



Global Water
Partnership

Pakistan Water Partnership



**Strengthening regional cooperation among Afghanistan,
India and Pakistan on climate change resilience
(Indus and Kabul rivers basins)**

Third AIP Regional Meeting

Dubai, UAE

29-30 January 2015



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Table of Contents

1. Background	1
2. Day One – 29.01.2015	3
2.1 Welcome Address	3
2.2 Comments by Mir Ahmad Joyenda of AREU, Afghanistan.....	5
2.3 Comments by Dr. Veena Khanduri of India Water Partnership.....	6
3. Open House Discussions.....	7
3.1 Views of Dr. S. R. Hashim	7
3.2 Views of Mr. Khalid Mohtadullah, Senior Advisor GWP	8
4. PWP Activities under WACREP	9
5. Day Two – 30.01.2015 – Deserts Development in South Asia	10
6. Movie and Presentation by Dr. Pervaiz Amir	10
7. Discussions and Suggestions	12
8. Points to be included in the Position Paper	13
9. Constitution of Subcommittee on Deserts Development	13

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1. Background

The Water and Climate Resilience Programme (WACREP)'s third and final meeting of Work Package 1 on strengthening the regional cooperation among Afghanistan, India and Pakistan on climate change resilience (Indus and Kabul rivers basins) was finally held at Dubai, UAE on 29-30 January 2015 despite the GWP and GWP-SAS Regional Office refusal to use 2014 saved money for this extremely logical and conclusive meeting of the WACREP Project. The final meeting was vitally important to identify areas where future cooperation can continue to make the program logical and result oriented.

This meeting was originally planned to be held in the last week of November 2014 with the prime objective of reviewing overall progress of this Work Package and to establish a mechanism for achieving the way forward devised in the last meeting at Kathmandu. In order to ensure participation of delegates from all participating countries, the meeting was initially proposed in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on 24-25 November 2014 but due to non-availability of timely permission of Uzbekistan Government for holding of the meeting in their country, we had no other option but to change the venue and it was finally held in Dubai on 29-30 January 2015.

Background paper and agenda for this meeting are placed at Annex-I. The attendance of the meeting participants is given at Annex-II.

Upon refusal of GWP and GWP-SAS to fund the costs of this meeting, PWP struggled to raise funds from local sources and its Directors contributed a wholesome amount to actualize this meeting.

Since all arrangements were finalized and advance hotel booking charges plus cost of air tickets were paid, the last moment refusal of GWP-SAS to allow the expenditure in 2015 was extremely disappointing and regretted. PWP went on to meet the expenses from its own resources particularly from its Directors contributions. This issue will be pursued with GWP and GWP-SAS and our future cooperation with GWP-SAS would depend on their attitude towards this issue. PWP would ensure this amount is not utilized by the Regional Office for any other purpose. PWP intends to approach GWP Chair with strongest protest.

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING

2. Day One – 29.01.2015

2.1 Welcome Address

The first session of the meeting on 29th January 2015 commenced with the welcome address by Sardar Muhammad Tariq, WACREP Coordinator Pakistan.



While welcoming the participants, he briefed the participants on the discussion and achievements of first two meetings to freshen their memories. He also mentioned that despite of hard struggle, two potential delegates from Afghanistan Government could not join the meeting due to their other preoccupations. He also informed the participants that Mr. Naseer Ahmad Gillani, Chairman PWP/Chief Water & Environment could not attend the final meeting because of his preoccupation with the Prime Minister of Pakistan and Minister of Planning, Development and Reform. He however hoped that these three delegates would contribute to the programme by email or through video conference in future.

After welcome address, Sardar Muhammad Tariq made a comprehensive presentation giving background of GWP, WACREP, its 8 components, details of the regional activity assigned to Pakistan under which the meeting was being convened, its expected output and outcome, progress of past two meetings, outcome of preliminary meeting, lead points for phase-2 of WACREP beyond January 2015, outcome of the second meeting, objectives of the third and final meeting. He at the end hoped that the delegates would remain in touch through electronic media as physical meeting may not be possible due to financial constraints. Webinars and audio/video conferencing may be the mean of continuation of these efforts in future. It was also his suggestion that on the side lines of some regional meetings/seminars, the participants may also avail opportunities to hold meetings on this AIP regional cooperation in future. His presentation is placed at Annex-III.

He also highlighted the importance of Afghanistan as a South Asian country and asked the PWP Secretary to remind the Regional Chair for his commitment during 2nd WACREP meeting held in Kathmandu for establishing Afghanistan Water Partnership.

