

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Chattogram Hill Tracts Affairs
Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka
Chattogram

Subject: Meeting Minutes of the 2nd National Steering Committee (NSC) of 'Strengthening Inclusive Development in CHT (SID-CHT)' Project

The **2nd National Steering Committee (NSC)** meeting on "Strengthening Inclusive Development in Chattogram Hill Tracts (SID-CHT)" project was held on **01 October 2018** in the conference room of the Ministry of Chattogram Hill Affairs (MoCHTA), Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka. **Mr. Bir Bahadur Ushwe Sing**, MP, Honorable State Minister, Ministry of Chattogram Hill Tracts Affairs presided over the meeting.

Mr. Md. Nurul Amin, Secretary, Ministry of Chattogram Hill Tracts Affairs; Mr. Sudatta Chakma, Additional Secretary (Development) and National Project Director (NPD) of SID-CHT project; Mr. Khurshid Alam, Assistant Country Director, UNDP; Representatives from USAID; Mr. Prasenjit Chakma, National Project Manager (NPM) of SID-CHT project; representative from concerned ministries/Planning Commission; Chattogram Hill Tracts Regional Council (CHTRC); Hill District Councils (HDCs) and UNDP officials from SID-CHT project were also present at the meeting. (Participants list attached as annex I).

2. Agenda for discussion :

- 1) 1st NSC meeting decisions and updates ;
- 2) Up-to date progress of SID-CHT project;
- 3) Progress of host community support in Bandarban and Cox's bazar component;
- 4) Progress of CHT watershed co-management activity;
- 5) Progress of new recruitments ;

The meeting started with the introduction by the participants and a welcome speech from the chair followed by background remarks and information about the project made by Mr. Sudatta Chakma, Additional Secretary, MoCHTA and the National Project Director (NPD) of the SID-CHT Project. As requested by the NPD, Kazi Moklesur Rahman, Deputy Chief & MoCHTA Project Coordinator (SID-CHT) stated the background of the project in brief and informed the meeting that the SID-CHT project was approved by the Bangladesh government on February 2017 with the objective of strengthening the capacity of the population in the Chattogram Hill Tracts to shape and make decisions that impact on their lives. He further said the specific objectives of the project are to strengthen the community land, resource and livelihood management and to increase participation and influence to shape decision-making. MoCHTA Project Coordinator also informed the meeting about the updates of the decisions of last NSC meeting. He informed the meeting that the project has complied previous NSC meeting decisions in consultation with MOCHTA and guidance from NPD.

3. Up-to date progress of SID-CHT project;

As per the agenda and as requested by NPD the National Project Manager (NPM). Prasenjit Chakma briefed the meeting and made Power Point presentation. Jhuma Dewan, Chief, Gender and Community Cohesion and Ram Sharma, Chief Technical Specialist, Forest and Watershed Management of the project also joined the presentation.

Highlights of the presentation were as follows:

3.1. *Agriculture and Food Security Activity:*

During his presentation the NPM informed the NSC that against TPP target of 47,500 farmers a total of 15,956 farmers (33.59%) (men: 7,698 and women: 8,258) has been trained on different improved agricultural techniques. The training includes vegetable cultivation, local chicken rearing with improved techniques, livestock rearing, fisheries, fruit trees management, hand pollinations techniques of cucurbits, producing composed fertilizer.

3.2. *Policy, Governance, Gender and Community Cohesion Activity:*

Regarding the Policy, Governance, Gender and Community Cohesion activities, the Chief, Gender and Community Cohesion informed the meeting that to increase civic participation and engagement in the public sphere 50 (13 female) Local Volunteer Mediators Forums (LVMFs) members (elected local government representatives and traditional leaders) of Longadu and Mohalchari upazilas were oriented on their responsibilities for local conflict management and diffusing local level tensions. Coordination meetings were held to enhance coordination between the LVMs for prevention of potential conflicts at local level. The Chief, Gender and Community Cohesion also informed that expansion of three Local Volunteer Mediators Forums (LVMFs) in comparatively conflict prone areas in three hill districts is underway. Moreover, SID-CHT provided technical support to MoCHTA through preparing ToRs for hiring expert consultants on various policy and legal prioritized matters. Database on potential youth from previous year's youth camps has been created. Concept note and ToR on CHT youth development through innovative employment opportunities shared with NPD for valuable inputs and suggestions.

