

## Appropriate Water Management - Key to National Development

*“For a sustainable development of the life and living condition of the people and environment a comprehensive National Water Management Plan was an absolute necessity”,* said Mr Abdur Razzaq, Minister, Ministry of Water Resources, while inaugurating the Regional Conference on National Water Management Plan at Chittagong on November 6, 1999. The Workshop was jointly organised by Water Resources Planning Organization and the Institution of Engineers, Chittagong Branch. The Mayor of Chittagong Municipal Corporation, Members of Parliament, academicians, specialists and experts, representatives of different government and non-government organisations, journalists, Mr. Tauhidul Anwar Khan, Director General, WARPO, other WARPO officials, and consultants attended the workshop. The main objectives of the workshop were to promote the National Water Policy, and to gain feed back on findings of the People’s Participation and Consultation Programme (PPCP) of the ongoing National Water Management plan preparation.

The Minister informed the participants that the Government had published the National Water Policy in January 1999.



The Water Resources Planning Organization had been entrusted with the task of formulating a long-term National Water Management Plan to implement the Policy. He also drew the attention of the participants to the risk of over-utilising groundwater resources and expressed the hope that the planners would strive to strike a balance between the use of groundwater and surface water in the future. He further informed the workshop participants that the present government placed great emphasis on stakeholder participation in water resources management and planning. Accordingly, WARPO had embarked on a comprehensive series of consultation programmes in 28 districts across the country, the findings of which would be incorporated in the Plan. He said that the National Water Management Plan was expected to be ready in 2001.

In the inaugural session, Al-Hajj ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, the City Mayor, Mr. Tauhidul Anwar Khan, Director General, WARPO and Mr. A B M A Baset, Chairman, Institution of Engineers, Chittagong Centre also spoke.

In the working session the Director General, WARPO, presented the

various aspects of the National Water Policy, and described the progress in preparing the National Water Management Plan and the findings of the regional PPCP results. After that he invited the participants for open discussions. The conference stressed on more use of surface water and less dependence on groundwater; water conservation through appropriate measures; strict measures to save the quality of water of the rivers like Halda and Karnafully. The participants also suggested that inland navigation must be improved and broadened to reduce the pressure on road and rail traffic. At the end the conference made a set of recommendations for consideration of WARPO.



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## Gender and Water Resources Planning

The National Water Policy, published in January 1999, has set out the framework for water resource planning and management for the future. The National Water Management Plan will propose the implementation strategy. One of The National Water Policy aims is:

*“to ensure the availability of water to all elements of society (including the poor and the underprivileged) and to take into account the particular needs of women and children”.*

This is a crucial point. Women in both rural and urban areas are the custodians of family health, nutrition and welfare as well as managers of domestic water supply and sanitation. Providing greater access to fresh water supply in rural areas will be expected to have a salutary effect on women’s health and welfare, as well as a profound social and economic impact on the nation’s human resource capability.

The Policy also defines a pro-active agenda for women to contribute to improved management and sustainability of water resources:

*“to bring institutional changes that will help decentralise the management of water resources and enhance the role of women in water management”.*

This is a progressive and enlightened approach to water management that creates an impetus for women to take up a more direct role in the future. The Policy suggests women should become more involved in O&M as well as cost recovery because of their special skills and interests in resource management.

### **Gender impacts in water resource planning: reports from the field**

Drawing from experience of projects such as the Khulna Jessoro Rehabilitation Project and the Compartmentalisation Pilot Project (CPP) (FAP 20 1991-1999), water resource planners are becoming much

more aware that women are cognisant of water resource issues and should be much more involved in planning water resource projects and their impacts.

The CPP project in particular tried to develop a strong gender component throughout the duration of the project. According to their assessment, women’s perspectives on water resource projects, like men’s, are influenced by personal interest, income level, age, livelihood, class and ethnicity and as a result, may not be homogeneous. In CPP, for example, during the Needs Assessment, women who worked as wage labourers and who had only smallholdings (less than .05 ha of land) opted for employment generating activities like construction of roads, bridges and culverts in the project. Women from larger farm holding households gave priority to improved drainage through khal excavation.

Amongst traditional fisher folk, the depletion of flood plain fisheries in the region and the gradual impoverishment of small fishing households resulted in the need for the women from these households to take up work as domestic help in return for subsistence. As they are unskilled and poorly educated, their chances of gainful employment are slim. Landless women, on the other hand, benefited from the savings facility offered by the Embankment Maintenance Groups and could buy and lease land from the proceeds in some, but not in all cases. Wage labour opportunities for women did not increase as a result of the project though they might have been expected to do so.

