

Aid to the East will Top the G7 Agenda

by Geoff Tansey

If a week is a long time in politics then it is no wonder the last G7 summit seems light-years away. One year ago, Mikhail Gorbachev was welcomed to the London meeting with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) high on the agenda.

This year Gorbachev is a pensioner in Russia and the summiters are likely to be preoccupied with the political and economic consequences of that spectacular collapse in the East, with South Africa also racing in to claim their attention.

Trade is unlikely to feature at the top of the agenda, says Sheila Page, a research fellow at the Overseas Development Institute in London. Monetary policy and interest rates will likely top the economic issues.

She believes the recent reforms announced by the European Community to its Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) mean the EC and the United States "could reach an economically acceptable deal" over GATT but that the political issues, like the US elections later this year, outweigh the economic issues now.

"The key thing for developing countries," she says, "is that there be an agreement that makes it no worse than now, otherwise there will be greater protectionism."

However, the paltry outcome of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro has lowered expectations even more than before. With the CAP reform

When leaders from the world's seven most industrialised nations meet (G7 summit July 6-8) in Munich, aid to their former eastern bloc adversaries is likely to dominate discussions. Issues relating to GATT and the latest developments in South Africa may also take some of the summit time. As for developing countries, however, the summit does not offer much hope.

agreement signed, EC trade ministers are at least now in a position to negotiate.

Other reports suggest that the US is still unhappy and believes the EC has offered to reduce its subsidy on agricultural exports 10 per cent less than the 30 per cent the US wants.

Pre-summit speculation, fuelled by German officials, suggests that the leaders do not want to issue yet another communiqué which fails to deliver anything on GATT. Instead, they may leave it to trade and economics ministers to negotiate a deal by the end of the year.

Attention is much more likely to be focused on eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union with bloody fighting going on in Bosnia and Moldova and where ethnic rivalries and the massive changes threaten stability.

The former Soviet Union alone has been upped to \$45 billion this year, according to World Bank president Lewis Preston.

Conservative estimates place the resources needed this year at \$20 to \$25 billion

for Russia, and \$20 billion for the other 14 republics," he said in a speech in mid-June.

"So far, most of the resources pledged have been for Russia. The relative lack of attention given to the other republics is a point of major concern."

Russia is heavily industrialised and has a relatively high income and has just joined the World Bank and the International Development Association which gives concessional loans to poor countries.

Russia is the Bank's seventh largest shareholder, on par with Canada, India, Italy and Saudi Arabia and Preston expects the Russian Federation to contribute to IDA.

The Bank is preparing a lending programme that could total \$2.5 billion over the next 12 months for the states of the former Soviet Union and by the fiscal year 1995 expects to have an annual lending programme of \$4 to \$5 billion assuming the reforms continue.

That is likely to be something the G7 will want to ensure. At their 1990 summit the G7 asked the Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to study the Soviet economy.

The G7 called for closer links between the Bank, the IMF and the then Soviet Union at last year's summit. Since then all former Soviet states have applied for Bank membership and 11 for IDA membership.

Between 1990 and January 1992, an estimated \$60 billion in Western, mainly bilateral, assistance was pledged to the former Soviet republics, including \$40 billion in export credits and \$10 billion for the withdrawal of the Red Army from Germany.

Much of this was at near commercial rates and so does not mean the region directly competed with developing countries for the type of concessional assistance that IDA provides.

It is by no means clear, yet, according to Professor Meghnad Desai of the London School of Economics, whether all of these states will end up

aligned with the North or South. He believes that the focus on the East is diverting attention and resources from the needs of the developing countries.

"It is too early to be conclusive about whether aid to the East is additional to that to developing countries," says Charlotte Benson, joint author of a recent Overseas Development Institute report on economic changes in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

The ODI report does note that aid flows to Sub-Saharan Africa from the OECD countries did not increase in 1990, although figures from the OECD show that total overseas aid from the countries rose slightly, from \$55.1 billion in 1990 to \$58.2 billion in 1991.

The World Bank's Trust Fund of \$30 million for the former Soviet Union is drawn from the Bank's own income.

However, "perhaps a more subtle and potentially profound effect of the crisis of eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union is the diversion of political and high level aid management capacity to the prob-

lems of programmes in support of these countries," notes the report.

Cuba, Mongolia, Vietnam and other traditional recipients of eastern bloc aid, have lost out most from the collapse of communism in Europe. Total assistance from the East to the South fell by an estimated 50 per cent between 1987 and 1990 and by 96 per cent in 1991, according to the report.