3.3. *CHT Climate Resilience:*

During his presentation the Chief Technical Specialist, Forest and Watershed Management Mr. Ram Sharma informed the meeting that activities of Climate Resilience Component will be implemented in 10 Upazilas. Following revised annual work plan approved by the National Project Director (NPD) of SID-CHT, the draft activity plans have been shared with all 3 Hill District Councils of Bandarban, Khagrachari and Rangamati and received their endorsements. As a piloting, the activities will be implemented in 20 selected sites (cluster of communities) that to be selected by the HDCs where location specific Local Resilience Plans (LRPs) will be developed in consultation with local residents. The LRPs will be implemented with supports from this component.

Discussions:

Detailed discussions followed the presentation. The honorable MoCHTA Secretary informed the meeting that he visited couple of field activities of SID-CHT project. He also opined that the activities carrying out by SID-CHT is satisfactory. The local communities are benefited by these activities. The Chair suggested that new participants should be included while selecting beneficiary for livelihood grants. He also recommended that a follow up mechanism should be developed to monitor the livelihood grants and Headmen and Karbaries are to be engaged in the monitoring and follow up mechanism.

Regarding establishing a CHT Development Bank and SDG mapping to achieve SDGs, the Chair suggested that UNDP could assist MoCHTA for establishing a CHT Development Bank which is very important for the overall development of CHT. The Assistant Country Director of UNDP Bangladesh Mr. Khurshid Alam assured the meeting that UNDP will assist MoCHTA for establishing the CHT Development Bank.

4. Host Community Support in Bandarban and Cox's Bazar;

The NPM informed the meeting that the local communities living in the areas adjacent to Rohingya camps are facing different challenges for the improvement of both livelihood and social harmony. At present, the area and host community people are facing various social, environmental and economic problems due to sudden Rohingya influx. Among them, the host communities being anxious about being outnumbered, impacted on their mobility, feeling of deprivation as main attention is focused on the Rohingyas, pressure on basic services and livelihood supports, losing forests and natural resources etc., increased pressure on natural resources, and de facto agricultural land being repurposed for camps and settlements. Deforestation linked to the influx have deprived or reduced host communities' access to firewood, timber and bamboo for housing as well as forest fruits and other non-timber forest products, and communities are extremely worried about the depleting water table and the potential effects of this situation on their livelihoods. Considering above situation, the development partners, particularly Denmark showed interest to support the host communities affected by Rohingya influx and approached UNDP whether it is possible to implement this support under ongoing project of SID-CHT. Accordingly, with approval of the Ministry of CHT Affairs (MoCHTA) [letter dated on 2 April 2018], UNDP has signed the funding agreement with DANIDA for DKK 14 million to support local communities in the Upazilas of Teknaf, Ukhia, Ramu in Cox's Bazar district and Naikhyongchari, Lama and Alikadam in Bandarban district. It will cover 600 communities (1800 households) in 6 Upazilas. This component was also discussed in the last PIC meeting. DANIDA has come up with additional DKK 25 million funding for the host community support programme in 3 (three) Upazilas of Bandarban (Lama, Alikadam and Naikkhyongchori) and 3 (three) Upazilas of Cox's Bazar (Ramu, Ukhia and Teknaf); therefore, the earlier signed funding agreement between DANIDA and UNDP will be amended to a DKK 39 million agreement. At the PIC meeting on 12 July it was decided that all the newly planned activities and new positions will be incorporated while revising the TAPP.

Discussions:

Regarding the present status of this component the NPM informed the meeting that following the approval from MoCHTA the new activities are included in revised Annual Work Plan (AWP) of SID-CHT project which was approved by the National Project Director (NPD) on 11 September 2018. Accordingly, the activities are reflected in UNDP's system. Activities for 3 Upazilas of Bandarban district were shared with BHDC and received their endorsement. Accordingly, the amendment of Letter of Agreement (LoA) with BHDC is under progress.

5. Progress of CHT Watershed Co-Management (CHTWCA) Activity:

A comprehensive power point presentation on the annual progress of the CHTWCA was made to the National Steering Committee. This covered the period from Aug 30, 2017 to Aug 29, 2018 during which the following three participatory forestry and watershed management objectives were focused:

- Sustainable management of Village Common Forests (VCFs), small streams and associated watersheds for livelihood improvements;
- Support for the Forest Department (FD) in headwater reserved forests (RFs) management activities in the Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT);
- Promotion of sustainable land use practices for resilient ecosystems and livelihoods;

Notable progress was made during the year in achieving important results by carrying out various project activities for meeting the above-stated objectives. The project has achieved all the targets as per the approved annual work plan. Successful implementation of the CHTWCA with financial support from USAID is resulting in positive changes, leading to community trust building and reduced forest-use conflicts.