After Sardar Muhammad Tariq's presentation, the delegates from Afghanistan, India and Pakistan briefly narrated the progress on Phase-I activities and status of preparations for Phase-II. Mr. Karamat Ali however, informed the participants that GWP-SAS did not allocate any funds for this activity in the Phase-II. The

current meeting would be a final meeting and project completion report would be prepared and shared during next three months period.

2.2 Comments by Mir Ahmad Joyenda of AREU, Afghanistan

Mir Ahmad Joyenda of AREU, Afghanistan explained that he had struggled a lot in



Afghanistan for the project objectives and he ensured his support in this extremely important initiative as well as in the formation of Afghanistan Water Partnership.

2.3 Comments by Dr. Veena Khanduri of India Water Partnership

Dr. Veena Khanduri of India Water Partnership explained that despite of her



tough duties in IWP, she worked hard on this project and assured that she will share with PWP and GWP-SAS two names of potential Afghan experts who may be helpful in forming Afghanistan Water Partnership.

She also displayed a movie on Water Harvesting for Climate Resilience and thoroughly explained interventions of IWP in resolving issues related to climate change and creating resilience in the civil society. Report on the subject is placed at Annex-IV.

3. Open House Discussions

The participants especially from Afghanistan appreciated this effort of PWP and hoped that this struggle will raise social awareness between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Experts from Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock; and Ministry of Energy and Water will be identified and engaged in this process. Mr. Joyenda promised to connect the AIP WACREP with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs using his good linkages with them.

It was proposed that the Planning Commissions of AIP countries should be on board to discuss issues and possibilities of involvement since the SAARC office seems to be dormant on such issues. The WACREP initiative has proved beyond doubts that AIP countries can start on water related information sharing at civil society and expert levels.

3.1 Views of Dr. S. R. Hashim

Dr. S. R. Hashim was of the view that CWPs are too small institutions to have impact on AIP governments. Water is a bilateral issue among India and Pakistan. CWPs would not be able to put it on their agenda; however, they can start experience sharing at CWPs levels. CWPs need to move within the known limitations.



3.2 Views of Mr. Khalid Mohtadullah, Senior Advisor GWP

Mr. Khalid Mohtadullah, Senior Advisor GWP appreciated the achievements of the project and expressed his support for on ground interventions rather than



close door discussions.

While discussing methodology for future cooperation, a sub committee comprising the following was formed to prepare solid recommendations for way forward beyond January 2015:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Dr. Pervaiz Amir | - Pakistan |
| Mr. S. C. Jain | - India |
| Mir Ahamd Joyenda | - Afghanistan |
| Mr. Karamat Ali | - Support |

4. PWP Activities under WACREP

Sardar Tariq highlighted the specific activities PWP carried out in Tharparkar, Cholistan and drought impacted areas of Dera Ismail Khan. He informed that PWP has installed bio-sand water filters in the above areas to provide clean water. The feedback from these areas indicates that there has been marked reduction of water borne diseases after the community started drinking filtered water. He also informed that participants of PWP intervention of operating water pumps on bio-gas plants in the salt range of Potohar region to provide drinking water and for growing vegetables by judicious use of water.

It was emphasized by Mr. S.C. Jain of IWP that PWP should reassess the results and quality check of the bio-sand filters to improve and enhance their benefits to the targeted communities. He advised use of TDS meter which is hand-held small equipment and gives immediate results of total dissolved salts in the water. He also advised to replace the steel tomb (dome) with bricked tomb (dome) to reduce the construction cost of the bio-gas plant.

Mr. Mujib Ahmad Azizi, the other Afghan delegate from AREU made a comprehensive presentation on river system and water bodies of Afghanistan. He also highlighted the features and issues of the Kabul river basin including hydrological and water management issues, livelihood issues, geographical properties, demographic properties and land use, urban & rural population, rainfall forecasts and flood forecast of the Kabul river basin. His complete presentation is placed at Annex-V.



The first day of the meeting concluded with the recommendation to formulate a bankable proposal and to look for financial partners to carry forward the project beyond January 2015.

5. Day Two – 30.01.2015 – Deserts Development in South Asia

At the very start of Day Two Sardar Muhammad Tariq put forward Dr. Pervaiz Amir's idea to focus on Desert Development as initiative of South Asia. He informed the participants that deserts in South Asia are generally less developed with prevalent of extreme poverty. The desert dwellers are generally neglected communities. He particularly explained issues being faced by people living in desert areas of Pakistan and emphasized on the need to highlight these issues at regional and international levels. Participants from all the three countries supported and endorsed the idea to adopt "Desert Development in South Asia" as a project of WACREP during and beyond 2015.

