

Minutes of the 8th meeting of Committee of Environmentalists, Social Scientists and other Experts on ILR held on 5th March 2010 at New Delhi

The 8th meeting of the Committee of Environmentalists, Social Scientists and other Experts on Interlinking of Rivers was held on 5.03.2010 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 of the meeting, Chairman welcomed all the Members, Special Invitees and other participants. Then, he requested the Director General, NWDA to take up the Agenda Items for discussion.

Item No.8.1: Confirmation of the Minutes of the 7th meeting of the Committee held on 31.7.2009.

Director General, NWDA informed the members that the minutes of 7th meeting held on 31.7.2009 were circulated among the members vide letter dated 21.8.2009. No comments on the minutes of the meeting have been received from any member. Therefore, the committee may like to confirm the minutes. The minutes of the meeting were confirmed.

Item No.8.2: Follow up action on the important decisions taken during the 7th meeting of the Committee held on 31.7.2009

DG, NWDA informed the Committee of the followup action taken on various decisions of the 7th meeting. The members noted the followup action.

Referring to the followup action taken on Item 8.2.(6), Shri Himanshu Thakkar mentioned that he has some more comments on EIA study of Ken-Betwa link and desired to discuss the same. Chairman stated that this is only followup action and this matter can be discussed separately.

Regarding item 8.2.(7), DG, NWDA explained that during the 7th meeting, Shri P. Sen had desired that Shri Kamaraj should make available more technical details of NWP proposal. Shri A.C. Kamaraj mentioned that his proposal had already been discussed many times. However, he will make available more technical details of his proposal to CWC for examination. Shri Kamaraj mentioned that NWDA proposal will require large area for storage reservoirs. The requirement of the land in NWP proposals is much smaller even though the size of the canal is very big.

Shri Z. Hasan mentioned that he would like to clarify his stand on NWP proposal of Shri Kamaraj. He stated that for any water transfer study, it is absolutely necessary to carry out the water balance study first. The Godavari river is not having surplus water upstream of Sriram Sagar and the surplus available in the Godavari is mainly due to the water of Pranhita and Sabari rivers. Since NWDA has already done comprehensive water balance study of Godavari basin and all its sub-basins, therefore, the water balance

studies carried out by NWDA should form the basis of water availability. Regarding NWP proposal, he felt that the canal proposed by Shri A.C. Kamaraj may eliminate the storage reservoirs like Manibhadra, Inchampalli and Pulichintala which are the integral part of Mahanadi-Godavari-Krishna-Pennar-Cauvery and Vaigai link system under Peninsular Component of National Perspective Plan (NPP). However, such large canals will have their own disadvantages like siltation, breaches etc. Further, NWDA has basic data regarding water balance studies and may check availability of water at the starting point of link proposed by Sh. Kamaraj.

DG, NWDA said that the proposal framed by Shri A.C. Kamaraj may be taken up by CWC/MoWR for examination. The Chairman felt that NWP proposal is entirely a new concept, which has not been implemented and practiced anywhere in the world. Therefore, he desired to have a detailed presentation by Shri Kamaraj for discussion on this proposal in the next meeting of the Committee. In the meantime, Shri Kamaraj may ascertain the availability of the water proposed to be utilized in NWP proposal.

Shri P. Sen mentioned that the proposal of transfer of surplus water from the river Godavari to the water scarce regions of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu has been examined for a long time in NWDA and its feasibility has perhaps been well established. Unfortunately, it appears that, due to certain reasons, it has not been possible to take it up till now for implementation. To implement such major inter basin transfer, it is necessary to declare in the Parliament all major inter state rivers in India as National Rivers. Legal sanction is absolutely necessary for transferring the surplus water from one basin to other, where the Government of India is certain about the transferable surplus. A consensus may kindly be taken in the next ILR experts meeting on this aspect and thereafter necessary steps for its legal sanction may kindly be taken. The views expressed by Shri P. Sen are at Appendix-II.

Referring to the issues raised by Shri Sen on the concept of national rivers and for enacting an act for this by the Parliament of the country, Chairman informed that constitutional provisions exist for the development projects on interstate rivers but inter basin water transfer projects are not covered by these. Reacting to this, Shri Hasan mentioned that entry 56 List-I empowers the Government of India to regulate and control the inter state rivers. Under this provision Government of India may make an act for inter basin water transfer also.

Item 8.3: Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) studies of Par-Tapi-Narmada and Damanganga-Pinjal links

Shri Thakkar vide his email dated 21.2.2010 (copy enclosed at Appendix-III) has stated that the work of EIA studies is supposed to involve an independent assessment of the Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposals including "No project option". Independent assessment cannot be done by an in house organisation like WAPCOS which has a very poor track record of doing EIA and has done seriously flawed EIA work in many cases and unexpected outcome in the past. Prof. Paranjpye and Shri Rajendra Singh have also endorsed Shri Thakkar's mail dated 21.2.2010 vide their

email letters dated 3.3.2010 & 4.3.2010 enclosed at Appendix-IV & V respectively.

Shri Himanshu Thakkar reiterated his views against awarding the EIA work to WAPCOS as it would not be able to make an independent assessment.