The CPP project assessors concluded that women should not only be seen as potential beneficiaries of a project, but also be regarded as agents of change in the process of participatory planning, design, and O&M. For

effective development of communities, women, as well as men, will need to have more say in affairs of public water management and water resources control as well as increased access to agricultural information, inputs and resources.

The National Water Policy has set the scene for women to be involved both in managing water and in organising use of resources:

*“An enabling environment will be created for women to play a key role in local community organisations for management of water resources.”*

As the social and entrepreneurial climate becomes more favourable for women to become involved in economic activities, more and more women will be keen to exploit their understanding of agriculture and animal husbandry, in horticulture, seedling plantations, livestock projects and culture fisheries. They will need access to technical expertise, inputs and potable water.

This multi-disciplinary approach to water resource planning is endorsed by the National Water Policy:

*It is the policy of the Government to ensure that “water resource projects, as far as possible, are developed as multi-purpose projects with an integrated multi-disciplinary approach from planning to implementation to monitoring”.*

Women are particularly able to contribute to this process as they are involved in multi-sectoral activities and resource management on a daily basis. They should be encouraged to do so. The National Water Policy provides them with this mandate. We hope that both men and women shall become major partners in future project planning in the water sector.

# Integrated Coastal Zone Management

The coastal zone of Bangladesh extends across the greater districts of Chittagong, Noakhali, Barisal and Khulna. This area is particularly vulnerable to cyclonic storms emerging from the Bay of Bengal, causing loss of lives and often severe damage to property and creating a major hindrance to the socio-economic development of the coastal area. These natural hazards are beyond human control but their impacts can be greatly reduced by taking appropriate mitigative measures. Although over US\$ 0.75 billion has been spent in the past, lack of coordination and plans with too narrow a focus have meant the expected benefits have not been realised.



The concept of “Integrated Coastal Zone Management” (ICZM) has come to the fore in a number of countries. ICZM may be defined as a way of utilising natural resources in a sustainable way to the benefit of all with the help of the latest information technology, planning process and resources management technology. The Government has recognised the importance of ICZM to Bangladesh and recently, following a review of practices elsewhere, has drawn up a policy statement on the subject. This statement has been much praised, and gained the full support of the development partners. The role of Dr ATM Shamsul Huda, Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources, in formulating the policy note deserves special mention. The Government has already taken steps to prepare a Development Programme for the coastal zone based on these principles.

The strategic objectives of the ICZM Plan are to alleviate rural poverty and improve rural livelihoods in the coastal zone by reducing vulnerability to natural hazards, supporting responsible and sustainable resource use, developing unrealised resource potential, adapting to climate change, and mitigating against environmental / resource degradation. The immediate objectives of the Plan are to:

- Reduce the risk of life and loss of damage to property due to storm surge caused by cyclone
- Improve the management of natural resources in the coastal zone

The ICZM Plan will be undertaken under the Ministry of Water Resources, who have appointed WARPO as the lead agency. Activities will include elaboration of policy, strategic planning, programme development followed by implementation. The Minister for Water Resources will chair a high-level Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee (SC), to co-ordinate inter-ministerial activities. SC will set the policy and agree on the strategy for ICZM plan preparation. SC will be assisted by a Technical Committee (TC) consisting of all relevant Heads of Departments, representative of Universities, NGOs and Civil Societies. The TC will be headed by the Secretary of MoWR.

Formulation of the preparatory phase of the Plan of ICZM will be undertaken over a 3-year period by a small but highly professional Project Development Office (PDO) located at WARPO, reporting to the TC and SC. The PDO will be responsible for:

- Development of an Integrated Coastal Resource Data Base (ICRDB) to be used for natural resources, environmental, social assessment and planning. The work will be done by EGIS under PHRD grant and PDO will monitor the activities.
- A Participatory Stakeholder Participation Process at local, community, regional and national level to ensure that integrated coastal management and priority project interventions are based on the need of local communities and institutions.
- Preparation of ICZM Plan comprising, policy formulation, strategic planning and programme development (identifying, formulation and appraising activities, studies and projects which will constitute building blocks for ICZM preparation)

This ICZM Plan will be the framework within which future activities and projects in the coastal zone will be developed and implemented. Funds for the preparatory work will be from GoB, the Government of Japan through a PHRD Grant monitored by World Bank and from the Netherlands Government.





