

INTRODUCTION BY THE MISSION LEADER OF WATER MONDIAAL, MR PETER DE VRIES

25 APRIL 2010

BANGLADESH AND THE NETHERLANDS COOPERATION ON WATER MANAGEMENT

TOWARDS A NEW PARTNERSHIP!

Bangladesh and the Netherlands have been collaborating in the field of water management since Bangladesh independence. Both delta countries have many similarities in the way they deal with water, as an opportunity and as a threat. Cooperation between the two countries has largely developed within the framework of developing cooperation programme; however also an important element have been programmes and project implemented through private sector companies, knowledge institutes and non-governmental organisations.

New water challenges have developed internationally, notably the need for climate change adaptation and the ever increasing demand for fresh water. At the same time the international order is changing and a growing number of countries are transiting from developing to middle income countries, among which many countries the Netherlands has cooperation relations in the field of water management e.g. Vietnam, Indonesia and also Bangladesh

INTERNATIONAL POLICY IN THE DUTCH NATIONAL WATER PLAN

In the National Water Plan of 2010, the Netherlands government has formulated its ambitions for its international water programme, called 'Water Mondiaal' (Global Water). This programme (2010-2015) envisages the Netherlands to continue playing an active role in solving the world's water problems by sharing its knowledge and expertise on crucial water issues

Objectives of the programme are to reduce vulnerability against floods and the effects of climate change and ensuring supply of sufficient and clean water. Central thematic areas of the programme are Water Supply & Sanitation, Water & Food and Ecosystems, Water & Safety as well as two transversal themes: Climate Change Adaptation and Water Governance. The Water Mondiaal programme will focus its attention on five deltas and envisions long term co-operation agreements with the countries of these deltas. These partnerships will build upon existing bilateral cooperation programme in the respective countries. Bangladesh is one of these five delta countries.

The programme will not only envisage cooperation between the concerned governments but also and in particular cooperation between the private sector in both countries and between knowledge centres.

At present the 'Water Mondiaal' programme is being developed with Indonesia and Vietnam. In Indonesia will focus on three major areas: flood prevention and management in the Jakarta area, the development of coastal lowlands and the drinking water & sanitation sector.

In Vietnam the programme will be focused climate change adaptation in the Mekong delta.

The approach in Vietnam will be based on the experiences obtained in the Netherlands developing the National Delta Plan for climate change adaptation.

THE WATER MONDIAAL PROGRAMME AND BANGLADESH

The Programme Water Mondiaal envisages contributing to the broadening of the existing cooperation programme with Bangladesh in the water sector by intensified and high level exchange of knowledge and experiences, capacity building and institutional strengthening between all components of the Bangladesh en Netherlands water sector.

The cooperation will be based on a government-to-government agreed framework, in which a range of partnership activities between the Netherlands and Bangladesh can be developed. Issues and activities to be

considered under this programme have to be in line with the goals and objectives of Bangladesh national development plans and contribute to reaching the Millennium Development Goals.

The programme will build upon the long-standing bilateral cooperation in the field of water management in which governmental and non-governmental organisations are engaged. During their visit to Bangladesh in July 2009 the Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation and the Vice Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Water Management have on one hand confirmed the central position of the water sector in the bilateral cooperation and their willingness to intensify the cooperation in this sector. On the other hand further development of this cooperation will only be successful if based on substantial progress in the reform of the sector institutions and the strengthening of these institutions in the period 2009-2011. For this reason the themes water governance reform (including participatory water management) will receive specific attention by the mission.

As climate change will have a very significant impact on all aspects of water management this (transversal) theme will equally receive explicit attention.

AIM OF THE PRE-IDENTIFICATION MISSION

Preparations are underway to start the implementation of the Water Mondiaal Programme. As first step in this process a pre-identification mission will visit Bangladesh from April 24 till 30 2010 in order to inform Bangladeshi partners about the programme and identify jointly with the Bangladesh government and water sector institutions and organisations priority fields of cooperation.

From the Netherlands the following mission members take part in the mission:

- Mr Peter de Vries, Environment, Water, Climate and Energy Department at the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (mission leader)
- Mr Ben Lamoree, Netherlands Water Partnership
- Mr Raimond Hafkenscheid, Cooperative Programme on Water and Climate
- Ms Catharien Terwisscha van Scheltinga, Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Conservation and Food
- Mr Martijn van de Groep, Netherlands Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management
- Mr Jaap van der Velden, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Jakarta.