DG, NWDA informed the members that the work of EIA studies of Par-Tapi- Narmada and Damanganga-Pinjal links has been awarded to WAPCOS (in December, 2009) on the basis of a transparent competitive process and is in progress. He explained that NWDA had prepared the ToR for EIA studies of both the links and the same were submitted to MoE&F. The consultants are required to finalize EIA studies as per the TORs approved by MOE&F. NWDA constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Chief Engineer (EMO), CWC for empanelment of the consultants for carrying out socio-economic and environmental impact assessment studies and evaluation of the bids. The Committee had short listed the firms and invited the bids from these short listed firms for awarding the work of EIA studies. Based upon two tier evaluation comprising technical and financial evaluation, the Committee recommended M/s WAPCOS for the award of the work. NWDA is governed by Govt. of India rules and it follows a well set and transparent procedure for selection of the consultants for EIA studies. He further mentioned that the apprehensions of Shri Thakkar expressed vide his email dated 21.2.2010 that the work has been awarded to M/s WAPCOS in its capacity as an organization under MoWR is not correct. It is only because this firm alongwith other Govt. & non Govt. firms participated in competitive bidding and obtained highest score and therefore found fit for awarding studies and it is not possible for NWDA to bar any firm unless it has been blacklisted by the Government.

DG, NWDA also apprised the provisions in EIA Notification, 2006 of MoE&F and mentioned that there is a mechanism in MoE&F to evaluate the EIA work done/got done for EIA studies by any organization in respect of the project under consideration. Based on the evaluation of MoE&F, a decision is taken for environmental clearance of the project. Therefore, acceptability of EIA studies of any project is well covered in Govt. mechanism. Based on the nature of observations of MoE&F, the project authorities will have to take the remedial measures, if any.

Shri Himanshu Thakkar emphasized that Quality Council of India in their criteria mentioned that conflicts of interest are to be avoided while selecting the firm for award of work. Therefore, WAPCOS is not expected to come to conclusion that project is not viable. EIA agency should also consider the "no project option" and also an assessment of the viability of the project. Quality Council of India also say that EIA consultant should be an independent agency and consider the "No project option". The EIA studies being done by the project authorities is mainly to get the clearance of Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) of Ministry of Environment & Forests. EAC does not have time to see issues related to environment governance.

Chairman, CWC expressed the opinion that the quality of work depends on many aspects, like the personnel associated with the study, availability of data etc. He was of the opinion that it may not be appropriate

to question the overall expertise of an organization, just because its 2 or 3 studies out of more than 50 studies were not upto the mark. Prof. Madhyastha mentioned that Committee may have look at the list of personnel of WAPCOS to be associated with the work of EIA study in order to assess the quality of work likely to be produced by WAPCOS.

Prof. Vijay Paranjpye mentioned that carrying out the work in accordance with ToR approved by MoE&F with the objective to get the project cleared is one aspect. Actually the work of EIA should look beyond this. He mentioned that most of the Master Plans of water resources projects were formulated at the time when EIA and ecological aspects were not of prime consideration. He opined that the work of preparation of DPR is being done by NWDA as in house preparation. But in a dynamic environment things keep on changing and this committee makes suggestions for improvement of the work of EIA studies. Even BC ratio worked out by the project authorities should be evaluated by an independent agency.

Chairman was of the view that WPCOS is only administratively under MOWR and carries out its work independently therefore, there would not be any conflict of interest.

Chairman mentioned that responsibility of NWDA is to prepare the DPR. If an organization has in house capacity to do EIA studies it is fully authorized to do it. Regarding the evaluation of the viability of the project by an independent agency as a part of EIA studies, he mentioned that cost is allotted to forest conservation, catchment area treatment, resettlement & rehabilitation and other related environmental aspects. Therefore, if the cost is higher and BC ratio of the project is not within the accepted limits, the project authority itself may conclude that the project is not viable.

Regarding the apprehension of members on the quality of the work of EIA studies, it was decided that WAPCOS would be asked to make a presentation on the methodology being adopted and expertise used in the next meeting to be held in May, 2010.

DG, NWDA informed the members that another e-mail dated 5.3.2010 from Shri Thakkar has been received today only and the same is being annexed (Appendix-VI) as desired by Shri Thakkar..

Item 8.4: Field visit of Members of the Committee to Par-Tapi-Narmada and Damanganga-Pinjal link area

Director General, NWDA mentioned that it is proposed to organize a Field visit of the Members of the Committee to Par-Tapi- Narmada and Damanganga-Pinjal link area. The members may intimate the probable dates convenient to them for field visit so that NWDA may make appropriate arrangements for the visit.

Item 8.5: Impact of climate change.

DG, NWDA informed the members that Senior Officers of NWDA had interacted with Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) regarding a study of climate change due to interlinking of studies rivers. The concerned

scientists of IITM informed that there is no significant change in the rainfall in the country over a long period and IITM do not impart much importance to the change in rainfall pattern over a short period of 5 to 10 years. Chief Engineer (South), NWDA mentioned that generally 50 to 100 year data are considered in formulation of water resources project. It takes into account lean years, maximum flow years and normal flow years. These aspects are duly taken care of in the reservoir operation studies.