# BANGLADESH WATER VISION 2025

Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad Chairman, Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP)

## Bangladesh Water Regime - A Reality Check

Bangladesh is richly endowed with water resources on an annual basis. But the country faces serious problems as the water availability is characterized by wide seasonal variability - too much water during the monsoon and too little in the dry season. There is also the spatial variability to contend with. Drainage congestion caused by unplanned construction of roads and flood control structures is another major problem that contributes to flooding. A major difficulty also arises because the country is the lowest riparian in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna (GBM) region and over 92 per cent of its annual run-off enters the country from outside its borders. The resulting uncertainties about the quantum of water have serious implications for water management in Bangladesh. There is a further complication as the country is mostly flat and the storage possibility in the country is virtually non-existent. Siltation of river beds caused by silts carried by rivers from upstream countries accelerates the occurrence and accentuates the intensity of floods; and flow reduction due to upstream abstractions is a major cause of water shortages in the dry season. Any moderation (during the monsoon) or enhancement (in the dry season) of the quantum of surface water, therefore, depends on interventions in the upper riparians and hence on regional cooperation.

With the population increasing and the economic activity expanding, Bangladesh faces serious shortages of water during the dry season. For domestic water supplies in particular, mainly in large urban centres, the shortage is a year-round phenomenon. And, in so far as major floods are concerned, ever increasing numbers of people face the devastating consequences. Although the people of Bangladesh are known for their resilience in the face of natural hazards, the coping capacities of people at large are extremely limited, given that about half the population of the country is poor on a head count basis (i.e. calorie intake being less than 2122 kcal) and the proportion increases substantially if a basic needs approach is adopted. Widespread suffering is, therefore, caused by a natural hazard like a major flood. The pursuit of development projects is also adversely affected as resources need to be diverted to the mitigation, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts following such a flood. In addition, certain parts of the country also suffer from drought or drought-like conditions, adversely impacting on agriculture and other economic activities.

Water planning efforts in Bangladesh date back to the 1960s; several major water planning exercises have since been carried out. The latest in the series is the under-implementation national water management plan exercise to be completed in 2001, being carried out under the auspices of the Water Resources Planning Organization (WARPO). But until early 1999, there was no National Water Policy so that all previous planning exercises were

carried out without a unifying set of principles and guidelines to refer to. However, lots of useful information and data were generated through those studies, which can be profitably used as background material for current and future water planning and management exercises. The National Water Policy adopted in early 1999 provides the framework for planning exercises to be coherently and purposefully carried out, taking into account the relevant realities, dynamics, and linkages.

While in the past the focus of water planning was mainly on irrigation and flood control, currently various other uses of water and flood management (rather than flood control) are also being rightly emphasized. The various water using sectors include domestic uses in both rural and urban areas, agriculture, industry, fishery, navigation, environment, and hydro-power.

## The Approach to Water Management Underlying the Vision Exercise

Various supply and demand aspects have been indicated above. With these factors kept in view, a water vision will have to do with the availability of water and matching the need for it seasonally and spatially as well as sector-wise. Flood management during the monsoon and enhancement of flows during the dry season are key concerns in this context. As noted earlier, the demand for water will increase in the future; its implications would mostly relate to the dry season. Currently, water availability in the critical month of March is substantially short of the demand and an estimate (see 1991 Water Management Plan) projects the shortage at 880 million cubic meters in 2018, which may be larger in 2025 if computed on the same basis. However, the actual need in 2018 or 2025 can be significantly less than this projected demand if water demand management is improved through such practices as conservation, water-use efficiency, and recycling.

A holistic and integrated approach to water management is needed in order that all relevant aspects on both supply and demand sides and their critical relationships can be addressed in a manner that would ensure the best possible utilization of the waters available and maximize the benefits for all concerned. All stakeholders on both user and management sides need to be appropriately involved in water management. Special needs of such groups as women and youth should be given due attention. Mechanisms should be developed for resolving conflicts between different water-using sectors and groups, between different agencies involved in water planning and management, and between users and planners/managers. The National Water Policy provides the guidelines for developing such a holistic approach. However, it is necessary that appropriate institutions be developed with their mandates, linkages, and coordination mechanisms clearly defined. Efficiency, transparency and accountability need to be established

throughout the management system; and efficient utilization by all water users must be ensured. In this context, a regulatory system needs to be put in place defining water rights and responsibilities of different water users concerning, for example, access, use efficiency, and pollution control. Pricing mechanisms may also be appropriately used to regulate access to water both to encourage water-use efficiency and to raise funds to meet the costs of projects.

