

Minutes of the First Meeting of the Special Committee for Interlinking of Rivers held under the Chairpersonship of Sushri Uma Bharti, Hon'ble Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation on 17.10.2014 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi

The First Meeting of the Special Committee for Interlinking of Rivers chaired by Sushri Uma Bharti, Hon'ble Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation was held on 17 October, 2014 at 1400 hrs at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. Shri Santosh Kumar Gangwar, Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation; Shri Vijay Kumar Chaudhary, Hon'ble Minister for Water Resources, Government of Bihar; Shri Sanwar Lal Jat, Hon'ble Minister for Water Resources, Government of Rajasthan; Shri Babubhai Bokhiria, Hon'ble Minister for Water Resources, Government of Gujarat; Shri T. Harish Rao, Hon'ble Minister for Irrigation, Government of Telangana and members/representatives from various Central and State Government Organisations attended the meeting. The list of Members and participants who attended the meeting is placed at Annex-I.

At the outset, Hon'ble Minister for Water Resources, RD & GR extended a warm welcome to all members and participants of the Special Committee meeting. Hon'ble Minister (WR, RD & GR) mentioned that Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of Networking of Rivers vide its judgement of 27 February, 2012 has directed the Union of India and particularly the Ministry of Water Resources, Government of India to constitute a "Special Committee for Interlinking of Rivers". Accordingly, the Special Committee has been constituted by the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation vide Gazette Notification dated 23.09.2014. She mentioned that the Hon'ble Supreme Court considered that the ILR programme was important for development of the country. Hon'ble Minister indicated that the schemes which could be implemented easily and those having difficulties shall be identified and the easily implementable schemes would be taken up on a priority for execution. She emphasized that the environmental and ecological concerns in respect of ILR programme will be duly addressed. The Hon'ble Minister mentioned that a three

day conference known as JAL MANTHAN to deliberate on various issues related to water resources of the country would be held shortly. One full day of the Conference will be completely devoted to discuss Interlinking of Rivers Programme and related issues to get the views of all stakeholders including experts, environmentalists and social scientists, which would be duly taken into consideration while formulating the project proposals. She emphasized that due consideration should be given to Jal, Jamin, Jan, Jungle and Janwar for sustainable development.

Shri Santosh Kumar Gangwar, Hon'ble Minister of State for Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, observed that Hon'ble Supreme Court has given various directions with regard to Interlinking of Rivers Programme and mentioned that it has specifically directed the Government to take up Ken-Betwa Link Project at the first instance itself. He highlighted the importance of river linking projects and their large benefits to the nation.

Shri Vijay Kumar Chaudhary, Hon'ble Minister for Water Resources, Government of Bihar stressed that interlinking of Himalayan rivers was very essential. He pointed out that various storage structures would need to be constructed in the territory of Nepal for interlinking of Himalayan rivers. Besides large irrigation and hydropower benefits the construction of these dams/reservoirs would effectively mitigate the adverse impact of floods in Bihar due to these Himalayan rivers.

Shri Babubhai Bokhiria, Hon'ble Minister of Water Resources, Government of Gujarat mentioned that three projects namely (i) Damanganga-Pinjal Link (ii) Par-Tapi-Narmada Link and (iii) Damanganga-Sabarmati-Chorwad Link pertained to the State of Gujarat. He observed that all these links were important for the State. He mentioned that there were some issues related to land acquisition and environment but expressed the hope that these would be addressed appropriately. In response to the query of the Hon'ble Union Minister (WR, RD & GR) regarding the unrest of tribals likely to be affected by these projects, Shri Bokhiria assured that these issues would be resolved amicably by the State Government.

Shri Sanwar Lal Jat, Hon'ble Minister of Water Resources, Government of Rajasthan mentioned that Interlinking of Rivers Programme should be implemented at the earliest so that the dry land areas in his State get water for irrigation and drinking purposes. He urged that the three Himalayan link projects viz; Sardar-Yamuna, Yamuna-Rajasthan and Rajasthan-Sabarmati Links should be implemented on priority. He requested that Government of India should immediately initiate the steps with the Government of Nepal towards arriving on an agreement for building required storages in their territory for Sardar-Yamuna link. He further requested for the implementation of Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal Link Project involving Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan for much needed irrigation benefits to his State.