Shri Hasan opined that NWDA instead of studying impact of climate change should study impact of project on climate change viz. increase in gases like Carbon dioxide and Methane.

Shri Thakkar cautioned about riverine change due to climate change.

Prof. Paranjpye mentioned that over a longer time span things are stable. However, the same over a marginal period may be devastating.

Chairman, CWC mentioned that when we actually construct the dam, the hydrology will be relooked and the design parameters will be fixed based on the latest available data.

The Chairman informed that studies are being conducted by 4 IITs & 2 NITs regarding the impact of climate change in India. The outcome of these studies would be made available to the members of the Committee.

Item 8.6 : Any other item with the permission of the Chair.

EIA studies of Ken-Betwa link :

Shri Himanshu Thakkar mentioned that the suggestions of the Committee members discussed in detail in the last meeting, on EIA studies of Ken-Betwa link have not yet been incorporated in the study and therefore, the study is not acceptable. He provided a copy of some additional comments on the EIA studies (Appendix-VII) and asked time for submitting some more comments. After discussions, it was agreed that all the members may give their additional comments by March end. It was also decided that a soft copy of the modified report incorporating the comments/observations of the members will be again circulated among the members.

Status of implementation of Polavaram Project :

Shri Himanshu Thakkar also wanted to know the status of implementation of Polavaram Project. He mentioned that the Govts. of Chhattisgarh and Orissa have not given their consent for implementation of the project even then the project is being implemented by Govt. of Andhra Pradesh. Chairman mentioned that the Govts of Chhattisgarh and Orissa raised their objections in court and court have cleared the project.

Appendix-I

List of Participants of the 8th Meeting of the Committee of Environmentalists, Social Scientists and other Experts on Interlinking of Rivers held on 05.03.10 at New Delhi.

Shri U.N.Panjiyar, Secretary, MoWR

In Chair

Members:

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

Apology:

- | | | |
|----|---|--------|
| 1. | Secretary, Ministry of Environment & Forest | Member |
| 2. | Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment | Member |
| 2. | Dr. Mala Kapur Shankardass | Member |
| 3. | Sh. A.K.Khosala | Member |
| 4. | Sh.Rajendra Singh | Member |

Special Invitees:

1. Sh. S.Manoharan, Special Secretary (WR)
2. Sh. A.B.Pandya, Commissioner (PR), MoWR
- 3.

Apology:

1. Sh.Ranjit Kumar, Sr. Advocate, Learned Amicus Curiae, Supreme Court
2. Sh.C.K.Aggarwal, Chief Engineer (EMO), CWC

Other Participants :

1. Sh. P.R. Rao, Chief Engineer (S), NWDA, Hyderabad
2. Sh. P.K. Dixit, Chief Engineer (N), NWDA, Lucknow
3. Sh. R.K. Jain, Chief Engineer (HQ), NWDA, New Delhi
4. Sh. H.N. Dixit, Director (Tech.), NWDA, New Delhi.
5. Sh. M.C. Jain, Superintending Engineer, NWDA, New Delhi
6. Sh. Muzaffar Ahmad, Superintending Engineer, NWDA, New Delhi
7. Sh. K.P. Gupta, Superintending Engineer, NWDA, Valsad
8. Sh. Jabbar Ali, Deputy Director, NWDA, New Delhi

**OBSERVATIONS OF SRI P. SEN ON THE NOTE OF
SHRI HIMANSHU THAKKAR ON VIABILITY OF ILR PROPOSALS
(NOTE DT. 25.01.2008 VIDE P.35 OF THE AGENDA OF 8TH MEETING)**

Shri Himanshu Thakkar has raised two serious issues in his above note. Shri Thakkar's notes are in general questioning the validity of the ILR Proposals.

Point I

Adequate scientific basis for Surplus/Deficit basins does not seem to exist as full option assessment has not been done for any river basin in India. The assessments would have involved local rainwater harvesting potential, watershed development, ground water recharge, optimum utilization of created infrastructure, effect of Rice intensification technique, etc. etc.

Observation of P. Sen

In any river basin, major or minor, hundreds of such possibilities of water use exist. To go into all such hypothetical assessments will not only be wastage of time but wastage of human energy as well. The surplus or deficit state of a basin largely depends on (a) overall availability of water in the rivers flowing through the basin and average quantum of rainfall in the region vis-à-vis (b) the area available for agriculture and the cropping pattern generally adapted in the region and their water requirement and (c) the net population in the region and their drinking water requirement.

If we go on extending our scope of work to a large spectrum of hypothetical exercises which may or may not materialize at all, it will only extend the time factor and as a result the cost of the project will multiply.

For a little diversion on the proposal of Shri Thakkar, it may be noted that, about 150 years ago, more than 400 water harvesting tanks were existing in South India mostly built by the Hindu Kings and Zamindars. Gradually with human apathy on such facility, gradual expansion of agricultural fields and changes in the rainfall quantum and pattern, nowadays hardly 10% of those tanks are in use. Can we leave our farmers livelihood in the mercy of such wishful experiments?

As regards the ground water depletion and recharge, this is the life and death problem in drought prone areas, extending to around 25% of the total arable land mass in India. Interbasin transfer of water is the only solution to this miserable situation in those regions. Against that, if we go on calculating the quantum of water to be kept reserve for future ground water recharge in the regions enjoying ample rainfall and river flow, it will be nothing but parochial and inhuman. Such a suggestion is not expected from an environmentalist.

