Minutes of the 2nd National Steering Board meeting of Bangladesh Water Multi-Stakeholder Partnership

Chair: Mr. Mohammad Shafiuil Alam, Cabinet Secretary  
Venue: Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel, Dhaka  
Date: 25th of June 2016 at 10.30 am

The second meeting of the National Steering Board (NSB) of Bangladesh Water Multi-Stakeholder Partnership (MSP) was held on June 25, 2016 at 10.30 am at the Surma Hall of Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel, Dhaka. Mr. Mohammad Shafiuil Alam, Cabinet Secretary, Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh chaired the meeting. The attendance list is attached appendix-A.

2. Welcome Remarks were made by Dr. Zafar Ahmed Khan, Member Secretary of the NSB and Senior Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources, highlighting the importance of water security and need to identify effective solutions. Dr. Khan mentioned that proper management of water resources is of utmost importance for our national development. It is time that the traditional thinking of government or the public sector as the sole investor in water infrastructure needs to change. The role of private sector and civil society is increasingly being recognized globally and these stakeholders need to be brought on-board in Bangladesh as well. The Ministry of Water Resources welcomes 2030 WRG’s initiative to form the Multi-Stakeholder Partnership for Water to adopt a long-term view towards water security, operationalized through a systematic approach of assessing the cost-effectiveness of solutions. Dr. Khan emphasized on the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 as special priority for Bangladesh. He mentioned that the purpose of this meeting is to discuss and decide on the concept notes. After his welcome address, he requested the Cabinet Secretary, Government of Bangladesh to chair the 2nd National Steering Board (NSB) meeting.

3. The opening remarks were made by Mr. Mohammad Shafiuil Alam, Cabinet Secretary and Chair of the NSB. In his opening remarks Mr. Alam stressed the importance of water resources in Bangladesh’s development and thanked the three Work-Streams for their diligent efforts in preparing the concept notes. He endorsed the welcome remarks made by Dr. Khan and declared the meeting open. After that he requested Mr. Sayef Tanzeem Qayyum, Coordinator Bangladesh Program, 2030 Water Resources Group (2030 WRG) to make his presentation.

4. Mr. Sayef Tanzeem Qayyum, Coordinator, 2030 WRG, Bangladesh made a presentation providing the updates on the progress of the three Work-Streams and proposed agenda for the 2nd NSB meeting. This was followed by presentation and discussion of the following concept notes and Terms of Reference (ToR) as below:

a. Presentation of Concept Note on Strengthening of Institutional Framework for Water Resources Management (WRM) by Mr. Peter Ravenscroft, Consultant, 2030 WRG. Discussion was moderated by Prof. Ainun Nishat and Mr. Christoph Jakob. Issues raised by the participants include-

i. There should be appropriate regulatory framework in groundwater utilization for irrigation and other uses.

ii. In strengthening the institutional framework of the water sector, participation of every stakeholder including the farmers and communities needs to be considered.

iii. Lessons need to be learned from past attempts to strengthen WRM and also, proper follow up of the recommendations need to be there for any new initiative.
Decision: The concept note was approved. 2030 WRG will incorporate the NSB guidance on the issues raised, discuss with relevant NSB members and circulate the final concept note within four weeks.

b. **Concept Note on Economic Incentives for Sustainable Water Management in Bangladesh** by Dr. Mohammad Asaduzzaman, Consultant, 2030 WRG. Discussion was moderated by Prof. Ainun Nishat and Mr. Christoph Jakob. Issues raised by the participants include-
   
   i. Water Supply and Sanitation may be included in the Economic Incentives Concept Note. This may be part of the next phase if the focus is on other sectors at the moment.
   
   ii. Introducing effective penalties for misuse and pollution of water need to be considered.
   
   iii. The timeline for the submission of recommendations for the Economic Incentives study should be by December, 2016.

Decision: The concept note was approved. 2030 WRG will incorporate the NSB guidance on the issues raised, discuss with relevant NSB members and circulate the final concept note within four weeks.

c. **Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Greater Dhaka Watershed Restoration (GDWR) Work-Stream** by Prof. Umme Kulsum Navera, BUET. Discussion was moderated by Prof. Ainun Nishat and Mr. Christoph Jakob. Issues raised by the participants include-
   
   i. Climate resilience perspective may be considered for the ToR of the GDWR work-stream.
   
   ii. With regard to the timeline of the ToR for the GDWR work stream, the short term outputs should be completed within next six months and the medium term outputs within 2 years.
   
   iii. Managed aquifer recharge should be carefully approached with due consideration given to the risk of groundwater pollution.

Decision: The concept note was approved. 2030 WRG will incorporate the NSB guidance on the issues raised, discuss with relevant NSB members and circulate the final concept note within four weeks.

d. **Concept Note on Agricultural Water** by Dr. M. Sirajul Islam, Program Head, Agriculture and Food Security, BRAC. Discussion was moderated by Prof. Ainun Nishat and Mr. Christoph Jakob. Issues raised by the participants include-
   
   i. The Agricultural Water Concept Note need to have more focus.
   
   ii. The inclusion of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in the Concept Note needs to be approached sensitively because of its special circumstances.
   
   iii. Need for crop diversification need to be balanced with the country’s targets for food security.
   
   iv. Farmers’ motivation for the choice of crops and agricultural technology and practices need to be carefully considered.

Decision: The Concept Note was approved. However, the NSB members felt that this Concept Note need to be more focused in a selected few areas. 2030 WRG will incorporate the NSB guidance on the issues raised, discuss with relevant NSB members and circulate the final concept note within four weeks.
5. The presentations (particularly the first three) were very well received and followed by a brief discussion moderated by Prof. Ainun Nishat and approval of the concept notes and the ToR by the NSB.

6. After the presentations and discussions, the Co-Chair from the private sector Mr. Mahbubur Rahman (President, ICC) and Co-Chair from civil society, Mr. Mushtaque Chowdhury (Vice-chair, BRAC) made brief remarks reassuring their full support for Bangladesh Water MSP to ensure water security in the country. Mr. Rahman gave importance on effective and efficient role of the Public Private Partnership (PPP) office and Mr. Chowdhury emphasized on the monitoring the SDG targets for timely achievement.

7. The following **Key Decisions** were made at the 2nd NSB meeting:

   I. The NSB has approved with all recommendations and suggestions-
      a. Concept Note on Strengthening of Institutional Framework for WRM
      b. Concept Note on Economic Incentives for Sustainable Water Management
      c. ToR for the GDWR Work-Stream
      d. Concept Note on Agricultural Water

   2030 WRG will incorporate the NSB guidance on the issues raised, which will be followed by individual consultations with relevant NSB members. The process to be completed within the next four weeks.

   II. The tentative date for the next meeting of the NSB is October 29, 2016.

8. Mr. Mohammad Shafiul Alam, Cabinet Secretary and Chair of NSB thanked the three work streams for their diligent effort in preparing the documents. He also thanked all the participants/experts from government, civil society and IFC Local Office for making the meeting fruitful providing their valuable suggestions, recommendations and cooperation. The meeting ended with a Vote of Thanks.

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(Dr. Zafar Ahmed Khan)  
Member Secretary, NSB  
&  
Senior Secretary  
Ministry of Water Resources

(Mohammad Shafiul Alam)  
Chair, NSB  
&  
Cabinet Secretary