6. Movie and Presentation by Dr. Pervaiz Amir

Dr. Pervaiz Amir before his formal presentation on WACREP work in desert areas of Pakistan showed a movie on interventions in the Tharparkar areas carried out by PWP during 2014.

After the movie, Dr. Pervaiz Amir made a presentation explaining what activities PWP carried out under WACREP Phase-I which is placed as Annex-VI. He mentioned that climate change in Asia is creating extreme hurdles to economic development. South Asia is prone to frequent droughts. The 2014 IPCC report cautions against extreme droughts especially due to failure of winter rains. Pakistan is already facing severe drought conditions in Tharparkar and Baluchistan resulting in huge losses to livestock, crops, and trees and in some cases widespread malnutrition and high infant mortality have been observed.

He further said that deserts in South Asia had remained mostly neglected with the result that desert dwellers are the poorest of the poor and deserts remained underdeveloped as compared to the rest of areas inspite of having abundance of natural resources and potential for livelihood development. Under climate change impacts, droughts hit the most and it was expected that desert population would migrate to areas where they could find water, food and fodder to survive though under absolute poverty and lack of civic amenities.

Mr. S. C. Jain, Regional Council Member India made a presentation on the Coping Mechanisms and Adaptation Strategies in Semi-Arid Areas – Experiences from Western region (Gujarat) and (Rajasthan) after Dr. Pervaiz Amir. Mr. Jain's presentation focused on the literature review on the topic, challenges in the Western Region of India, outline of the practical approaches adopted and key strategies.



He gave a narrative of the key strategies formulated to strengthen and revive the biodiversity, skills, knowledge systems, and productivity of eco-system based livelihoods, strengthening local decentralized governance and to create a stronger alignment between local eco-systems, and local institutions for better governance of resources and developing and integrating local and 'green' markets which absorb these eco-system based production. His presentation is at Annex-VII.

7. Discussions and Suggestions

Towards the end a comprehensive and conclusive discussion was held on future lines of action. To address the technology challenges in arid and hyper arid desert ecologies, it was proposed that a three day conference may be organized to discuss and debate with best scientific knowledge the future approach to sub-continent deserts. The conference would attract expertise from the region, FAO, Africa and Middle East. The Group also proposed that WMO may be approached along with SAARC Office to support this important and highly urgent issue.

It was proposed that as part of the conference, site visits to actual deserts in India, Pakistan and Afghanistan should be included followed by brain storming sessions. Dr. Pervaiz Amir requested the participants to advise on design of conference, venue, dates and other logistical arrangements. He also sought further clarity to scope, objectives and outcomes of this important conference. The focus was to be on “Deserts Development” as a project under WACREP during and beyond 2015.

The participants were also asked to highlight the potential of deserts in terms of their natural resources, handicrafts and development opportunities in their respective countries.

In addition to identified donors, it was suggested to also approach the UNDP, ADB, World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO and UNEP for their participation and financial support.

Sardar Tariq also suggested to learn from India’s Rajasthan desert development where Indra Canal played a catalyst role in converting the desert into green belt. Dr. Hashim cautioned that India faced the following issues associated with Indra Canal which would require careful study:

- i) Uncontrolled flow inundated large populated areas.
- ii) Canal normally is designed to cover more command areas and passes through the ridges where drainage is usually through depression and valleys resulting in service drainage problems.
- iii) Efforts are required to protect the canal from moving sand dunes and great efforts needed in stabilizing sand dunes.

Dr. Hashim's experiences were highly appreciated by the participants and agreed that such experience need to be kept in mind and proper technical solutions sought before undertaking similar projects in other regional countries.

After further discussions, it was suggested by one of the participants to first prepare a "position paper" on deserts to access potential donors.

8. Points to be included in the Position Paper

It was also suggested that the following points may be given due importance while preparing the position paper:

- 1) Improving livelihood
- 2) Watershed development
- 3) Harvesting water/rainwater
- 4) Water conservation – methodologies
- 5) Stabilization of sand dunes – technologies
- 6) Drainage problems

9. Constitution of Subcommittee on Deserts Development

Detailed discussions were held to find means for moving forward. It was decided that Dr. Pervaiz Amir will prepare the initial draft of the position paper and proposal which will be shared with all participants for their review and inputs. The conference idea will be announced as soon as possible along with its concept note/ background paper to stimulate interest of related experts inviting papers on identified sub-themes of the conference. Sardar Tariq proposed to constitute the following subcommittee to prepare the first draft of the regional proposal on "Desert Development in South Asia":

- i) Dr. Pervaiz Amir (Pakistan)
- ii) Dr. S. C. Jain (India)
- iii) Mr. Mir Ahmad Joyenda (Afghanistan)

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks by Sardar Tariq.