Regarding Rice intensification efforts, we all know that it was to some extent successful several decades ago. But due to rapid depletion of ground

water on account of over-pumping; or adverse effect of artificial fertilizer on soil productivity and other factors, the enthusiasm has decreased. Still we go on harping on these well-versed jargons.

My earnest request to the learned friends present here is to kindly not to criticize any and every development project just to delay or stall the same. The project costs are going up by leap and bounds.

Point 2

Context of Surface Irrigation Performance.

Shri Himanshu Thakkar has mentioned that even after spending Rs.99,610 crores in the Major and Medium irrigation schemes between 1991-1992 and 2003-2004 there was no addition to the net irrigated area. Therefore what is the justification for a scheme like ILR which is essentially a long distance surface water irrigation scheme.

Observation of Sri P. Sen

The facts may have to be analysed more objectively Rs.99,610 crores spent in 12 years amounts to about Rs.8200 crores per year. If we look at the large number of Dams, Barrages and Long Canal Networks existing and serving all over India, the operation, maintenance and repair cost should have been much more than this figure. It is unfortunate that during this period Water Resources Sector received a very low priority. The Irrigation Engineers of India will tell you with what meager allocation they had to carry out their tasks. In spite of that, we are reaping the harvest of their toil. Instead of thanking them, our environmentalists go on criticizing for lack of proper repair and maintenance, and no addition to the irrigated area. From my personal experience I can say that, the bills of repairs for the Barrage gates in a major International project could not be paid year after year for shortage of fund.

I would like to draw the kind attention of our learned members that we are gradually losing sight of the real issue. Till now construction of Irrigation Projects in India had been taken up mainly in the regions fortunate with ample availability of surface water resource. We had to leave out the regions where both river discharges and rainfall are scanty. To counter-act this unbalanced situation our national leaders including our last President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam raised their voices to let our water wealth be distributed equally as far as practicable and let our suffering brethren live slightly better life.

Now if we go on haggling on hypothetical issues and unfounded complaints, and delay and stall the ILR projects, it will not be humane.

Should we go on discussing ad-infinitum, bypassing the major problem for which we have assembled here?

NWP Project (Proposed by Shri A.C.Kamraj)

The NWP project, connecting Godavari and Krishna, as explained by Sri Kamraj, appears interesting. It is a totally new concept. A few questions however needs clarification.

As I have understood, it will perhaps be a large canal, serving the purpose of a flood water reservoir, which will release the stored water during the lean season to the water scarce regions in the neighbourhood.

To retain such large volume of water, a very big-size canal will be necessary. A few problems will arise.

- (1) A vast extent of land has to be acquired, which may be opposed by the public.
- (2) As the canal bed width will necessarily be very much, the cross-drainage works and bridges may be very costly.
- (3) Any breach in such a large contour canal may cause devastation in the surrounding area.

The NWDA Link Canal proposal prima facie appears more attractive. It can utilize the existing reservoirs both major and minor in the region, where the flood water can be stored. It will be cheaper than NWP proposal. The savings can be utilized for sediment clearance of the existing reservoirs and canals as also for lining the existing canal systems.

As time is running out, Shri Kamraj may kindly agree for a compromise formula and come to an unanimous proposal.

A separate proposal to declare all the major Interstate Rivers in India as National Rivers to avoid inter-state controversies in water-sharing is enclosed for consideration.

To
The Director General
N.W.D.A.

Sub: Declaring major Indian Rivers as National Rivers

Dear Sir,

The proposal of transfer of surplus water from the River Godavari to the water-scarce regions of Andhra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu has been examined for a long time in N.W.D.A. and its feasibility has perhaps been well-established. Unfortunately it appears that, due to certain reasons, it has not been possible to take it up till now for implementation.

I had discussed this with Sri Z. Hasan, ex-Secretary, M.O.W.R. and the first D.G. of N.W.D.A. To implement such major inter-basin transfer it is necessary to declare in the Parliament all major inter-state rivers in India as National Rivers. Legal sanction is absolutely necessary for transferring the surplus water from one basin to other, where the Government of India (N.W.D.A.) is certain about the transferable surplus.

In Australia, where acute water shortage exists in certain states, the Australian Government has legal mandate for restricting the use of their major rivers ensuring equal distribution among the surplus and deficit states within the country.

A consensus may kindly be taken in the next ILR experts meeting on this aspect and thereafter necessary steps for its legal sanction may kindly be taken.

Arbitrary withdrawal by upland users of any major river depriving the lower riparian states can also be controlled by such law.

Yours faithfully,
Sd/-
(Prasad Sen)

Copy to: Sri Z. Hasan, ex-Secretary, M.O.W.R. for kind information. C-104,
Sector 26, NOIDA, U.P. – 201301

Appendix-III

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Subject: 8th Meeting of ILR experts: EIA for Par Tapi Narmada and Damanganga Pinjal link

Date: Sun, 21 Feb 2010 15:08:37 IST

February 21, 2010

To
Chairman,
Committee of Environmentalists, Social Scientists and other Experts on Interlinking of Rivers
And
Secretary, Union Ministry of Water Resources

And Members of the Expert Committee

Dear Sirs and Madam,

Kindly note that I have received the agenda notes for the eighth meeting of the Expert committee proposed on March 5, 2010, over seven months after the last meeting when more than once the committee has agreed to meet quarterly.

