

No. A-32011/2/2009-NRCD-I
Government of India
Ministry of Environment & Forests
National River Conservation Directorate


Paryavaran Bhawan, CGO Complex,
Lodi Road, New Delhi - 110 003

Dated the 7th December, 2009

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Sub: Minutes of the first Meeting of National Ganga River Basin Authority held on 5.10.09

The minutes of the first meeting of the National Ganga River Basin Authority held on 5.10.2009 are enclosed for information.


(Rajiv Gauba)

Joint Secretary to the Government of India

Encl: As above

To

1. Principal Secretary to Prime Minister, South Block, New Delhi
2. JS to PM (Shri Sanjay Mitra), South Block, New Delhi
3. PS to Finance Minister, North Block, New Delhi
4. PS to Minister of Urban Development, Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi
5. PS to Minister of Power, Shram Shakti Bhawan, New Delhi
6. PS to Minister of Water Resources, Shram Shakti Bhawan, New Delhi
7. PS to Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, Yojana Bhawan, New Delhi
8. PS to Minister of State (I/C), Environment & Forests, Paryavaran Bhawan, New Delhi
9. PS to Minister of State (I/C), Science & Technology, Anusandhan Bhawan, New Delhi
10. Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh, Bapu Bhawan, Lucknow
11. Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Uttarakhand, Sachivalaya, Dehradun
12. Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Bihar, Sachivalaya, Patna
13. Principal Secretary to H.E. Governor, Jharkhand, Raj Bhawan, Ranchi
14. Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, West Bengal, Writers Building, Kolkata
15. Chief Secretary, Uttar Pradesh, Shastri Bhawan, Lucknow
16. Chief Secretary, Uttarakhand, Sachivalaya, Dehradun
17. Chief Secretary, Bihar, Sachivalaya, Patna
18. Chief Secretary, Jharkhand, Project Bhawan, Ranchi
19. Chief Secretary, West Bengal, Writers Building, Kolkata

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20. Finance Secretary, North Block, New Delhi
21. Secretary, Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, North Block, New Delhi
22. Secretary, Ministry of Urban Development, Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi
23. Secretary, Ministry of Power, Shram Shakti Bhawan, New Delhi
24. Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources, Shram Shakti Bhawan, New Delhi
25. Secretary, Ministry of Environment & Forests, Paryavaran Bhawan, New Delhi
26. Secretary, Planning Commission, Yojana Bhawan, New Delhi
27. Secretary, Department of Science & Technology, Technology Bhawan, New Delhi
28. Addl. Secretary (RHK), Ministry of Env & Forests, Paryavaran Bhawan, New Delhi
29. Chairman, Central Pollution Control Board, Parivesh Bhawan, East Arjun Nagar, Delhi -32
30. Prof. K.J. Nath, AK-284, Sector-2, Salt Lake City, Kolkata - 91
31. Prof. R.K. Sinha, Department of Zoology, Patna University, Patna
32. Prof. B.D. Tripathi, Coordinator, Centre for Env Science & Technology, BHU, Varanasi
33. Dr. Veer Bhadra Mishra, President, Sankat Mochan Foundation, Tulsi Ghat, Varanasi
34. Shri Rajendra Singh, Chairman, Tarun Bharat Sangh, Jaipur
35. Smt. Rama Rauta, Convener, Save Ganga Movement, Pune
36. Ms. Sunita Narain, Director, Centre for Science & Environment, New Delhi
37. Dr. Ravi Chopra, Director, Peoples' Science Institute, Vasant Vihar, Dehradun
38. Prof. R.H. Siddiqi, former Professor, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh

**MINUTES OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE NATIONAL GANGA RIVER
BASIN AUTHORITY HELD ON 5TH OCTOBER, 2009 UNDER THE
CHAIRMANSHIP OF HON'BLE PRIME MINISTER**

