

Report on the interaction program on “Opportunities of Nepal-Bangladesh Co-operation in managing Water Resources for Mutual Benefit”

Water Energy Commission Secretariat (WECS) and Jalasrot Vikas Sanstha (JVS)/Nepal Water Partnership (NWP) jointly organized the interaction program on “Opportunities of Nepal-Bangladesh Cooperation in Managing Water Resources for Mutual Benefit” on June 24, 2006. The program was organized during the visit of delegates from the Bangladesh for the Fourth Joint Expert Committee meeting of Harnessing of Water Resources of the Region for Multiple and Optimal use and Mitigation of Flood and Flood Damages.

The interaction program was conducted with H.E. the Ambassador from Bangladesh, Mr. Humayun Kabir as the Chief Guest and Mr. Iswer Raj Onta, Officiating Chairman of JVS, as the Chairperson of the session. The meeting was attended by the visiting delegates from Bangladesh, Water Resources Experts, and representatives from Non Governmental Organizations and personalities from the media. The session was conducted for around two hours with the presentation of paper as well as feelings and remarks in connection with the cooperation in water resources on regional basis. The expressions during the meeting are presented below in brief.

Mr. Bhuvaneshwor Prasad Daibagya, Secretary General, of JVS started with the welcome address. Mr. Daibagya stated that such meeting would be helpful in further cooperation in regional basis and expressed the happiness for opportunity of welcoming the delegates.

Mr. Som Nath Poudel, Water Resources Expert, presented the paper on “ Regional Cooperation in Water Use – Nepal Perspective”. The paper contained as below:

- Present Status of Agriculture and Irrigation
- Water Augmentation
- Water Sharing and Co-riparian States
- Water Pricing and Proper Benefits Calculations
- Future Course of Actions

Overall, the paper stressed the need for the proper pricing of the water generated in Nepal, that is, submerging the huge land area for the use by the downstream users.

Mr. Tauhidil Anwar Khan, Leader of the Bangladesh for the Joint Expert Committee meeting expressed the satisfaction for concluding the Fourth Joint Expert Committee meeting of Harnessing of Water Resources of the Region for Multiple and Optimal use and Mitigation of Flood and Flood Damages. He again stated the availability of enough water during the monsoon ranging about 2.6 million cusec from the Ganges and 3.6 million cusec from the Brahmaputra totaling around 6.2 million cusec to the contrary, the minimal water available during the dry season. Mr. Khan also expressed the forcible use of the groundwater for the agriculture purpose, which is making trouble to the people for the Bangladesh with the

contamination of the arsenic. He feels sorry that the people of the Bangladesh for virtually baring from the right use of the surface water. Mr. Khan suggested the construction of dams in Nepal for the augmentation of water during the dry season as well as to work for the flood mitigation purpose. Ultimately, Mr. Khan showed the reservation of the India's plan for interlinking the rivers without consulting the riparian countries.

Mr. Rajendra Kishore Kshatri, Team Leader for the Nepalese side for the Fourth Joint Expert Committee meeting as well as the Officiating Executive Secretary of Water and Energy Commission Secretariat also the satisfaction of the outcome of the meeting specially in terms the exchanging the data on hydrology and meteorology. Mr. Khatri again conferred the study on water resources for the mutual benefit.

His Excellency the Ambassador, Mr. Humayun Kabir stressed the need for the frequent meeting of Joint Expert Committee of Nepal and Bangladesh. He also expressed that the Nepal and the Bangladesh could play the big role not only for the mutual benefit but also to benefit the region.

Mr. Iswer Raj Onta, Chairman of the session, in his concluding remarks expressed the need for the Regional Cooperation in the water resources. Moreover, he also stressed that the Government of Nepal in the Water Resources Strategy, which was approved by the government in 2002, had focused as output no. 9 for the Regional Cooperation for Substantial Mutual Benefit. Again the National Water Plan, which was approved by the government, has also focused the regional cooperation action programmes has emphasized the need to develop and implement an improved framework of regional cooperation. Ultimately, the Chairman thanked all the participants for participating in the interaction program.

Floor discussion of around half an hour was carried during the process and was followed by the Cock-tail Dinner.

The program was coordinated by Mr. Naveen Mangal Joshi, Project Manager, National Water Plan.