However, I am writing this only to bring to your attention a very crucial issue mentioned in the agenda notes, that requires urgent attention and action before the meeting. I will be raising the other relevant issues in the meeting.

The agenda note says in item 8.3, "the Committee had recommended M/s. Water &

Power Consultancy Services (India) Pvt. Ltd. for award of the work for carrying out the EIA studies for Par-Tapi-Narmada and Damanganga-Pinjal links. The awarding of the works of EIA studies is under process." This is shocking development on many counts, let me list a few important ones.

1. FIRSTLY, as the WAPCOS (Water and Power Consultancy Services (India) Ltd) website (see <http://wapcos.gov.in/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20Brief-rkg.pdf>) says, "WAPCOS Limited, a Govt. of India Enterprise under the aegis of Union Ministry of Water Resources", it is a MWR organisation. The Introduction to WAPCOS on its website notes, "WAPCOS as a techno-commercial organisation under the aegis of Ministry of Water Resources utilises the talent and expertise developed in the various organisations of Govt. of India and State Govts." The list of supporting organisations on the WAPCOS website lists various MWR organisations like the CWC, CGWB, CSMRS, CWPRS, among others. Each year MWR annual report contains a section on WAPCOS. It is clear from all these that WAPCOS is an in house organisation of the MWR and in any case not an independent agency.

The work of EIA study is supposed to involve an **independent assessment** of the environment impact assessment of the proposals and the study is supposed to include No project option, listing of unacceptable impacts, and include the possible option of concluding that the project is not viable. **Such independent assessment cannot be done by an IN HOUSE ORGANISATION like WAPCOS. EIA HAS TO BE DONE BY AN ORGANISATION THAT IS INDEPENDENT, WAPCOS IS CLEARLY NOT AN INDEPENDENT ORGANISATION SINCE IT IS PART OF THE SAME HOUSE THAT INCLUDES MWR and NWDA. OTHERWISE THE EIA CAN BE REJECTED ON THE GROUNDS OF ISSUE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST.**

2. SECONDLY, WAPCOS has done survey and investigation works justifying river link and such other projects in the past. It has done such studies for River linking projects (e.g. Pranhita Chavella link), for Maharashtra and Gujarat, including projects like Damanganga and Sardar Sarovar that has direct involvement in projects under discussion. An organisation in the business of doing such work cannot be entrusted to take up an EIA work as the work of EIA is in direct conflict with other business of the organisation.

3. THIRDLY, WAPCOS has had a very poor track record in case of doing EIAs. It has done seriously flawed EIA work in many cases, including in case of Athirapally HEP in Kerala, Middle Siang HEP in Arunachal Pradesh, 1200 MW Teesta III project in Sikkim, We can provide detailed critique of each of these EIAs and flaws in the way WAPCOS did that. By not looking at the track record of such companies, a decision to award to EIA to WAPCOS would lead to flawed EIA and unacceptable outcomes.

Lastly and most importantly, in the 4th meeting in January 2008, I had raised the issue that this committee did not have the opportunity to apply its mind in the selection of the consultant for Ken Betwa link, which was in complete violation of the mandate given to the committee. If this committee is to give justice to the TOR given to it, it must get an opportunity to apply its mind to the issues of relevance. NWDA never provided adequate response to that issue. That situation lead to the outcome of the most shoddy EIA work for the Ken Betwa link as we all saw during the presentation by the consultants M/s. Agriculture finance Corporation Ltd., Hyderabad during the 7th meeting of this committee.

Now we are again confronted with the same situation, where decisions have already been said to have been taken without this committee given an opportunity to apply its mind in selection of consultants for the two links under discussion. WHY IS THIS COMMITTEE NOT BEEN GIVEN A CHANCE TO APPLY ITS MIND TO THE ISSUES UNDER ITS MANDATE?

I would request you all to kindly respond to this. I also request that this email (without the words THIS IS SPAM and KINDLY REMOVE THESE WORDS FROM ALL THE MESSAGES ANNEXED EARLIER, INCLUDING IN THE MINUTES OF THE SEVENTH MEETING) be included in the minutes of the 8th meeting.

I would urge Chairman to kindly take urgent action to ensure that inappropriate organisation like WAPCOS does not get EIA work for any river links, leave aside the two under discussion, for the reasons listed above.

Thanking you and awaiting your response,

--

Himanshu Thakkar

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Appendix-IV

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Subject:Re: 8th Meeting of ILR experts: EIA for Par Tapi Narmada and Damanganga Pinjal link

Date: Wed, 03 Mar 2010 15:37:47 IST

To
Chairman,
Committee of Environmentalists, Social Scientists and other Experts on Interlinking of Rivers
And
Secretary, Union Ministry of Water Resources

And Members of the Expert Committee,

Thank you for the invitation and the agenda notes for the 8th Meeting of Committee of Environmentalists, Social Scientists and other Experts on Interlinking of Rivers. However, after reading the agenda notes, I was surprised to find that "the awarding of the works of EIA studies (for Par Tapi Narmada and Damanganga Pinjal Link to WAPCOS) is under process".

