

Discussion Notes

Round Table on Water Policy Issues: Exploring Areas of Partnership

Organised by: Jalsrot Vikas Sanstha (JVS) Nepal/ Nepal Water Partnership (NWP), International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Nepal office

Venue: Hotel Shankar, Kathmandu

Date: 9 January 2009

Presentation by : Mr. S.N. Upadhyaya/ Mr. Sanjaya Dhungel, NWP
Dr. Collin J. Charters, DG, IWMI Colombo

Topic: Round Table on " Water Policy Issues: Exploring Area of Partnership"

Objectives: The objectives of the discussion were as given below:

- To renew the partnership between JVS/NWP and IWMI and sharing of experience between neighbouring countries.
- To explore the new areas of partnership between IWMI and JVS/NWP in the policy sector of water resources

The summary of the discussion issues and consensus arrived at; following the presentation are summarized below.

Summary of Discussion Issues:

- Government of Nepal has already approved the National Water Plan(NWP) with the short term (5years), medium term(15 years) and long term(25 years) goals to improve the living condition of the Nepalese people through the development of water resources.
- Goals and principles of the NWP are very ambitious.
- A number of challenges are there to implement the NWP
- Targets of NWP lagging far behind the schedule.
- Development projects are facing some overstretching of the issues by the local and indigenous committees thus hampering their own progress
- The new policies should be framed compatible with the new constitution
- The Water scarcity will be a major challenge in the water resources development in the years to come. Similarly, the world food crisis of the year 2008 is very alarming where the food prices rose by over 40% in less than 12 months
- Increase in the productivity of agricultural products is essential to meet the global food crisis in the days to come
- Putting research into development action is necessary
- The guiding principles of IWMI would be : (i) focus on poverty and gender (ii) Integrated Water Resource Management(IWRM) and (iii) Balance in the agriculture and the ecosystem
- Irrigation Service Fee collection in the irrigation systems of Nepal is very low which has affected in the sustainability of irrigation in Nepal.

- Climate change has more effects on the river flow
- Nepal is a very good place for research activities because of the availability of a wide range of climate, flora and fauna.
- One person office of IWMI could not become effective in Nepal. Hence, more staffs to cover more area of involvement is necessary
- The area of collaboration between JVS and IWMI could be the followings:
 - (i) Experience sharing of the neighbouring countries
 - (ii) Water Fee study
 - (iii) Partnership
 - (iv) IWMI could extend its area from irrigation to other sectors
 - (v) Demand side management of water resource
 - (vi) Relation between availability of water and poverty
- Constitution of Nepal is in the writing stage. There is a Natural Resources Sub-committee to collect comments and provide suggestions to the main committee. The JVS/NWP/IWMI partnership could provide some feedback to this sub-committee about the water sector of Nepal.
- Operationlization of the research activities is rarely found in the past. A review of the past findings is needed.
- Grass root level targets should be made to address the grass root level problem. National level problems are seldom understood by the local community.
- Animal husbandry has to be combined with the poverty alleviation plans.
- Market access is necessary to sell the agricultural products grown in the poverty stricken pockets
- The society is becoming more and more individualistic and has become very difficult to bring together in the development activities.
- Both the local and global issues need to be identified and addressed in a systematic way
- Local institutions need to be strengthened
- NWP, Water Resources Strategy, and Agricultural Perspective Plan formulated by the Government of Nepal should be revisited. Mostly, it has been observed that the documents are redone with a new name instead of revisiting.

General consensus reached

The general consensus reached during the discussions are as follows:

1. A new partnership between JVS/ NWP /IWMI is necessary in the research field of water resource of this region
2. NWP and other documents should be revisited to address the new issues and challenge.

*Discussion Notes prepared by D. P. Jaishy, Member JVS
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