

Report of South – South Learning Series on Development of Farmer Water User Associations (a video conference)

I. INTRODUCTION:

A Video Conference was held on 27th May, 2009 on South- South Learning on Development of Farmer Water User Associations, through Global Distance Learning System China. The Video Conference was jointly organized by The World Bank and the World Bank Institute, the state office of Comprehensive Agriculture Development under Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Water Resources of China. Philippines, Afghanistan, Indonesia and Pakistan were the Participants of Video-Conference. Pakistan set up 05 Centers to participate in the Conference at Karachi, Hyderabad (LUMS, Jamshoro), Lahore, Quetta and Islamabad. Different representatives from Area Water Boards, Farmer Organisations and Water Professionals from Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (SIDA) Hyderabad participated in the Video Conference(list of Participants is attached).

Objective of the Video Conference was to share the experience of China with other Countries as well as learn from the experiences of the East Asia and South Asia through their participants.

Proceedings:

Ms. Mei Xie Senior Water Resources Specialist, Task Manager, WBI, World Bank conducted the proceedings of the Video Conference. During the discussions and presentations delivered by Chinese representative the participants from Pakistan and Sindh learned that concept of Water User Associations was initially introduced to China through World Bank. So far 40,000 WUAs have been established and they are fully operational in rural China. 25% of these 40,000 WUAs are headed by Women Farmers. They are making a difference, contributing to irrigation water management and agricultural production.

Following were the 05 basic principles, commonly discussed in the Video Conference:

- a. Water User Association is the farmers' own organization –its management body is democratically elected.
- b. Water User Association is formed based on hydrological boundaries.
- c. There should be a water measurement device at intake, where the WUA takes responsibility, so that the WUA pays water on volumetric basis.
- d. WUA collects water fees from farmers and pays directly to the irrigation company based on a contract, symbolizing a clear commercial relationship between water provider and buyer.
- e. There should be a functional irrigation system, supplying water to the WUA.

Following were the key discussion points and question raised by the participating countries.

1. Sustainability of Water User Associations.
2. Methodology and Time period Chinese took to establish a WUA.
3. Monitoring and Evaluation of Water User Associations.
4. Gender Mainstreaming in WUAs.
5. How to develop a local Farmer Organization in fully functional Water User Association.

Discussions:

From Pakistan, Irrigation and Drainage Authorities (PIDA, SIDA, etc established under Institutional Reforms at Provincial level) were the participating institutes along with a little participation of Planning Commission of Pakistan.

The General Manager Transition from SIDA led the Conference. Following are the questions raised by SIDA participants,

1. How 25% Water User Associations are working under the leadership of women.
2. What is the financial management of these 40, 000 WUAs.

Regarding women participation in WUAs it was informed that women mainly play a crucial role in food production in Rural China and the major farming activities are also undertaken by the women. Therefore they take more interest in establishment of WUAs than men. It was also shared that, the Chinese put more focus on gender mainstreaming at all levels of WUAs. There are special training manuals and information / educational material for women integration in WUAs. It was also informed that for Gender Mainstreaming they have special funds from DFID and World Bank as well.

Coming to the Financial Management of WUAs it was informed that apart from World Bank funds, they also have local government support. Water Service charges are collected by WUAs, 40 % of that share is deposited to Government share where as 60% is retained for the operation of WUA. Participants from Sindh noted this with interest as it is other way round in Sindh.

Conclusion:

All participants learned while being involved in such world exposure and took interest and gave serious attention in knowing countries committed towards irrigation reforms. It was recommended that such events with focus groups like farmers, govt officials may be organized continuously in series manner by the WBI to further augment and share the knowledge and enhance understanding of PIM.. The participants appreciated the efforts of WB, WBI and others including SIDA (at local level) for facilitating the event.

II. PARTICIPANTS COMMENTS/ REMARKS:

- ***Professor Aijaz A Qureshi, General Manager Transition SIDA:*** The conference was very well organized. From the presentation of China, Philippines and Indonesia many new things were learned. The presentation made by Lu-Ming was fascinating on the issue of WUAs, especially the process of elections and establishing the process of

monitoring by the WUAs and archives established, gave a very impressive feedback, which made us to learn quite a lot.