In addition to Shri. Thakkar's comments over the appointment of WAPCOS, I would like to express my serious concern over the way in which participation of the present committee is being limited. Currently, the role of this committee is limited to post facto appraisals/ comments. In order for us to discharge our functions properly, we need to be involved in the decision making from the upstream of the planning process. In the absence of this, our role is currently severely curtailed and

unsatisfactory.

I hope that we have time in the 8th Meeting to discuss these important issues, in detail.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,
Vijay Paranjpye

Prof. Vijay Paranjpye,
Chairman,
Gomukh Environmental Trust for Sustainable Development,
92/2, Durga,
Ganagote Path,
Erandwane,
Pune 411 004
Tel: + 91 20 25673324/ 25672448

--- On **Sun, 21/2/10, Himanshu Thakkar** <ht.sandrp@gmail.com> wrote:

From: Himanshu Thakkar <ht.sandrp@gmail.com>
Subject: 8th Meeting of ILR experts: EIA for Par Tapi Narmada and Damanganga Pinjal link
To: "nwda" <se1nwda@rediffmail.com>, secy-mowr@nic.in, secywel@sb.nic.in, vijai.sharma@nic.in, cwcchairman@netscape.net, zafarul_h@hotmail.com, ackamaraj@hotmail.com, djsen@iitkgp.ernet.in, jalpurushtbs@gmail.com, mkshank2001@yahoo.co.in, vol_org@yahoo.co.in, akhosla@hotmail.com, madhyasthamn@hotmail.com, paranjpye@yahoo.co.uk, aswrs-mowr@nic.in, commpr-mowr@nic.in, kranjit13@hotmail.com, ckagrawal@gmail.com, nwdaald@rediffmail.com, cfsnwda@rediffmail.com, dgnwda@vsnl.net, cehqnwda@rediffmail.com, diretech@rediffmail.com, se3nwda@rediffmail.com
Date: Sunday, 21 February, 2010, 15:13

February 21, 2010

To
Chairman,
Committee of Environmentalists, Social Scientists and other Experts on Interlinking of Rivers
And
Secretary, Union Ministry of Water Resources

And Members of the Expert Committee

Dear Sirs and Madam,
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I would urge Chairman to kindly take urgent action to ensure that inappropriate organisation like WAPCOS does not get EIA work for any river links, leave aside the two under discussion, for the reasons listed above.

Thanking you and awaiting your response,

--

Himanshu Thakkar

South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers & People,
c/o 86-D, AD block, Shalimar Bagh,
Delhi, India
himanshuthakkar@iitbombay.org, ht.sandrp@gmail.com
www.sandrp.in

Appendix-V

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From: "Tarun Bharat Sangh" <jalpurushtbs@gmail.com> | [Add to Address book](#) |

To: "Himanshu Thakkar" <ht.sandrp@gmail.com>, "nwda" <se1nwda@rediffmail.com>, <secy-mowr@nic.in>, <secywel@sb.nic.in>, <vijai.sharma@nic.in>, <cwcchairman@netscape.net>, <zafarul_h@hotmail.com>, <ackamaraj@hotmail.com>, <djsen@iitkgp.ernet.in>, <mkshank2001@yahoo.co.in>, <vol_org@yahoo.co.in>, <akhosla@hotmail.com>, <madhyasthamn@hotmail.com>, <paranjpye@yahoo.co.uk>, <aswrs-mowr@nic.in>, <commpr-mowr@nic.in>, <kranjit13@hotmail.com>, <ckagrawal@gmail.com>, <nwdaald@rediffmail.com>, <cfsnwda@rediffmail.com>, <dgnwda@vsnl.net>, <cehqnwda@rediffmail.com>, <diretech@rediffmail.com>, <se3nwda@rediffmail.com>

Subject: RE: 8th Meeting of ILR experts: EIA for Par Tapi Narmada and Damanganga Pinjal link

Date: Thu, 04 Mar 2010 17:36:02 IST

To

Chairman,
Committee of Environmentalists, Social Scientists and other Experts on
Interlinking of Rivers
And Secretary, Union Ministry of Water Resources
And Members of the Expert Committee

Respected Sir/Mam,

I hope you must have gone through the below mail by Sri Himanshu Thakkar. I am agree to all the objections raised by him in the mail. I would urge all the members and experts to consider the matter and act accordingly.