### The Nature of the Underlying Scenario

A vision is of course a dream. One can therefore envision that all the water sector and related problems, be they on the supply side or on the demand side or in management, will be resolved by 2025, generating a cohesive, sustainable water regime consistent with high levels of equitably distributed socio-economic performance in the country. This is an optimistic scenario. Alternatively, the vision may be related to a pessimistic scenario, implying that the problems will not only persist but may compound, with crises of one kind or another plaguing the water sector. There will, as a consequence, be severe, adverse impacts on the economy and the society. The optimistic scenario obviously is not realizable while the pessimistic scenario is not acceptable. Therefore, the vision may be construed in terms of a plausible scenario. With sustainable human development as the overriding goal, the forging of a sustainable water regime could be achieved through appropriate action with respect to various forces operating on supply, demand, and management of water resources.

### Vision Drivers

The forces or elements which would influence the conditions towards achieving the water vision goals are called water vision “drivers”. Improvement in the conditions would imply such developments as improved and assured water supplies, reduced flood vulnerability, improved demand management, improved equity in the access of various socio-economic groups to water, better distribution of water among various water-using sectors/users, improved ability of the people to face flood hazards and use water more profitably, improved governance and institutional framework for more effective water planning and management, and effective regional cooperation. There are many drivers. For convenience, these may be grouped under the following categories: demography, economy, societal ability and well-being, technology, ecological harmony, governance and institutional capacity, and regional cooperation.

The elements or drivers to focus on under different categories would include: size of population (water user), density of population, and rural and urban migration **under demography**; patterns of development, per capita income, poverty ratio, economic growth rate, and savings and investment ratios **under economy**; social equity, access to employment (particularly of the poor and disadvantaged), literacy rate, status of women’s involvement in water management, and access to health care and sanitary facilities, and access to piped water **under societal ability and well-being**; access to

appropriate technology for efficient harnessing, distribution and use of water in various sectors, water and sewage treatment, effluent management, land reclamation and settlement, and disaster preparedness and warning **under technology**; water quality, drainage, salinity intrusion, flood and drought vulnerability, channel maintenance, bio-diversity, forest cover, land degradation, and air pollution **under ecological harmony**; political commitment, public awareness, public-private partnership, institutional framework, legal provisions, regulatory mechanism, involvement of local government bodies, and efficiency in decision-making — all concerning water management - **under governance and institutional capacity**; and regional cooperation in harnessing and managing water resources of common rivers, particularly in flood forecasting, warning, and management **under regional cooperation**.

The drivers listed above under any category are certainly not exhaustive. But these constitute an important set to focus on. As to goal setting concerning the drivers, some examples relating to a sustainable water regime by 2025 are as follows: population size to be contained to about 176 million, thereby containing the demand for water; per capita income to be raised to US\$ 1200, thereby raising the ability of the people to face flood hazards and to use water more efficiently; access to health and sanitary facilities to be available to 100 per cent of the population, thereby improving their well-being; women’s status to be equal to that of men in general and in the context of water use and management in particular; a high level of water and sewage treatment to be ensured; flood vulnerability to be reduced to a low level; an efficient institutional framework for water management including appropriate local government involvement to be put in place; and an effective regional cooperation in flood forecasting and warning to be fostered. These are some examples of goals that may be set concerning specific drivers in the context of a sustainable water regime by 2025. Regarding goal setting for other drivers listed in the preceding paragraph, one may consult the reference listed as no. 1 below.

### The Envisioned Water Regime 2025

The various drivers belonging to different categories may evolve in one fashion or another and interact in different ways and in different combinations and the consequences depend on the way they evolve and the manner in which they interact. In order to achieve the vision goals, a framework for action in terms of policies and programmes needs to be designed and implemented to appropriately influence the developments concerning various individual drivers and their interactions. The instruments to be used in this context for a particular driver would depend on its current situation, the goal set in respect of it, and the best possible strategy that can be constructed for achieving that goal. Obviously, the strategy with respect to a particular driver needs to be derived from holistic considerations involving its linkages with other elements within the category and outside. And the overall framework for action embodying all the driver-specific strategies is expected to lead to a

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# Political Will needed for Cost Recovery

Economics is one of the key disciplines involved in the formulation of the NWMP. A joint team of WARPO and NWMP consultants' staff has been carrying out a wide range of economic studies to provide the data and analyses required for the production of a sound Plan.