1. The first meeting of the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) was held on 5th October, 2009 under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister. The list of participants is annexed.
2. Prime Minister welcomed the participants and outlined the importance of conserving Ganga, given its unique status. He expressed the hope that NGRBA, which is a participative and collective endeavour, would address the issues facing the Ganga in a comprehensive manner. The River Basin Management Plan being prepared by NGRBA would provide an affordable, time bound, and sustainable plan with a viable roadmap.
3. The Minister of Environment & Forests (MEF) gave a brief presentation outlining the experience with the Ganga Action Plan, the challenges ahead and the activities taken up after the constitution of the Authority.
4. MEF explained the need for an appropriate institutional mechanism under the apex council of NGRBA. It was proposed that a Standing Committee under the Union Finance Minister be set up to periodically review the implementation of the NGRBA's work programme. An empowered Steering Committee under Secretary (Environment & Forests) to appraise and sanction projects was also proposed to be set up.
5. MEF presented, for the consideration of the Authority, the proposed 'Mission Clean Ganga 2020' to ensure that, by year 2020, no untreated municipal sewage or industrial effluent is discharged into Ganga. Currently there is a sewage treatment capacity of only about 1000 mld against 3000 mld sewage being generated in the towns along Ganga. An estimated investment of Rs.15,000 crores over the next 10 years will be required to create the necessary treatment and sewerage infrastructure. The Centre and States will provide these resources in 70:30 ratio.
6. MEF explained the proposed Action Plan of NGRBA. He mentioned the steps taken for preparation of a comprehensive basin management plan. This exercise is expected to be completed by December, 2010 and would be the basis for formulating appropriate projects. Meanwhile, implementation of the initial portfolio of priority projects will be taken up. States would formulate DPRs for new projects at the critical pollution hotspots and major towns on Ganga and major tributaries by November 30, 2009. The projects will be based on a comprehensive approach encompassing sewerage networks, municipal solid waste management and conveyance, collection and treatment systems, while ensuring convergence of Central and State sector schemes and dovetailing of resources. Implementation would be subject to tripartite MOAs between the Centre, States and ULBs, to be signed by February, 2010. The initial portfolio of projects would be sanctioned by March, 2010. The Ministry of Environment and Forests would work with states to prepare specific action plans by January 31, 2010 for dealing with problem of industrial hotspots in the Ganga Basin, affecting the river water quality.
7. Chief Minister, Bihar welcomed the setting up of NGRBA and endorsed the proposed plan of action. He underscored the importance of ensuring coverage of all major and small towns along Ganga for comprehensively addressing the problem of pollution of the river. He, however, pointed out that the States would find it difficult to mobilize the proposed 30% share of capital costs and suggested 100% Central funding, including for

meeting the cost of O&M in the initial years. He supported the fast track mechanism for approval of the projects and urged that the empowered State Authorities be delegated powers to sanction schemes upto Rs.50 crores. Chief Minister, Bihar observed that promoting river front development works would help catalyze community involvement in river conservation efforts. He also suggested that the logo of NGRBA should include the Gangetic dolphin as it epitomizes the state of health of the river.

8. Chief Minister, Uttarakhand highlighted the threat to the Ganga from the receding glaciers and the large flow of tourists and pilgrims visiting the State. He stressed the need for inclusion of all small and major towns on Ganga under NGRBA's action plan and the importance of addressing the sanitation issue. He endorsed the suggestion of the Bihar Chief Minister regarding 100% central funding. He requested that a Ganga Museum and a knowledge centre be set up in Uttarakhand.

9. The issue of continuance of the Lohari nag Pala, Pala Maneri and Bhaironghati hydroelectric projects coming up in Uttarakhand was discussed in the context of the orders of High Court of Uttarakhand. Shri Rajendra Singh observed that it is essential to preserve the Ganga in its pristine state and avoid activities which have the potential to affect the natural flow of the river. He requested that the order of the High Court stopping the work on these projects should be fully complied with. Smt. Rama Rauta and Shri Ravi Chopra endorsed the views of Shri Singh and added that Uttarakhand could be suitably compensated for foregoing the hydroelectric potential of these projects in the interest of conserving the river Ganga. Responding to these observations, Secretary, Ministry of Power stated that only the essential safety and maintenance related work at Lohari nag Pala were going on and no new activity had been taken up after the orders of the High Court. He referred to the substantial investment that had already taken place in the project and to the fact that 85% civil work has been completed. He, therefore, requested that the Lohari nag Pala project should be allowed to be completed. Chief Minister, Uttarakhand agreed that it is important to maintain minimum flows in the river Ganga. However, the problem of reduced flow is only during the lean season and there is no harm in harnessing the flow for generation of electricity during rest of the year. He said that in the event of a decision not to continue with these hydroelectric projects, Uttarakhand will have to be adequately compensated by provision of free power supply from the Central pool.

10. Shri Veer Bhadra Mishra welcomed the Ministry's decision regarding a pilot project based on Advanced Integrated Wastewater Pond System (AIWFS) at Varanasi and suggested that this should extend to the entire ghat area. He also suggested that a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) should be constituted to tackle the problem of pollution of river Ganga in Varanasi.

11. Shri B.D. Tripathi underlined the importance of preserving the ecology of the river in its entire stretch and of the need to choose appropriate technologies and locations in designing and constructing sewage treatment plants. He mentioned certain instances of untreated industrial effluents being discharged into the municipal sewerage networks even though STPs are not designed to handle industrial effluents.

12. Shri R.K. Sinha underlined the importance of preserving the flora and fauna of the river, with the Gangetic Dolphin as the ultimate symbol of the success of river conservation efforts.

13. Shri K.J. Nath stated that besides constructing STPs, comprehensive sewerage networks will need to be put in place, if the objective of ensuring that no untreated sewage

discharges into the river is to be achieved. He also underscored the importance of addressing the issues of solid waste management in this regard.