Regards,

Rajendra Singh
TARUN BHARAT SANGH
Bheekampura- Kishori,
Thanagazi, Alwar-22
Rajasthan

From: Himanshu Thakkar [mailto:ht.sandrp@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, February 21, 2010 3:13 PM
To: nwda; secy-mowr@nic.in; secywel@sb.nic.in; vijai.sharma@nic.in;
cwcchairman@netscape.net; zafarul_h@hotmail.com; ackamaraj@hotmail.com;
djsen@iitkgp.ernet.in; jalpurushtbs@gmail.com; mkshank2001@yahoo.co.in;
vol_org@yahoo.co.in; akhosla@hotmail.com; madhyasthamn@hotmail.com;
paranjpye@yahoo.co.uk; aswrs-mowr@nic.in; commpr-mowr@nic.in;
kranjit13@hotmail.com; ckagrawal@gmail.com; nwdaald@rediffmail.com;
cfsnwda@rediffmail.com; dgnwda@vsnl.net; cehqnwda@rediffmail.com;
diretech@rediffmail.com; se3nwda@rediffmail.com
Subject: 8th Meeting of ILR experts: EIA for Par Tapi Narmada and Damanganga
Pinjal link

February 21, 2010

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Chairman,
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And
Secretary, Union Ministry of Water Resources

And Members of the Expert Committee

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Thanking you and awaiting your response,

--

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c/o 86-D, AD block, Shalimar Bagh,
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Appendix-VI

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From: Himanshu Thakkar <ht.sandrp@gmail.com> | [Add to Address book](#) |

nwda <se1nwda@rediffmail.com>, secy-mowr@nic.in, secywel@sb.nic.in, vijai.sharma@nic.in, cwcchairman@netscape.net, zafarul_h@hotmail.com, ackamaraj@hotmail.com, djsen@iitkgp.ernet.in, jalpurushtbs@gmail.com, mkshank2001@yahoo.co.in, vol_org@yahoo.co.in, akhosla@hotmail.com,
To: madhyasthamn@hotmail.com, paranjpye@yahoo.co.uk, aswrs-mowr@nic.in, commpr-mowr@nic.in, kranjit13@hotmail.com, ckagrawal@gmail.com, nwdaald@rediffmail.com, cfsnwda@rediffmail.com, dgnwda@vsnl.net, cehqnwda@rediffmail.com, diretech@rediffmail.com, se3nwda@rediffmail.com

Subject: 8th Meeting of ILR experts: Letter regarding additional points for the 8th meeting of Expert committee to be held on March 5, 2010

Date: Fri, 05 Mar 2010 00:09:04 IST

March 4, 2010

To
Chairman,
Committee of Environmentalists, Social Scientists and other Experts on Interlinking of Rivers
And
Secretary, Union Ministry of Water Resources

And Members of the Expert Committee

Dear Sirs/ Madam,

While I await substantive response to the following message from the Chairman and NWDA, besides other members (having already received positive feedback from Shri Vijay Parajpye and Rajendra Singh), I would like to raise following issues, and request the member secretary to also include this message in the minutes of the 8th meeting.

1. Is there a written concurrence and MOU signed from Gujarat and Maharashtra for taking up DPR and EIA related work for the Par Tapi Narmada and Damanganga Pinjal link canals, like in the case of Ken Betwa link canal? Why has that not been

found necessary? Is there a change of policy within MWR and NWDA on this? When was this change of policy brought about and why?

2. **Ken Betwa link** Please share copies of GOMP letter of 19.8.2009, GOUP letter of 23.10.2009 and minutes and agenda notes of the meeting on this issue convened by the secretary, MWR on 3.2.2010 with the Expert committee during the 8th meeting (if possible email them to the members in the morning tomorrow). Why has it become necessary to take up fresh work on DPR for Phase 1? What parts of the earlier DPR are excluded from the new one now being made?

3. **Polavaram** How is the project now being implemented by AP different than the one as described in the FR of the project by NWDA? Which all states have sent in their written consent for this project and on which dates? When did Chhattisgarh and Orissa send their written consent? How can the project get CWC, Planning Commission clearances and AIBP status without such letters?

4. Has MWR and NWDA seen the statements from the Union Minister of State for Environment and Forests (In Charge) recently, that the Ken Betwa link proposal in current form cannot be cleared due to its serious impact on Panna Tiger Reserve? Why is NWDA and MWR not working on more viable, non large dam options for the region?

5. NWDA letter of 1.9.2009 to Principle Secy, UP, Irrigation Dept misrepresents the mandate of the committee. This committee is not only for looking at R&R aspects.

6. NWDA ltr of 29.09.2009 says, "It was not possible for expert committee to have a say in the selection of EIA agency". This seeks to deny the committee its rightful mandate in such matters and is not satisfactory.

7. Specific response from MWR to the two specific suggestions made by me in the 7th meeting for additional studies and followed up through the letter dated 03.08.2009 is awaited.

8. The NWDA response about incomplete TOR for the Par Tapi Narmada proposal cannot satisfy any objective person. If it is not clear what exactly is to happen to the additional water displaced in the Narmada command, where it is to go, for what purpose, how and when, how can one even start to frame the TOR?

I will look forward to your responses on these issues.

Thanking you,

Himanshu Thakkar

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--

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Note submitted by Shri Himanshu Thakkar, Member of Committee of Experts on 5.3.2010

Ken Betwa River Link EIA from NWDA received in November 2009

WHY THIS EIA IS NOT ACCEPTABLE

EIA AGENCY IS BIASED

- In the very second para of the executive summary, EIA says Betwa is "Water short". EIA agency is supposed to be unbiased and cannot parrot the assumptions of the developing agency, NWDA.