Shri T. Harish Rao, Hon'ble Minister of Irrigation, Government of Telangana mentioned that his State was in favour of Interlinking of Rivers Programme. He suggested that along with the interlinking of rivers, interlinking of existing tanks in his State may also be considered as it could be completed in a short time and would bring immediate benefit of additional irrigation. He observed that this would require financial assistance from the Government of India as the newly created State lacked financial resources. He stressed the need for interlinking of Himalayan Component with the Peninsular Component of the ILR Programme.

Shri Ranjit Kumar, Amicus Curiae observed that although Supreme Court had delivered the judgement in February 2012, the meeting of the Special Committee was being held in October, 2014. In this regard, the Hon'ble Minister (WR, RD & GR) mentioned that soon after formation of the new Government the matter was considered by the Union Cabinet and the Committee was constituted in September, 2014. She expressed her happiness that the first meeting of the Committee was being held within a month of its constitution.

Thereafter, with the permission of Hon'ble Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Director General, NWDA and Member-Secretary of the Special Committee took up the agenda items for discussion.

Item 1.0: Introduction and background

Director General, NWDA and Member-Secretary of the Special Committee gave the brief background of the judgement and directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court and stated that the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of Writ Petition (Civil) No. 512 of 2002 "In Re: Networking of Rivers" alongwith Writ Petition (Civil) No. 668 of 2002 delivered a judgment dated 27.2.2012. He mentioned that the Hon'ble Supreme Court had directed that an appropriate body should be created to plan, construct and implement the Interlinking of Rivers Programme for the benefit of the nation as a whole. The Hon'ble Supreme Court specifically directed the Union of India, to constitute a 'Special Committee for Interlinking of Rivers' under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Minister for Water Resources. The Member-Secretary mentioned that as per the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court the Special Committee for the Interlinking of Rivers has been constituted by the Ministry of Water Resources, RD & GR vide Notification dated 23.09.2014.

Item 2.0: National Perspective Plan (Interlinking of Rivers)

Director General, NWDA briefly explained the salient features of the National Perspective Plan for Water Resources Development. It was mentioned that the then Ministry of Irrigation formulated a National Perspective Plan (NPP) for inter basin transfer of water in August 1980 which comprised of two components, namely (i) Peninsular Rivers Development and (ii) Himalayan Rivers Development. The benefits envisaged from the NPP are 35 million hectare of additional irrigation potential and 34000 megawatt (MW) of hydropower beside other benefits of drinking water supply, flood control, fisheries etc. The details as given in the Agenda Notes were noted by the Committee.

Item 3.0: National Water Development Agency and Present Status of Works

It was mentioned that NWDA was established in 1982 and its functions were modified from time to time. The work of preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) for inter-State links under NPP was entrusted to NWDA in 2006 and that of DPR for intra-State Links was entrusted in the year 2011. NWDA has

completed various studies. It was further mentioned that DPRs of Ken-Betwa Link Project Phase-I and Phase-II and Damanganga-Pinjal Link Project under the NPP had already been completed while that of Par-Tapi-Narmada Link was in progress and scheduled for completion in March 2015. It was informed that out of 46 proposals of Intra-State links received from 9 States, Pre-feasibility Reports (PFRs) of 33 Intra-State links had been completed by NWDA upto September, 2014. The Detailed Project Reports (DPR) of two intra-state links projects of Bihar namely, Burhi Gandak-Noon-Baya-Ganga Link and Kosi-Mechi Link have already completed and submitted to the Government of Bihar. The DPR of intra-state link projects viz; Ponnaiyar-Palar of Tamil Nadu, Wainganga (Gosikhurd) –Nalganga (Purna-Tapi) of Maharashtra and Barkar-Damodar-Subaranarekha of Jharkhand are in progress. The details as given in the Agenda Notes were noted by the Committee.

Item 4.0: Directions as to functions of the Committee and Agenda points for discussion

The various directions as to the functions of the Committee contained in the Notification were brought out in the Agenda Notes and were noted for compliance. In view of the specific direction that the Committee may constitute such sub - committees as it may deem necessary for the purpose of carrying on the objects of the Inter-Linking of Rivers Programme on such terms and conditions as it may deem proper, the Committee considered the proposals for the constitution of such Sub-Committees.