14. Prof. R.H. Siddiqi stated that while research and data collection work related to the entire Ganga basin could commence, the initial thrust of the activities of NGRBA should be on the main stem of the Ganga.

15. Minister for Urban Development, Govt. of West Bengal gave a brief overview of the river conservation activities implemented in West Bengal. He referred, in particular, to the successful river front development work in several towns, including maintenance through collection of user charges. He suggested that the capital costs of new schemes should be shared on 90:10 basis and the O&M expenditure should be shared on 50:50 basis. He requested that a Knowledge Centre on Ganga be set up in West Bengal as well.

16. Minister for Finance, Govt. of Uttar Pradesh observed that the capital costs of projects should be shared by the Centre and the States on 90:10 basis and the O&M expenditure should be borne by the Central Govt. for the first five years. He stressed that for achieving the objective of preventing untreated sewage from flowing into the river Ganga, a comprehensive approach including complete sewerage management and solid waste management should be adopted. He expressed the view that the Authority should not become an additional layer for clearance of development projects over and above the existing mechanism for environmental clearances.

17. Adviser to Governor, Jharkhand requested that Damodar, which is a major tributary of Ganga and is facing the problem of pollution from industries and mines located in Dhanbad-Bokaro region should be included in NGRBA's Action Plan.

18. The meeting concluded with following decisions:

(i) Under the Mission Clean Ganga, it will be ensured that by 2020 no untreated municipal sewage or industrial effluents flows into the Ganga. Funding pattern would be evolved after further discussion with the Planning Commission, the Ministry of Finance and the State Governments.

(ii) The proposed Action Plan of NGRBA was approved. While the comprehensive basin management plan being prepared will form the basis for project formulation, work on initial portfolio of priority schemes would be initiated expeditiously. The on-going projects would be put on fast-track.

(iii) A Standing Committee of NGRBA would be constituted, headed by the Union Finance Minister to meet more frequently and review implementation. An empowered Steering committee headed by Secretary (Environment & Forests) would be set up for fast track clearance of projects on the lines of JNNURM. The Ministry of Environment & Forests would create a separate and distinct professional team to service the NGRBA and the Empowered Steering Committee. Specific approvals would be sought on this from the Union Cabinet.

(iv) The issue of hydro electric projects in the upper reaches of Bhagirathi (Lohari nag Pala, Pala Maneri and Bhaironghati) would be studied by the Ministries of Environment & Forests and Power and a report would be submitted to NGRBA in 60 days.

(v) With regard to the declaration of Gangetic Dolphin as the national aquatic animal, a suitable proposal would be framed by the Ministry of Environment & Forests for approval.

19. The meeting concluded with thanks to the chair.

Annexure

of participants in the NGRBA meeting at 7, RCR, New Delhi on 5th October, 2009

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| Prime Minister | - | In the Chair |
| Union Minister, Urban Development | - | Member |
| Union Minister, Water Resources | - | Member |
| 4. Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission | - | Member |
| 5. Union Minister, Environment and Forests | - | Member |
| 6. Chief Minister, Uttarakhand | - | Member |
| 7. Chief Minister, Bihar | - | Member |
| 8. Dr. Veer Bhadra Mishra, President,
Sankat Mochan Foundation, Varanasi | - | Co-opted Member |
| 9. Shri Rajendra Singh, Chairman,
Tarun Bharat Sangh, Jaipur | - | Co-opted Member |
| 10. Smt. Rama Rauta, Convener, Save Ganga Movement, Pune | - | Co-opted Member |
| 11. Prof. B.D. Tripathi, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi | - | Co-opted Member |
| 12. Dr. Ravi Chopra, Director,
Peoples' Science Institute, Dehradun | - | Co-opted Member |
| 13. Dr. R.K. Sinha, Department of Zoology,
Patna University, Patna | - | Co-opted Member |
| 14. Prof. R.H. Siddiqi, former Professor,
Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh | - | Co-opted Member |
| 15. Prof. K.J. Nath, former Director,
All India Institute of Public Health & Hygiene, Kolkata | - | Co-opted Member |
| 16. Secretary, Union Ministry of Environment and Forests | - | Member Secretary |
| 17. Shri TKA Nair, Principal Secretary to PM | | |
| 18. Shri Shyam Saran, Special Envoy to PM | | |
| 19. Shri Harish Khare, Media Advisor, PMO | | |
| 20. Shri Sanjay Mitra, Joint Secretary, PMO | | |
| 21. Shri Rajeev Topno, Deputy Secretary, PMO | | |
| 22. Shri Harishankar Brahma, Secretary, Power | | |
| 23. Dr. M. Ramachandran, Secretary, Urban Development | | |
| 24. Ms. Sushma Nath, Secretary, Expenditure | | |
| 25. Shri S. Manoharan, Addl. Secretary, MoWR | | |