- ***Habib Baig, Chairman FO Duthro Minor:*** This was my 1st experience to attend a video conference. I think this is an excellent way to share experience at international level. I learned about the other models of FOs/ WUAs and their functioning. Now I am happy because I may adapt some of new activities from other models of WUAs especially from Indonesian and Chinese models and make our own FO more productive.
- ***Turab Ali Aradin General Secretary FO Simni Minor:*** Video conference was a good opportunity of linking relations with others, but it is most important to go there and watching their work and problems.
- ***Habib Ahmedani, Training Coordinator, SIDA:*** As per China's PIM model, investment in irrigation system, for improvement is being done by Government. Only irrigation management is transferred to WUAs. But in Sindh FOs are legally independent and could invest independently through business plan and funds provided by Government are being invested by FOs. In China in case of conflict farmers try to resolve at WUA. In case of non-resolution Government involves. But in Sindh Regulatory Authority is established as independent court where conflict resolves. In Philippine different models are under practice. One model provides partial transfer, other relatively more and third fully transfer of the system as per willing and efficiency of WUA. In light of above the PIM in Sindh is better than ChinaPhilippine model of irrigation management transfer will give better results.
- ***Zulfiqar Memon, Social Mobilization Officer:*** The conference was very good and we learnt a lot about the system of different countries.
- ***Masroor Ahmed Social Mobilization Officer :*** The conference has given me great exposure, of reforms in South Asia especially in China. The experience of clients towards reform will help to other countries for partial fulfillment of problems encountered while implementing of the transition.
- ***Waqar Khokhar Social Mobilization Officer:*** Video conference was so good and online sharing ideas and experiences were also good. More video conferences should be organized in future but with more time period so that Farmers could participate in the event. The presentations should be placed on the Banks website so we can download.
- ***Tanveer Ahmed Assistant:*** In that conference different Asian countries participated and shared their professional experiences regarding water users association. With their professional experiences I have learned a lot of thing regarding subject title and observed that how other countries are actively working on development of Water Users Association. With this conference I knew very well regarding irrigation system of Asian countries being an agriculture country we might be able to compete with other Asian countries and professionally we develop different successful water users associations for getting productive results in our agriculture and irrigation sectors.

- ***Imran Dayo Social Mobilization Officer:*** The successful implementations on irrigation reforms and participatory management were discussed in detail by the China within their Water Users Associations in which, the involvement of gender component was encouraged. It was a great opportunity for me to learn and get updated of my area of work and line of profession. The Philippine, Afghanistan, Indonesia and Pakistan participated with full charm and progressively during whole conference. The question and answers session went out-standing due to useful question and progressive answers by the China pertaining to the field based issues and techniques they have used to achieve the target. It was a great experience to know they have up to 25% participation of women in their Water Users Associations (WUAs). Other learning was that their contribution of Water Charges (Abiana) is 40% for Government and 60% for WUAs to strengthening the WUA.
- ***Bilawal Soho Social Mobilization Officer: Conference*** was done very well. Audiences were comprehensively briefed about participatory irrigation management system being executed in China and Phillipines. However less time duration was offered for discussions. Discussion at national level could not take place.
- ***Shakeela Leghari Coordinator Gender and Development:***The video conference gave me an excellent opportunity of interaction with other people at different parts of South Asia. Presentations, and sessions were ideal as conference was designed to meet the needs of those who had yet started to develop Farmer Water User Associations. To me integration of women in WUAs on such a big scale was surprising because gender mainstreaming in my own country is a challenging job. After participating in video conference I am feeling more enthusiastic. The duration of conference was less; it is suggested to increase the length of conference next time. The sound of translations could not be heard and understood clearly it is also suggested to maintain a quality translations with clear sound.
- ***Mustafa Ujjan, Group Leader Social Mobilization:*** The experience sharing of Water User Associations Kunan Province of China and Phillipins were informative and encouraging for us. It was evident from the presentations of representatives of WUAs of both countries that the core issues and problems of water sector and its decentralization process are almost same which we are facing here. The only difference is the scale of irrigation infrastructure and the keen involvement of public sector of those countries for the success of PIM model.

**South –South Learning Series on Development of Farmer Water User Associations
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(List of applicants)**

S#	Name	Designation	Organization	Location
1	Professor Aijaz Qureshi	General Manager Transition	SIDA	Hyderabad
2	Mr. Muhammad Ali Mahar	Deputy General Manager Operations	SIDA	Hyderabad
3	Mr. Nazeer Chana	Communication Advisor	SIDA	Hyderabad
4	Mr. Ghulam Mustaf Ujjan	Group Leader , SDC	SIDA	Mirpurkhas
5	Mr. Masroor Ahmed Shahwani	Social Mobilization Officer	SIDA	Hyderabad
6	Ms. Shakeela Leghari	Social Mobilization Officer	SIDA	Hyderabad
7	Mr. Waqar Ahmed Khokhar	Social Mobilization Officer	SIDA	Sanghar
8	Mr. Zulfiqar Memon	Social Mobilization Officer	SIDA	Umerkot
9	Mr. Bilawal Soho	Social Mobilization Officer	SIDA	T.M Khan
10	Dr. Buxal Lashari	Member (academician)	SIDA Board	Hyderabad
11	Mr. Zahid Hussain Bhurgari	Member	Nara Canal AWB	Nau Kote
12	Mr. Omer Farooque A. Khan	Member	Left Bank Canals AWB	Badin
13	Mr. Ali Akbar Bodlo	Chairman	FO Bagi Minor	Jhudo
14	Mr. Habib Baig	Chairman	FO Duthro Minor	Sanghar
15	Mr. Turab Ali Aradin	Secretary	FO Simni Minor	Choondko
16	Ms. Shagufta Durrani	Gender Specialist	PIAC	Hyderabad
17	Tanveer Ahmed Memon	Computer Operator	SIDA	Hyderabad
18	Aftab Leghari	Assistant	SIDA	Hyderabad
19	Arif Balouch	Social Mobilization Officer	SIDA	Sanghar
20	Imran Dayo	Social Mobilization Officer	SIDA	Hyderabad