In view of the specific nature of analysis required for evaluating the various reports/studies presented to the Hon'ble Supreme Court and also reported elsewhere, the proposal to constitute following three Sub-Committees to guide NWDA to carryout specific tasks was taken up.

- (i) Sub-Committee for comprehensive evaluation of various Studies/Reports;
- (ii) Sub-Committee for system studies for identification of most appropriate alternative plan; and

- (iii) Sub-Committee for consensus building through negotiations and arriving at agreements between the concerned States for sharing of surplus waters in river basins/sub-basins.

The Principal Secretary, PWD Government of Tamil Nadu mentioned that there was no need of constituting a sub-committee for consensus building as mentioned at Sl. No. (iii) as it would be difficult to achieve the consensus. Chairman, Central Water Commission emphasised the need for this Sub-Committee in view of getting expert opinion and consensus of concerned States. Secretary, Water Resources Department, Government of Karnataka supported Chairman, CWC and mentioned that the constitution of this Sub-Committee was essential. Additional Chief Secretary, Kerala was also in favour of the sub-committee so that fair views of all those involved in ILR could be obtained. The Member Secretary clarified that the planning of all link projects had been done by NWDA in accordance with the award of various Water Tribunals regarding the sharing of waters among the concerned States. Shri Ranjit Kumar, Amicus Curiae suggested that the words “for sharing of surplus waters in river basins/sub-basins” may be deleted from the title of Sub-Committee at (iii) above. Considering the views of the members, it was decided to constitute all the three sub-committees as proposed above with modification in the title of the Sub-Committee No. (iii) which would read as “Sub-Committee for consensus building through negotiations and arriving at agreements between the concerned States”. The details as given in the Agenda Notes were noted by the Committee.

Item 5.0: Present status of Ken-Betwa Link Project Phase-I

The Director General, NWDA explained the salient features and benefits of Ken-Betwa Link Project Phase-I and mentioned that the project was in an advanced stage of getting statutory clearances. The techno-economic appraisal of the project has been done by Central Water Commission. The Advisory Committee of MoWR will consider the project for techno-economic clearance after the various statutory clearances by Ministry of Environment & Forest & CC and Ministry of Tribal Affairs. The details as given in the Agenda Notes were noted by the Committee.

Item 6.0: Present status of Ken-Betwa Link Project Phase-II

Director General, NWDA mentioned that DPR of Ken-Betwa Link Project Phase-II had been completed and submitted to Govts. of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh in January, 2014. The online application for forest clearance in respect of Lower Orr dam which is a part of Ken-Betwa Project Phase-II has been submitted by NWDA on 16.10.2014. The details as given in the Agenda Notes were noted by the Committee.

Item 7.0: Additional Agenda item - Restructuring of NWDA

A Note for the additional agenda item: Restructuring of NWDA with the approval of Chairperson was circulated to all members/participants before the start of the meeting.

Director General, NWDA mentioned that the issue of restructuring of NWDA was earlier considered by the Task Force on Inter Linking of Rivers (TF-ILR) headed by Shri Suresh Prabhu, former Union Minister in its Report (2004) and studies were got done by IIM, Ahmedabad. Further, it was mentioned that as per the decision of the Governing Body of NWDA a Report on the Restructuring of NWDA by Shri M.E. Haque, former Member of CWC was submitted to Ministry of WR, RD & GR in December, 2012. It was emphasized that considering the time bound implementation of ILR Programme and enhanced mandate of NWDA there was a need for restructuring of NWDA. It was proposed that a Sub-Committee for restructuring of NWDA may be constituted for above purpose to give its report in a time bound manner.

Secretary, Water Resources, Government of Karnataka mentioned in this regard that Superintending Engineers office functioning in their State had been downgraded to Executive Engineer's Office by NWDA and requested for its restoration. Hon'ble Minister for Water Resources, Government of Bihar stressed the need for strengthening the Circle office at NWDA by upgrading it to the level of Chief Engineer.

Considering all aspects, the Committee approved the setting up of a Sub-Committee for re-structuring of NWDA. The Hon'ble Minister (WR, RD & GR)

assured the members to take up the issue of restructuring of NWDA further on the basis of the report of the Sub-Committee which would be submitted in a specified duration.

