

Minutes of the Stakeholder Consultation Meeting on Restoration & Rejuvenation of Wah Umkhrah, Wah Umshyrpi & Wah Umkhen held on 14th April, 2023.

1. A stakeholder consultation meeting was held on 14th April, 2023 at Yojana Bhawan, Main Secretariat to deliberate on Restoration & Rejuvenation of the three main rivers Wah Umkhrah, Wah Umshyrpi & Wah Umkhen flowing through Shillong City.
2. The meeting was Chaired by Hon'ble Chief Minister of Meghalaya Shri Conrad K. Sangma. Hon'ble Dy CM Shri Sniawbhalang Dhar, Hon'ble Minister Shri A.L. Hek and Chief Secretary, Government of Meghalaya, Shri D.P. Wahlang IAS were also present. List of participants is at Annexure-1
3. Shri. S.M.A. Razi, Commissioner & Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya, Forests & Environment Department welcomed all the dignitaries, representatives of KHADC, concerned citizens, civil society groups, government officials and Rangbah Shnong of different localities of Shillong who turned up in large numbers at Yojana Bhawan to deliberate on the issue of utmost importance regarding the condition of the Wah Umkhrah, Wah Umshyrpi & Wah Umkhen the three main rivers flowing through Shillong city. He highlighted that the presence of the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, Hon'ble Minister and Chief Secretary for the deliberations indicates the seriousness Government of Meghalaya accords to the condition of the three rivers.
4. In the opening address, Shri. Conrad K. Sangma, Hon'ble Chief Minister welcomed all the stakeholders and thanked the Chief Secretary for taking the initiative to convene the meeting. The Chief Minister said that the objective of the meeting was identify the critical gaps and devise future action plan and the way forward in the rejuvenation and restoration of the three important rivers of Shillong while soliciting the participation and suggestions of the Dorbar Shnongs and the communities.
5. Chief Secretary Shri Donald P. Wahlang, IAS then made the presentation on the status of the three rivers and started by expressing regret that whereas Meghalaya also boasts of the cleanest river Umngot and the cleanest village Mawlynnong, the Umkhrah and Umshyrpi rivers are listed among the 45 most polluted rivers in the country. The Chief Secretary highlighted the alarming condition of the rivers through drone videos & photographs which also identified the main polluting locations for both solid & liquid waste. He also informed that the water quality of the three rivers as per Central Pollution Control Board standards is highly polluted and needs immediate corrective measures. Chief Secretary also highlighted that MSPCB had identified 20 outfalls of Wah Umkhrah & 12 outfalls of Umshyrpi which needed

treatment by setting up of Sewage of Treatment Plants & other related measures. Chief Secretary informed that Government is ready to install STPs on Government land wherever available and requested the Rangbah Shnongs & KHADCs cooperation in identification of land in other areas to enable the Government of Meghalaya to set up STPs.

6. Directives of the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal on OA No. 673 of 2018 and OA No. 192/2022 was also highlighted to make everyone aware with regard to the direction of the court for restoration of Umkhrah & Umshyrpi Rivers. He also referred to the KHADC Solid Waste Management Rules, 2022 which empowers the Dorbar Shnong to take action such as imposing fines on polluters. As such the Shnongs now have powers to impose hefty fines from people who discharge their septic tanks directly into the rivers or who openly dumps solid wastes.
7. Chief Secretary strongly emphasized that Shillong Municipal Board will impose hefty fines on anyone found openly dumping of solid waste and residing in a house without or faulty septic tank. To overcome the problem of Municipal and non-Municipal areas, Chief Secretary stated that the PHE Department will now be the nodal department to look after sanitation in non municipal areas and also other problems pertaining to poor management of garbage.
8. Case studies on best waste management practises and efforts taken by the Government and Dorbar Shnong and community involvement were also presented.
9. The Chief Secretary concluded his presentation by identifying the action points going forward:

- a. Treatment of sewage/used water at all 32 outfalls of two rivers by collection, transport and treatment of sewage in STP both within SMB areas and outside with required Sewer network
- b. In situ nallahs treatment wherever STP not feasible /Onsite STP
- c. Ensure no fecal matter released into river.
- d. Penalty on households without septic tank/ leakage of septic tank
- e. All industrial unit should have ETP/STP
- f. No vehicle washing along the rivers

Garbage Management

- g. Spot penalty for dumping garbage by SMB and other agencies
- h. Headman empowered to impose spot penalty for garbage dumping
- i. Fencing to prevent garbage dumping and CCTVs for monitoring
- j. Mesh trap and regular cleaning

