservoir capacity as fixed by NWDA appears to be on higher side and for further studies the working table of the reservoir may be made available to the members. He also mentioned that the delay in implementation in ILR project is causing a loss of thousands of crores to the nation due to floods and droughts, therefore, the NWP proposal framed by him deserves serious consideration as it is acceptable to the State Govts. of Peninsular India.

Item No. 6.4 : Views of Shri P. Sen related to environmental issues and R&R aspects.

Director General explained the views expressed by Shri P. Sen on the issues related to the R&R and lean season flow to be considered in NWDA studies. The suggestions expressed by Shri Sen were noted by the members.

Prof. Paranjpye expressed the need to have a look on DPR from social aspects like R&R issue as the cost of social issues will have a bearing on Benefit Cost ratio. There should be a correlation in the different chapters of DPR to reflect the backwater effect and the cost of social aspects in the B-C ratio. He also stressed the need of preparation of summary of the project in local languages in a manner so that it can be easily understood by the common man. It will help to educate the people about the benefits of project.

Shri Thakkar stressed the need of responding by NWDA to the letters/representation received by him from affected people during his field visit to Ken-Betwa link area.

Chief Engineer (N), NWDA informed that NWDA has prepared a brief summary of the project in local language highlighting the benefits to the area and distributed it among the people in the project area.

Chairman mentioned that the hydrological data and social aspects are covered in the EIA studies of Ken-Betwa link and cost of the R&R plan is reflected in Environmental Management Plan (EMP). Therefore, it is reflected in the B-C ratio. Also the EIA studies have been done for getting the project cleared from MoE&F and any changes suggested by MoE&F will be incorporated in the DPR taking into account all aspects. Chairman desired that NWDA should prepare a summary of Ken-Betwa project in local language based on DPR for local people and draft be sent to members for their suggestions.

Item No. 6.5 : Presentation on intra-state links.

As decided in the 5th meeting, a presentation was made by Chief Engineer (HQ), NWDA on the status of the intra-state links being studied/to be studied by NWDA. Shri Hasan wanted to know the criteria for acceptance of intra-state links by NWDA for studies. He expressed the opinion that NWDA is carrying out the studies of interbasin water transfer links based on the criteria of surplus and deficit basins and same should be applied to the intra-state links also. The intra-state links suggested by State Govts. may also be for interlinking of two surplus basins. He expressed the need of accepting the pre-feasibility studies of intra-State links based on the maps prepared by Survey of India. He was also of the opinion that the NWP proposal of Shri Kamaraj of storing flood waters in the canal connecting two existing reservoirs at same level appears to be attractive.

Prof. Madhyastha wanted to know the status of intra-state links pertaining to Puducherry. He also informed about the news coverage related to the visit of delegation consisting of Shri Suresh Prabhu and 5 other MPs to China to see their experience of interlinking of rivers.

Chief Engineer (S), NWDA informed that Puducherry proposal is for inter-state links and not intra-state links so Govt. of Puducherry has been advised to contact the Govt. of Tamil Nadu.

Shri S. Sahni, Air Vice Marshall (Retd.) from Development Alternatives representing Dr. Ashok Khosla, mentioned that considering the Bundelkhand region as drought prone area, appropriate measures should be taken to reduce the transmission losses. He mentioned that the check dams constructed by project authorities become unserviceable after 1 or 2 years and the whole money is wasted. Therefore, all canals should be lined to reduce the transmission losses. Director General, NWDA informed that in the NWDA proposals, the main canals are invariably considered to be lined canals. Chairman informed the members that the repair & maintenance of the canal network is the State subject, however, MOWR is regularly pursuing the matter with the State Govt. to sensitize on these issues.

Item No. 6.6 : Any other Item.

Nil

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks.

Appendix-I

List of Participants who attended the 6th Meeting of the Committee of Environmentalists, Social Scientists and other Experts on Interlinking of Rivers held on 13.1.2009 at New Delhi.

Sh. U.N. Panjiar, Secretary, MoWR

In Chair

Members of the Committee:

S/Shri

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

Apology:

1. Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment
2. Secretary, Ministry of Environment & Forests
3. Dr (Mrs.) Mala Kapur Shankardass
4. Sh. Rajendra Singh
5. Sh. P. Sen

Special Invitees:

1. Sh. S. Manoharan, Additional Secretary (WR)
2. Sh. Indra Raj, Commissioner (PR), MoWR

Apology :

1. Sh. Ranjit Kumar, Learned Amicus Curiae

Other participants:

1. Air Vice Marshall S. Sahni (From Office of Dr. Ashok Khosla, Member of the Committee)
2. Sh. C.K. Agrawal, Chief Engineer (EMO), CWC
3. Sh. M.K. Sinha, Chief Engineer (N), NWDA, Lucknow.
4. Sh. P.R. Rao, Chief Engineer (S), NWDA, Hyderabad.
5. Sh. N.K. Bhandari, Chief Engineer (HQ), NWDA, New Delhi.
6. Sh. R.K. Jain, Director (Tech.), NWDA, New Delhi.
7. Sh. N.C. Jain, Superintending Engineer, NWDA, New Delhi.
8. Sh. Muzaffar Ahmad, Superintending Engineer, NWDA, New Delhi.