Item 8.0: Any other item with the permission of the Chair

Hon'ble Minister for Irrigation, Govt. of Telangana mentioned that his State was not getting any benefit from interlinking of rivers because water of Godavari river from catchment area in their State was proposed for diversion outside the State. He stressed that Telangana State should not be deprived from the benefit of ILR Programme and interests of the State should be protected. Hon'ble Union Minister (WR, RD & GR) assured that interest of all the States would be protected and it will be ensured that no State was deprived from the benefits of the ILR projects. She mentioned that Ken-Betwa Link Project was being started as a model project which will be followed by other link projects.

Hon'ble Union Minister (WR, RD & GR) in her concluding remarks assured the Hon'ble Ministers from Bihar, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Telangana that their issues will be taken up in the Ministry appropriately. She expressed the hope that the Hon'ble Supreme Court would protect the Special Committee from legal hurdles in the matter of implementation of ILR programme and sought the help of Amicus Curiae in this regard.

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

List of Members and participants of 1st Meeting of the Special Committee for Interlinking of Rivers held on 17.10.2014

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|----|--|-----------------|
| 1. | Sushri Uma Bharti
Hon'ble Union Minister (WR, RD & GR) | Chairperson |
| 2. | Shri Santosh Kumar Gangwar
Hon'ble State Minister (WR, RD & GR) | Member |
| 3. | Shri Vijay Kumar Chaudhary
Hon'ble Minister (Water Resources),
Government of Bihar,
Patna | Member |
| 4. | Shri Sanwar Lal Jat
Hon'ble Minister (Water Resources),
Government of Rajasthan,
Jaipur | Member |
| 5. | Shri Babubhai Bokhiria
Hon'ble Minister (Water Resources),
Government of Gujarat,
Gandhinagar | Member |
| 6. | Shri T. Harish Rao
Hon'ble Minister (Irrigation),
Government of Teleganga,
Hyderabad | Special Invitee |
| 7. | Shri A.B. Pandya
Chairman, CWC
New Delhi | Member |
| 8. | Shri Dipak Kumar Singh
Secretary, Water Resources Department,
Government of Bihar,
Patna | Member |
| 9. | Shri P.N. Jain
Secretary, Water Resources Department
Government of Gujarat,
Gandhinagar | Member |

Annex-I (contd.)

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|-----|---|--------|
| 10. | Shri Dhiman Mukherjee
Secretary,
Water Resources Department
Government of West Bengal,
Kolkata | Member |
| 11. | Shri V.J. Kurian
Addl. Chief Secretary,
Water Resources Department
Government of Kerala,
Thiruvananthapuram | Member |
| 12. | Shri Ajitabh Sharma
Secretary,
Water Resources Department,
Government of Rajasthan,
Jaipur | Member |
| 13. | Shri Gurupad Swamy B.G.
Secretary,
Water Resources Department,
Government of Karnataka,
Bangaluru | Member |
| 14. | Shri Suresh Kumar Goyal
Secretary,
Irrigation & Water Resources Department
Government of Harayana,
Chandigarh | Member |
| 15. | Shri M. Saikumar
Principal Secretary,
Public Works Department,
Government Tamil Nadu,
Chennai | Member |
| 16. | Shri Ekanath Patil
Principal Secretary,
Water Resources Department,
Government of Maharashtra,
Mumbai | Member |
| 17. | Shri Ranjit Kumar
Amicus Curiae,
Supreme Court | Member |

Annex-I (contd.)

