

FIRST MEETING OF NGRBA HELD ON 5TH OCTOBER, 2009
UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF HON'BLE PRIME
MINISTER -- Press briefing by Shri Jairam Ramesh, Minister
for Environment and Forests

1. The first meeting of the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) was held on 5th October, 2009 under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister. The meeting was attended by the Chief Ministers of Uttarkhand and Bihar, Union Ministers of Urban Development, Water Resources and the Union Minister for Environment and Forests, besides the Deputy Chairman Planning Commission.

2. **Major Decisions**

(i) Approval for Mission Clean Ganga: No untreated municipal sewage and industrial effluent to enter Ganga by 2020 -- The Authority decided that under Mission Clean Ganga it will be ensured that by 2020 no untreated municipal sewage and industrial effluents flow into Ganga. Currently there is a sewage treatment capacity of only about 1000 mld against 3000 mld sewage being generated in the towns along Ganga. An estimated investment of Rs 15,000 crores over next 10 years will be required to create the necessary treatment and sewerage infrastructure. It was agreed that the required resources will be provided by Centre and States over ten-year period to be shared suitably between Centre and states after Planning Commission consultations. New and innovative models for implementation like, for instance, special purpose vehicles to be adopted.

(ii) While comprehensive river basin management plan will be ready by December, 2010, on-going sewage treatment projects to be put on fast-track and states to formulate DPRs for new such projects in critical pollution hotspots and major towns on Ganga and major tributaries by November 30, 2009. Tripartite MOAs to be signed by February 1, 2010 and initial portfolio of projects to be sanctioned by March 1, 2010.

(iii) Union Ministry of Environment and Forests to work with states to prepare specific action plans for dealing with problem of industrial pollution in Ganga Basin by January 31, 2010.

(iv) The issue of hydro electric projects In the upper reaches of Bhagirathi (Loharinag Pala , Pala Maneri and Bhairon Ghati) to be studied by Union Ministry of Environment and Forests and Power and report submitted to NGRBA in 60 days time.

(v) A Standing Committee of NGRBA to be constituted headed by Union Finance Minister to meet more frequently and review implementation. An empowered Steering committee headed by Union Environment Secretary to be set up for fast track clearance of projects on JNNURM lines. Union Ministry of Environment and Forests to create separate and distinct professional team to service the NGRBA and the Empowered Standing Committee.

3. It may be recalled that the Authority was set up on 20th February, 2009 under the Environment (Protection) Act as an empowered

Authority to adopt a new holistic river basin approach to the cleaning of the river Ganga and address the issue of minimum ecological flows, besides pollution abatement works.

4. The following actions have been taken since the setting up of the Authority in February, 2009:-

- EOIs were invited for preparing a comprehensive Ganga river basin management plan. RFPs have been issued to 10 shortlisted firms. Work will be awarded by Dec 15.
- Rs 250 crore have been allocated in the Union Budget for 2009-10 for NGRBA. Rs 500 crore per year allocation in the remaining 2 years of 11th Plan has been agreed to by the Planning Commission.
- World Bank has been engaged for long term support of Authority's work programme. Assistance of \$1 billion is indicated for first phase. Proposal of \$3 million project preparation facility was forwarded to World Bank and has been approved.
- Empowered State River Conservation Authorities have been notified for West Bengal, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.
- A Model Tripartite Memorandum of Agreement between Centre, States & ULBs has been prepared by National Institute of Urban Affairs. It has been circulated to States for comments. The MOA will link flow of funds to achievement of milestones and measurable improvement in water quality.
- A Proposal has been submitted to 13th Finance Commission for one time allocation of Rs 1320 crore for meeting O&M needs of STPs for 5 years;

- Pilot projects of Sankat Mochan Foundation at Varanasi (pond based treatment) and National Botanical Research Institute (plant based wastewater management) at Hardwar have been approved, in order to encourage innovative approaches to river cleaning.
- Work on GIS based mapping of Ganga basin has been entrusted to NIC. This will be completed by June 2010. It will be a useful decision making tool.
- Consultations with States, Urban Local Bodies and experts have been held for identifying river conservation projects to be implemented in PPP mode through special purpose vehicles.
- Action has been initiated for third party evaluation of schemes. Independent institutions will be appointed by Dec 2009 for this purpose.
- Improved water quality monitoring system is being put in place. Work on online data transmission from monitoring organisations and public access to WQM data is expected to be completed by Dec 2009.
- A Proposal has been finalized for awarding consultancy by January 2010 for creation of a state-of-the-art knowledge centre on Ganga.
- A Compendium of sewage treatment technologies has been prepared by IIT-Kanpur for guidance of implementing agencies/ULBs.
- A Status paper on Ganga has been prepared by Alternate Hydro Energy Centre, IIT Roorkee providing an overview of Ganga Basin.