An early task was to establish the macro-economic framework setting for the NWMP. Driving forces and key macro-economic factors that will influence the planning include future population and economic growth, industrial expansion, foodgrain demand and the rate of urbanisation. Based on data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the Planning Commission, the World Bank and other sources, projections have been made of these key parameters up to 2050.

By that time Bangladesh's population growth rate, which has been falling for some time, is projected to be down to about 1.1% per annum. Another positive factor for the country's future is that the average annual foodgrain demand per head is expected to rise very little above the present level of around 200 kg. An economic growth rate of 5.5 - 6.0% was assumed, similar to that achieved in recent years, but with the possibility of acceleration to 7 - 8% later in the Plan period.

Urbanisation is a major driving force in the country's economy. NWMP forecasts are that the urban population percentage will almost double over the next 25 years to 40% of the national total. This will relieve pressure on the countryside but will greatly increase the demand for urban infrastructure and services, including water supply and sanitation.

One of the most interesting tasks undertaken by the NWMP economists so far has been the evaluation of the economic performance of a wide selection of existing water sector projects, as part of a multi-disciplinary NWMP team. First-hand evaluations were carried out of 22 projects in the fields of rural and urban flood control and drainage (FCD), irrigation, flood proofing and disaster preparedness, and experience in the water supply and sanitation, fisheries and inland water transport sectors was reviewed. Interesting findings included the high cost-effectiveness of urban FCD and structural flood proofing (raising the plinth levels of houses etc), which have not previously received much attention from economists. Economic conversion factors and economic input and output prices developed for the NWMP were applied in these analyses.

Poor cost recovery is recognised to be

one of the most serious problems facing Bangladesh's public sector, and the water sector is no exception. In a recent NWMP Topic Paper (TP9), a wide range of options to improve the situation has been examined, along with potential economic and regulatory instruments to improve water abstraction management and environmental management and pollution control. Crucial requirements for progress in these fields include strong political will, a sound legal and institutional framework and awareness-raising amongst both the direct stakeholders and the population at large.

After completing the assessment of technical, institutional and other options for possible inclusion in the Plan, the NWMP team will move into the strategy formulation stage. Comparison and selection of alternative strategies and interventions (options) is one of the main tasks involved. Here a major role for the economists is to help develop an appropriate Multi-Criteria Assessment (MCA) framework for the analysis of alternatives and then to define the economic and financial criteria to be applied. The MCA framework set out in the FPCO 1992 Guidelines for Project Assessment provides a starting point, but this needs considerable amplification to meet the needs of the NWMP.

## Bangladesh Water Vision 2025

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sustainable water regime by 2025. That is, by 2025, Bangladesh's water regime will be characterized by a high degree of efficiency and equity in the development and management of the country's water resources, contributing to such national goals as accelerated and equitable economic development and social progress, the development of the capabilities of all citizens of the country and uplifting of their living conditions, and maintaining ecological and environmental harmony. Towards realization of this vision, there will need to be a strong political commitment to it underpinned by a broad-based national consensus, and commensurate mobilization of financial and human resources in its favour.

### References

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## Capacity Building and Training in WARPO

Training is one of the ways of helping an organisation and its employees stay in business and grow. Training is only useful if it enhances the business of the organisation, and also meets the aspirations of the individuals who work for that organisation. However, training must be seen as a means to an end and not an end in itself. The training programme at WARPO aims to identify the needs of both the organisation and the individual and ensure that the relevant skills, resources and services are in line with the needs of WARPO's clients, projects and day-to-day workload. In short to fit "round pegs into round holes". It also recognises the importance of follow-up monitoring of how effective the training has been and to make sure that the staff continue to meet the changing needs of the organisation.

The National Water Policy (NWPo) provides WARPO with a mandate, which requires the organisation to help to implement NWPo. To this end, an interim organisational structure has been prepared for WARPO, emphasising increased management and technical responsibilities at senior and middle management levels. As a part of capacity building, a training and development plan has been developed to upgrade the skills of existing staff. This plan involves job descriptions, a training record database, training needs analysis along with management and technical training. Existing job descriptions

were inadequate to meet the new demands on WARPO and in any case needed to be adjusted to fit the new organisational structure. New job descriptions have now been prepared for all professional staff matching the interim structure, highlighting their management and technical roles, responsibilities and obligations.