Sustainability Measures

k. Extensive Plantation along rivers

l. Community Participation, Awareness Programme and Sensitization

10. The Chief Secretary then invited the leaders of civil society, members of public, Rangbah Shnong etc to offer their comments, suggestions, etc.
11. Shri. Barnabas Nangbah, Rangbah Shnong suggested that punishments and penalties should be strictly implemented and suggested appointment of sanitation inspectors on two-wheelers to drive around and click pictures/videos of defaulters.
12. Chief Secretary informed everyone that very soon Government of Meghalaya is introducing an App where the citizens can take pictures of such violations and upload in the app for corrective action.
13. Shri Rapionglang Blah suggested joint venture & collective responsibility amongst the Dorbar Shnong, citizens and the Government/Organization for waste management. Inspection on septic tanks on every household should be carried out for appeals through pamphlet or local PA system to general public for creating awareness on proper waste management. He opined that prize distribution should be given to localities having best practices on waste management. He also requested that Shillong Municipal board should put it in public domain and make available with the Headman of all the Dorbar Shnong on number of available Cesspool vehicles, the fees alongwith the contact number of nodal persons so that the public can avail this facility to prevent illegal discharge of sewage.
14. Shri. R. S. Marbaniang, Rangbah Shnong of Wahiingdoh informed that Reserved Police premises opposite of Wahiingdoh are discharging of both solid and liquid wastes into Wah Umkhrah. He requested responsible senior officials to come personally and inspect the localities to see the ground reality with regard to waste management. He pointed out that the solid waste that is coming through Raimohan Drain in Wahiingdoh is from Police bazaar, Iewduh, IewMawlong, Motphran via Umsohsun stream. Requests the Government to provide CCTVs to be installed in the areas near the discharged outlets so that it acts as a deterrent for defaulters. Shri Marbaninag also presented a pen drive with information on above issues to the Hon'ble CM.
15. Shri. Ritre Lyngdoh of Greentech Foundation stressed that awareness for the cleanliness of the locality must be done by the Dorbar Shnong and the District Council should direct the Shnong to imposed penalties on violators or polluters residences or business establishments in their localities. He informed that Greentech Foundation is willing to collaborate with the Dorbar Shnong towards cleanliness and creating awareness to the public.

16. Shri. Nicholas Kharkamni pointed that due to lack of infrastructure and resources to treat the waste that it has become a problem being faced right now. He opined that we should look at waste as an opportunity and direct defaulters to pay for polluting. He suggested that waste resource collection centre should be set up for people to pay for disposal of their waste.
17. Shri. Jefferson Kynjing, Project Clean Surrounding suggested awareness should be done aggressively at school levels for school children. He pointed that there is lack of enforcement and door to door collection is not being carried out in some areas. He suggested that the Government should set up a City Green Police to tackle this menace and to encourage Sewage management at home.
18. Ms. Patricia Mukhim, Operation Clean Up suggested that since Umkhen river passes through Army areas, they should also be taken as stakeholders for maintenance of cleanliness of the river and to avoid encroachment. Requests that garbage collection trucks should be punctual and timing of collection are fixed accordingly with the Dorbar Shnong so as not to cause any inconvenience to the residence that have to leave home early for work.
19. The representative of Raid Laban DorbarPyllun, Shri A. Sunn informed that dumping of garbage into the stream happens mainly at night and that the Dorbar are contemplating to construct a mesh at accessible junctions to prevent dumping of garbage to the stream.
20. Shri Bantyllilang Nari, Rangbah Shnong, Nongrim Hills informed that there is illegal mining and quarry happening 500 mts from Umkhen area. Request the govt. to sanction funds for procurement of garbage collection trucks to cater to the waste being generated from the locality.
21. Shri P Pyngrope, Rangbah Shnong of Nongrah informed that Nongrah already has a waste management cell and the Dorbar is now is proposing to streamline waste management in the locality, Expressed his gratefulness to KHADC who has empowered Rangbah Shnong to fine the defaulters.
22. Shri. Carmo Narohna of Bethany Society suggested that a curriculum for zero waste should be introduced for schools and colleges.
23. Shri. Devender Singhania, Secretary Police Bazaar Welfare Society informed that the street dwellers are the main cause of littering in the area and suggested that the street dwellers be immediately relocated. He informed Automobile workshops are directly discharging their wastes into the drain behind Shani mandir and it has to be stopped.
24. Shri. Rudi Warjri suggested creation of a supervisory body to oversee the waste management in the State.