Discussions:

Detailed discussions followed the presentation. Honorable State Minister made some valuable suggestions. He suggested that local people residing in and around the project VCFs should be benefited from the project activities, and that local leaders including the headmen and karbaries should be closely associated. He commented that indigenous tree species should be focused in the regeneration of degraded VCFs and RFs.

The Chairman of Bandarban Hill District Council narrated in detail about his experiences while dealing with the CHT land-use issues including forest management. He gave examples from Matamuhuri and Sangu RFs in Bandarban. He emphasized protecting degraded VCFs and RFs by involving local community as these forests have regenerative capacity.

The Chairman of Khagrachari Hill District Council recollected the important decisions taken in the two meetings convened in the Prime Minister Office. He opined that local community people should get co-benefits of participatory management of the VCFs.

6. New Recruitment

The NPM briefed the meeting about new recruitment under the project. He informed that considering the newly planned activities under SID-CHT project the 2nd Project Implementation Committee (PIC) meeting held on 12 July 2018 approved recruitment of existing 16 vacant posts as per approved TAPP. In consideration of effective implementation of the project components PIC also approved the proposal of 10 new positions under the project on condition that draft TOR of the new positions will be shared with NPD of SID-CHT project. The PIC had also approved 7 new positions under the SID-CHT project to support the 2nd phase of Activating Village Court (AVC-II) CHT activities implementation. It has been mentioned in the approved TAPP that PIC will discuss and approve any new positions, if required, based on future funding situation and programme necessity (TAPP of SID-CHT, page-23).

7. Discussions:

Honorable State Minister suggested that local people should be given preference while recruiting for the field position. UNDP assistant Country Director completely agreed with the spirit and opined that local people should be empowered more for CHT development. He ensured that UNDP will incorporate the issue while preparing the ToRs so that local people get more opportunities.

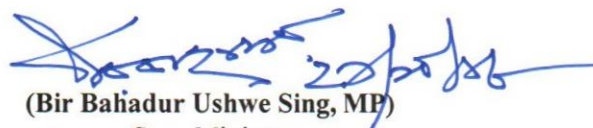
Decisions

- 1) New participant should be included while selecting beneficiary for livelihood grants.
- 2) A follow up mechanism should be developed to monitor the livelihood grants. Headmen and karbaries are to be engaged in the monitoring and follow up mechanism.
- 3) While preparing the Annual Work Plan for 2019 more emphasis should be given on grants than trainings for sustainable livelihood development of CHT people.



- 4) SID-CHT will prepare TOR, guidelines and assist MOCHTA to establish the CHT Development Bank.
- 5) Local people residing in and around the project VCFs should be benefited from the project activities, and local leaders including the headmen and karbaries should be closely associated.
- 6) Focus should be given on indigenous tree species during activities aimed at regeneration of degraded VCFs and RFs.
- 7) Local community people should be involved in participatory forest management, and co-benefits to VCF dependent community be provided by VCF management committees.
- 8) The project management should take all out efforts for implementation of project activities as per TAPP and work plan.
- 9) Local people should be given preference while recruiting the field positions.
- 10) The NSC agreed with the following decisions made at the PIC meeting of 12 July 2018:
 - Project Management can start recruitment process for 16 vacant positions as per TAPP.
 - 10 new positions under the SID-CHT project are approved
 - 7 new positions under the SID-CHT project to support AVC-II are approved
 - All the new activities and new positions will have to be included while revising the TAPP.
- 11) The NSC endorses DKK 39 million funding for the host community support programme in 3 (three) Upazilas of Bandarban (Lama, Alikadam and Naikkhyongchori) and 3 (three) Upazilas of Cox's Bazar (Ramu, Ukhia and Teknaf). The NSC directed that all the newly planned activities and related new positions must be incorporated while revising the TAPP.

There being no other agenda to discuss, the Chair concluded the meeting with a vote of thanks to all the participants.



(Bir Bahadur Ushwe Sing, MP)

State Minister

Ministry of Chattogram Hill Tracts Affairs
and Chairperson, NSC of SID-CHT Project