Training record cards have been introduced, to gather and retain data. This will help senior management in the future to make appropriate decisions for staff career development.



A training needs assessment was also carried out among all professionals and senior administrative grade staff. A list of recommended training courses has been produced and implementation has started.

In-country training concentrates on upgrading management skills. Good quality management training is available in Dhaka. The programme is sub-divided between general management and project management training for senior and mid level WARPO officials. A total of fourteen management skills development courses, each of 1 to 5 days duration,

are being offered on topics which WARPO officials need to be familiar with.

Since October 1999 four training courses have been conducted using local management experts on: (i) management by objectives; (ii) fund release procedure for development projects; (iii) problem solving / decision making and (iv) website management. In addition, a programme for developing computer skills among officials and staff was implemented early in 1999.

Recognising the need to computerise the Administration and Accounts Section, an in-house workshop was organised using external trainers. This has identified the needs and areas to be computerised, and the outcome of the workshop is being reviewed at present.

Overseas technical training programme has been broken down into four major areas (i) integrated water resources management, (ii) information

technology, (iii) personnel management and (iv) administration. In addition a study tour is being organised for policy-level staff in the Ministry and WARPO to visit other similar institutions.

The WARPO training plan also recognises the need for a central unit for training and staff development and the needs to establish a human resources development capacity in the near future. This unit will control training information and training activities as well as helping to determine internal staff development policy.

## From the DG's Desk

*Was that the Millennium or not? Many people believe that we have another year to wait. Whichever, the passing of one year to another, let alone from one century to the next, is a time for reflection on the past and rededication to the future. In WARPO, we have been giving much attention to revisiting past plans and developments to learn lessons from these, as we prepare plans for the next 25 years. Much has been achieved since the founding of our nation through our efforts in successive decades, and with support and advice from our development partners.*

*Could we have done better? For sure, with benefit of hindsight, some issues would have been dealt with differently. However, the challenge for the future is to recognise that the needs of the country are changing. Bangladesh in 2025 will require different solutions to those of 25 years ago. Many more of us will live in cities, industry will grow, pollution will be an ever-present risk. Our domestic economy will continue to expand, but will be increasingly influenced by outside forces, over which we may have little control. The way we do business will also change. Electronic trade, decentralised Government, and private sector development are already matters of fact. Increased incomes and better education will influence the way we view development problems. Environmental and social awareness are growing in our country, and will progressively define a new set of priorities.*

*We are grateful to Dr QK Ahmad for contributing an article for this Newsletter on the Bangladesh Water Partnership Vision statement for 2025. This is part of a worldwide initiative to address water sector issues, and to share ideas and plans for the future. BWP has drawn together experts from a wide range of backgrounds to discuss their concerns and expectations of what may, and should, happen in the water sector. Their insights and suggestions are valuable to us all.*

*We are also featuring some of WARPO's current*

*activities. The effort we are making to understand social and gender issues reflects our commitment to fully address the water-related needs of all segments of society in an equitable manner. Economic realities are a fact of life and greatly influence the way in which we plan and finance our future development.*

*Understanding these complex subjects is essential if we are to succeed in meeting long-term objectives.*

*Two new initiatives are being taken up by WARPO. Following the signing of the Ganges Water Treaty in December 1996, the Ministry of Water resources hosted an international seminar in March 1998 to determine an action plan for the Ganges Dependant Area (GDA) of Bangladesh. WARPO has been asked to look into the opportunities for making best use of the Ganges waters secured under the treaty, and this is now going ahead as a supporting study to the NWMP. The Government has also recently agreed to proceed with an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project to address the pressing and diverse needs of this area. Earlier valuable work was undertaken in the Meghna Estuary Study. The new project will be prepared at WARPO over the next two years. We are very pleased to be involved in this work, which will draw heavily upon the information that we have already consolidated in the National Water Resources Database.*

*We have greatly appreciated the response to our Topic Papers published as part of the preparations for the National Water Management Plan. Many of you have sent us comments and we shall be taking these into account in finalising the papers and drafting a new Development Strategy. As ever, we welcome all comments and suggestions.*

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