25. The Chief Secretary in reply to the suggestion, issues and opinions of the all the speakers will be taken into account and included in the actionable points that will emerge from this consolation. He also stated that a follow up of this meeting will happen very shortly. He then requested the Hon'ble Chief Minister to present the concluding remarks of the programme.
26. The Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri. Conrad K. Sangma pointed that there is a need of the hour is to ensure the balance between ecology and economy and the meeting is a part of the larger agenda of the state government to have a balance among livelihood, economy and environment so that while the economic needs are being taken care of the environment is also protected and conserved for future generations. He stressed that it is important to have a positive mindset and stop playing the blame game since we are all in this together. He also said that the government is committed to rejuvenation and restoration of all water bodies in the state and we need to put our heads and hearts together to address this monumental problem. The Chief Minister suggested that a core group along with sub-groups be set up to monitor and address the specific issues and actionable points that have emerged out this consolation.
27. Hon'ble CM stressed that Restoration & Rejuvenation of the rivers is a part of the larger agenda of government related to climate change which is being dealt by the climate council under his Chairmanship. He also highlighted some of the programmes of the government for climate change mitigation like Payment of Eco-system Services, sewage and waste management, phasing out single-use plastic, mitigating air pollution through use of electric vehicles and afforestation and community participation through awareness and involvement of students and youth. Hon'ble CM exhorted everyone present to start with a positive mindset as everyone has a role to play towards a better environment.
28. A vote of thanks was accorded by Shri. S.M.A. Razi, Commissioner & Secretary. who expressed his gratitude to Hon'ble Chief Minister, Hon'ble Dy Chief Minister and Hon'ble Minister for taking out time from their extremely busy schedule. He thanked the Chief Secretary, Govt of Meghalaya for conceptualizing and convening this stakeholder consultation meeting and all leaders of civil society, all the officials, Rangbah Shnongs, concerned citizens and NGO's present at the consultation meeting for their co-operation, participation, suggestion and opinions towards a better and clean Shillong. He also informed that the presentation made by Chief Secretary will be uploaded on the website of Shillong Municipal Board for information of everyone

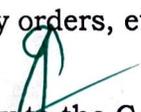
Sd/-

(D. P. Wahlang, IAS)
Chief Secretary

Copy to:-

1. The P.S to the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Govt. of Meghalaya, for information of the Hon'ble Chief Minister.
2. The P.S to the Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister i/c Urban Affairs Department for information of the Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister.
3. The P.S to the Hon'ble Minister i/c Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department for information of the Hon'ble Minister.
4. The P.S to the Chief Secretary to the Govt. of Meghalaya, for information of the Chief Secretary.
5. The P.A. to the Principal Secretary to the Govt of Meghalaya, Water Resources Department for information of the Principal Secretary.
6. The P.A. to the Commissioner & Secretary to the Govt. of Meghalaya, Forest & Environment/ Urban Affairs/ Public Health Engineering/ District Council Affairs/ Home (Police)/ Finance Department for information of the Commissioner & Secretary.
7. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forest & HoFF, Meghalaya, Shillong.
8. Smti. Patricia Mukhim, Editor The Shillong Times & Operation Clean Up.
9. The Secretary to the Govt. of Meghalaya, Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare Department.
10. The Deputy Commissioner, East Khasi Hills District, Shillong.
11. The Member Secretary, Meghalaya State Pollution Control Board, "ARDEN", Lumpynggad, Shillong-793014.
12. The Director, Urban Affairs, Shillong.
13. The Chief Executive Officer, Shillong Municipal Board/ Shillong Contonement Board.
14. The Chief Engineer, Public Health Engineering.
15. The Secretary to Executive Committee, Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council, Shillong.
16. Shri Toki Blah, IAS (Retd), Shillong/ Shri Rudi Warjri, IFS (Retd), Shillong/ Shri Bryan Wahlang, Shillong/ Shri Jiwat K. Vaswani, Shillong.
17. The Chief Executive Officer, Shillong Smart City Limited.
18. _____ Civil Society Organisations.
19. The Headman, _____ Dorbar Shnong.
20. Shri Nababrata Bhattacharjee, Chairman, State Expert Appraisal Committee (SEAC), Silviculture Building, Lower Lachaumiere, Shillong-793001.
21. Mr. R.L. Blah, General Secretary, SYNJUK KI NONGSYNSHAR SHNONG KA BRI U HYNNIEWTREP.

By orders, etc.,


Joint Secretary to the Govt. of Meghalaya,
Forest & Environment Department
