

**Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the Standing Committee of the
National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) held on 29th December, 2010**

The first meeting of the Standing Committee of NGRBA, chaired by the Union Finance Minister, was held in Room no. 41, North Block on 29th December, 2010. The list of participants is at Annexure-I.

2. While welcoming all the participants to the first meeting, the Finance Minister emphasized the importance of controlling pollution, and restoring the ecological health of the river Ganga.
3. The Power Minister brought to attention that his presence had not been recorded in the minutes of the 2nd meeting of the NGRBA. He also indicated that reference to reimbursement of costs incurred by NTPC in the now-closed, Loharinag Pala project as mentioned in the Press Note dated 20.08.2010 had been left out. Minister of Environment & Forests (MEF) indicated that an appropriate communication would be issued reflecting the decision taken at the meeting of Finance Minister, Power Minister and Minister of State (I/C) Environment & Forests on 20.8.2010.
4. Thereafter, the agenda was taken up for discussion. MEF indicated that there were four broad issues which needed to be addressed:
 - (i) Compensation to the state of Uttarakhand for closure of hydro electric projects on the river Bhagirathi.
 - (ii) Sharing of capital costs of conservation projects between the Centre and States in the ratio of 90:10.
 - (iii) Determining the share of Centre and States with regard to O&M costs which is crucial to the success of the river conservation projects.
 - (iv) Early sanction of projects by MOEF.
5. The representatives of Uttarakhand reiterated the views made by the Chief Minister, Uttarakhand in the second meeting of the NGRBA. It was observed by the



Chairman that in the matter of environmental sustainability the question of compensation is not tenable and the issue has to be viewed with reference to the loss of power the State would be facing because of scrapping of the Loharinag Pala Project. As regards the other two projects of the State Government at Bhaironghati and Pala Maneri, he observed that the decision to abandon the projects was taken by the State Government due to public demand, and that it is the joint responsibility of the Centre and the States to protect the environment. The Government of India is, however, looking into the issue of providing power to the power-deficient States. The share of the power of Uttarakhand from the Loharinag Pala project is 78 MW. The Centre could examine the matter of providing this quantum of power from an alternate source to Uttarakhand through a Committee of Secretaries of Expenditure, Power and Environment & Forests. The Chairman stated that this, however, would not set a precedent. On the issue of cost of rehabilitation and stabilization of the Loharinag Pala project site, it should be included in the overall claim of NTPC.

6. Regarding the issue of sharing of capital and O&M costs for projects under NGRBA, the ratio would be retained at 70:30 for the present. A review would be undertaken after two years instead of three.

7. The meeting was informed that 34 projects at a total cost of Rs. 1457.11 crores had already been sanctioned under NGRBA. Another 34 projects for a total amount of Rs. 3255.96 crores were pending for approval in MoEF. These projects would need to be appraised as per the new guidelines for DPRs. The representatives of the State Governments expressed the view that reappraisal of the projects, as per the new DPR guidelines, would mean unnecessary delay. The Chairman advised that those projects where there was minimal deviation from the new guidelines could be cleared early. These projects would not be posed for retroactive funding to the World Bank. The following projects were identified for expeditious approval.

- (i) Uttarakhand : All 5 projects of Uttarakhand at a total approximate cost of Rs. 71.66 crores.
- (ii) Uttar Pradesh : 6 projects out of the 16 pending projects at a total



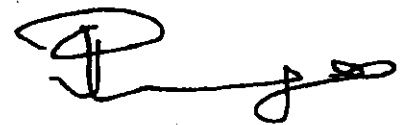
- approximate cost of Rs. 742.45 crores.
- (iii) West Bengal : 4 sewage projects out of a total of 12 projects at a total approximate cost of Rs. 484.25 crores.
- (iv) Bihar : 1 project which was presently being modified.
- (v) Jharkhand : No project pending.

8. Minister of Environment and Forests emphasized the necessity of adopting the revised guidelines which would improve both the formulation of projects and their sustainable operation and maintenance, in the post construction phase. The States should, therefore, follow the revised guidelines for all future projects.

9. Minister of Municipal Affairs, West Bengal raised the issue that solid waste management projects should also be considered under NGRBA. Minister of Urban Development, Bihar made a similar request.

10. Given the importance of restoring the ecological health of the river Ganga, the Chairman was of the view that there should be synergy between the different schemes of the Central and State Governments. With regard to setting up the Ganga Knowledge Centre, a decision would be taken separately.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to the chair.



List of Participants

1. Shri Pranab Mukherjee, Union Minister for Finance - In Chair
2. Shri Shushil Kumar Shinde, Union Minister for Power
3. Shri Jairam Ramesh, Union Minister for Environment & Forests

Uttar Pradesh

4. Shri Nakul Dubey, Minister of Urban Development
5. Shri Alok Ranjan, Principal Secretary, Urban Development

Bihar

6. Dr. Prem Kumar, Minister of Urban Development,

West Bengal

7. Shri Asok Bhattacharya, Minister-in-Charge, Urban Development Department
8. Shri Debashis Sen, Principal Secretary, Urban Development

Uttarakhand

9. Shri Rajeev Gupta, Principal Secretary (Forests, Rural Dev, AYUSH & Home)
10. Shri M.H. Khan, Secretary (Forests)

Ministry of Finance

11. Smt. Omita Paul, Adviser to FM
12. Smt. Sushma Nath, Secretary (Expenditure)
13. Shri Pradeep Gupta, OSD to FM

Ministry of Environment & Forests

14. Smt. Mira Mehrishi, Addl. Secretary, MoEF
15. Dr. S.P. Gautam, Chairman, CPCB
16. Shri B. Sikka, Director, NRCD, MoEF
17. Dr. K.C. Rathore, Director, NRCD, MoEF
18. Shri Rajiv Sinha, Director, NRCD, MoEF
19. Shri B.B. Burman, Addl. Director, NRCD, MoEF
20. Shri L.K. Bokolia, Joint Director, NRCD, MoEF
21. Shri C. Uppili, Under Secretary, NRCD, MoEF
22. Shri Ajay Raghava, Dy. Director, NRCD, MoEF
23. Shri Vinod Kumar Singh, Dy. Director, NRCD, MoEF