EIA AGENCY IS INCOMPETENT

- In para 14 of the Exe Sum, it says, "Out of the above, forest land accounts for to 5258 ha, rest of the area being agricultural lands, settlements, scrubs and water bodies. Ten villages are likely to be submerged. Area of Panna national park or Tiger reserve accounts for about 65.13 percent of total forest area under submergence with 4163 ha." Simple calculation shows that 4163 is 79.2% of 5258, and not 65.13% as stated by the EIA. The EIA also does not explain why the forest land has reduced from 6400 ha in Feasibility report to 5258 ha and area of Panna tiger reserve has come down from 4586 ha in FR to 4163 ha now.
- In Para 56 the EIA says, "The area (Daudhan project) under irreversible impacts is neither a home nor an important habit for the wildlife including birds". To say this when the project is going to submerge over 4600 ha of Panna Tiger Reserve is shocking.
- In para 58 EIA says, "Interlinking of these basins through link canal will facilitate rapid migration of the fish easier." How can this become possible?
- In Para 60 EIA says, "Stagnated body can get rid of their pollutants by sedimentation". This is clearly wrong.

EIA INCOMPLETE

- In para 66 (under Reservoir Rim Treatment) the EIA says, "The periphery line beyond the MWL will be in submerged condition for a few days only during flood period and will be vacant during other period." No details are given as to how much area of which specific villages/ districts will be affected over how much period and what will be the impacts thereof.

EIA DRAWS UNWARRANTED CONCLUSIONS/ ASSUMPTIONS

- Para 26 of Exec Sum says, "Due to drying up of leaves of trees, monkeys were found moving from one tree to another for their shelter in Panna Park near proposed Daudhan dam."

- In Para 40 it says, "Hence impact due to change in the hydrological cycle are not anticipated." This is completely wrong, the hydrological cycle will change with the building of the dam and there will be impacts there of.
- In Para 57 it says, "The Daudhan reservoir is capable of effecting the distribution of Tigers since the Tiger reserve of 4163 ha (National Park) will be submerged. But at the same time, the reservoir may prevent encroachments of the park and invasion by livestock so that a relatively more secure and compact habitat is formed on Right flank of Daudhan dam which may be beneficial." There is no obvious logic to what the EIA says here.
- In Para (on growth of aquatic weeds in reservoir) 59 it says, "The problems are manageable through bio-manipulation of reservoirs." How can that be achieved and what will be consequences?
- In Para 62 it says, "There are no places of tourist interest going to be affected due to the submergence." This when the Daudhan dam will submerge over 4500 ha of Panna Tiger reserve, which is obviously a place of tourist interest.
- In Para 66 (under compensatory afforestation) it says, "Assuming that non forest land is not available..." when the EIA is not supposed to make such assumptions.
- In Para 69 the EIA talks about development of fisheries in Daudhan reservoir, without understanding that the most of the reservoir will remain under the forest dept and tiger reserve and such activities are not allowed in reserve area.

EIA MAKES CONTRADICTORY STATEMENTS

- In Para 69 the EIA says, "Funds to a tune of **Rs. 1000 lakh** are required for conservation of REET species in the submergence area." However, earlier in para 57 it says, "...impact of the projects on REET species may not be too severe to prevent any recovery." And in para 58 it says, "None of the species of aquatic plants comes either under rare or endangered or endemic or threatened categories (REET)."
- In Para 69(a) the EIA says, "There is a proposal to develop carp based fisheries in Daudhan reservoir with an anticipated production of 470 MT/ year" and in para 69(e) it says, "Fish production from the reservoir will be increased steadily on a sustainable basis to attain a yield of 60 tones on full development by adopting the measures suggested."

EIA AGENCY IS CARELESS

- The EIA in para 34 says, "The Daudhan dam and reservoir area comprises of very hard, compact and dense quartz – arsenate", but does not give any implications of the presence of dangerous Arsenate

compound. According to Wikipedia, "An **arsenate** (compound) is any [compound](#) that contains this (AsO₄³⁻) ion."¹

- The EIA says (para 4) that the Full reservoir Level is 288 m. When the FRL in FR was 287 m, the EIA should explain this change. It also claims that the MWL will be same as FRL, which is also a change from FR, no explanation is given.

EIA AGENCY USES WRONG TERMS

- In para 39 it says, "No change in the regime of Ken River due to Daudhan dam or Betwa river due to Makodia dam is anticipated." The line or the para does not explain what is meant by regime of river. If it means flood regime, since the para is talking about floods, its conclusion that there will be no change is completely WRONG. Such big reservoirs would completely change the flood regime downstream from the dams.

THE EIA PROVIDES NO REFERENCES OR NAMES OF THE SOURCES OR EXPERTS IT USES IN THE REPORT. THIS MAKES SUCH FIGURES AND STATEMENTS UNVERIFIABLE AND HENCE UNRELIABLE.

The EIA also does not address many of the issues I raised following the earlier version of the EIA shared with the expert committee, this is pretty shocking too.

This brief note is sufficient to show why the current EIA for the Ken Betwa link proposal is unacceptable and the best course of action would be to go for a fresh EIA with a more credible agency. While I will try to send a more detailed note in next few days, pl include this note in the minutes of the 8th meeting of expert committee on ILR.

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¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arsenate>, accessed on March 5, 2010