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| 18. | Shri P.R. Meena
Resident Commissioner,
Government of Puducherry | Representing Secretary
(Public Works),
Government of Puducherry |
| 19. | Shri T.D. Sahoo
Engineer-in-Chief (P&D),
Water Resources Department,
Government of Odisha,
Bhubaneswar | Representing Chief
Secretary, Government
of Odisha |
| 20. | Shri M. Venkateswara Rao
Engineer-in-Chief,
Irrigation Department,
Government of Andhra Pradesh,
Hyderabad | Representing Principal
Secretary (P), I&CAD
Department, A.P. |
| 21. | Shri R.S. Tyagi
Member,
Delhi Jal Board, Delhi Government,
Delhi | Representing Principal
Secretary, Urban
Development |
| 22. | Shri L.L. Gupta
Chief Engineer,
U.P. Irrigation &
Water Resources Department
Government of Uttar Pradesh,
Lucknow | Representing Principal
Secretary, Irrigation
Department, U.P. |
| 23. | Shri S.K. Khare
Chief Engineer (Bodhi),
M.P. Water Resources Department
Bhopal | Representing Principal
Secretary, Water
Resources Department,
M.P. |
| 24. | Shri Anonta Kumar Barmah
Chief Engineer (Q.C.)
Water Resources Department, Guwahati | Representing Chief
Secretary, Government
of Assam |
| 25. | Shri S. Masood Husain
Director General, NWDA | Member-Secretary |
| 26. | Shri Virag Gupta | Social Activist |
| 27. | Shri K.K. Payasi | Social Activist |
| 28. | Shri N. Birthare | Social Activist |

Officers from Ministry of WR, RD & GR

1. Dr. Amarjit Singh
Additional Secretary
Government of India
2. Shri TVSN Prasad
Joint Secretary (PP)
3. Shri Sriram Vedire
Adviser,
Government of India
4. Shri Pradeep Kumar,
Commissioner (SP)
5. Shri S.K. Gangwar
Sr. Joint Commissioner (BM)
6. Dr. M.K. Sinha
Sr. Jt. Commissioner (PP)
7. Shri Asit Chaturvedi
Deputy Commissioner (BM)

Officials from State Governments

1. Shri Harmail Singh
Engineer-in-Chief,
Irrigation & Water Resources Department
Government of Haryana, Panchkula,
Chandigarh
2. Shri Sumnesh Mathur
Addl. Secretary-cum-Chief Engineer,
Water Resources Department,
Government of Rajasthan,
Jaipur
3. Shri Rajeev Verma
Chief Engineer,
Irrigation & Water Resources Department
Government of Haryana,
Chandigarh

Annex-I (contd.)

4. Shri B. Hari Ram
Chief Engineer/Pranahita,
I & CAD Deptt, Telangana State,
Hyderabad
5. Shri V.K. Gupta
Chief Engineer,
U.P. Irrigation Department,
Lucknow
6. Shri Indu Bhushan Kumar
Chief Engineer, Monitoring,
Water Resources Department,
Government of Bihar,
Patna
7. Shri Bhavani Rama Shankar
Chief Engineer (Hydrology),
Irrigation & CAD Department
Telangana State,
Hyderabad
8. Shri M.P. Raval
Chief Engineer (SG) & Addl. Secretary,
NWRWS & Kalpsar Department,
Government of Gujarat,
Gandhinagar
9. Shri K.S. Ramkumar
Vice Chairman,
Cauvery Technical Cell-cum-
Interstate Waters Wing, PWD,
Water Resources Department PWD,
Government of Tamil Nadu,
Chennai
10. Shri H.J. Patel
Superintending Engineer CDO (Hydro),
Government of Gujarat,
Gandhinagar
11. Shri Anil Kumar
Deputy Secretary (MMI),
Water Resources Department,
Government of Karnataka,
Bangaluru

Annex-I (contd.)

12. Shri A. Varshney
Executive Engineer (Bodhi),
Bhopal
13. Shri Yogesh Kumar Mittal
Executive Engineer,
Water Resources Department,
Government of Rajasthan,
Jaipur
14. Shri D.S. Ankara Rao
Deputy Executive Engineer,
I & CAD Department Government of A.P.

NWDA Officers:

1. Shri M.K. Srinivas
Chief Engineer (S), Hyderabad
2. Shri R.K. Jain
Chief Engineer (HQ), New Delhi
3. Shri H.N. Dixit
Chief Engineer (N), Lucknow
4. Shri N.C. Jain
Director (Tech), New Delhi
5. Shri K.P. Gupta
Superintending Engineer, New Delhi
6. Shri O.P.S. Kushwah
Superintending Engineer, New Delhi
7. Shri Muzaffar Ahmad
Superintending Engineer, Inv. Circle, Patna
8. Shri M.P. Gupta
Director (Finance), New Delhi
9. Shri J.S.S. Sastry
Consultant (A), New Delhi
10. Shri Nizam Ali
Consultant (Tech), New Delhi