Other losers are countries that had large bi-lateral trade, normally barter trade, with the eastern bloc, like India.

A further problem for developing countries could arise as privatisation in the East "could also attract private investment which might otherwise have been directed at development countries," says the ODI report.

The structural adjustment programmes underway in the East affect more than economic statistics as people in developing countries know only too well.

The effects of rising unemployment, hyper-inflation and cuts in public expenditure on benefits and services could be even more extreme than those in developing countries," notes the ODI report.

Add that into an already volatile situation, with some of the Soviet republics on a par with some low and middle income developing countries and you can see why the G7 might have more to think about than GATT. Then there is always South Africa. — GEMINI NEWS

A Sordid Affair

A shameful picture emerged about trafficking in women across South Asia from the proceedings in the Supreme Court in Pakistan last week. It was revealed by a government law officer that between 100 and 150 young women were being brought into Pakistan from other countries in the region, including Bangladesh, daily through illegal means, traded as "animals" and sold into prostitution.

In a commendable frank testimony, the Advocate General of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) suggested that police could be involved in this trade. The three-member bench, presided over by the Chief Justice, went into the matter with equally commendable thoroughness and established the basic facts on the tragic situation. For instance, it is now known that apart from Bangladesh, other countries which serve as sources of these unfortunate women include Burma, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and India. With a number of districts in Punjab providing the market for this clandestine trade, the gangs either purchased their victims or brought them to Pakistan after phony marriages, then sold them into brothels or sent them off to the Middle East.

Chief Justice Mohammad Afzal Zullah has rightly taken a tough line on the whole matter and issued several firm orders. Each village-level administration in Pakistani provinces has been asked to investigate and report, within a fortnight, if trafficking in women has taken place in its jurisdiction. In coming weeks, the Supreme Court will also hear complaints of alleged gang rapes of women at number of police stations in NWFP and Punjab. Again, the Chief Justice also suggested that a separate ministry be set up in Pakistan to look after the enforcement of human rights, through a determined crackdown on the trafficking of women.

If the Government of Pakistan and its provincial administrations act on the advice of Justice Zullah, the trafficking in women may well face a determined challenge from the law-enforcing agencies. However, even if the government's measures, including prosecution of police officials found to be involved in the trade, produce results, the end of this sordid business may not come all that easily. It may slow down a bit, change the market for the sale of these women and alter the strategy. What we should bear in mind, it is very much a regional problem, not wholly a Pakistani concern.

While it has been established that a section of police in NWFP are involved in this illegal trade, it would be virtually impossible for these unfortunate women from Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and other countries to cross the frontier on way to Pakistan without the connivance of border police or immigration officials of countries of their origin. Since this has been going on for many years, involving as many as 100 to 150 young women every day, the system may well be too established to be broken overnight or by the government of any single country. There may well be a South Asian mafia running the show from behind the scene.

South Asia must indeed deal with this menace on a regional basis, with necessary support from the Interpol. Let the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) take this up on a priority basis, do all the homework on it with information available from various member countries and devise a firm plan of action for the next summit of the alliance. We owe this to thousands of women who have been bought and sold by criminal gangs as well as to potential victims who can still be saved through a collective action by members of SAARC. Here, we also owe a debt to Justice Zullah for awakening our conscience on a problem that governments in this region had apparently pushed under the carpet, and, by doing so, he has upheld the best tradition of judiciary in South Asia.

Ballot Trouble in Beirut

Attempts to bring peace and reconciliation in the Lebanon, always a daunting task due to the existence of a bewildering array of forces ready to their utmost to derail any peace-treat that may whistle-in, are in doubt once again. This time, however, the problem seems to lie not with bullets but ballots. The Beirut government's plan to hold parliamentary elections within the next few weeks have brought Christians, clerics and militia fighters alike, to their feet in protest. The objectors contend that any polling at this juncture would leave nearly a third of the electorate without an opportunity to vote; they also doubt if elections could be free and fair with the Syrian army deployed in the eastern parts of the country and the Israelis illegally occupying a large segment of the south.

The Christians have threatened to boycott the polls, possibly fearing such a poll would tantamount to a legal transfer of the country's sovereignty to Syria, which commands the allegiance of most Muslim and some Christian factions.

It is now doubtful if prime minister Rashid Sohi would go ahead with the polls. However, there is the risk that Syria may not wish to wait until all the cobwebs resulting from the 17-year old civil war have been cleared away, including the return of some 500,000 refugees to their homes to register as voters. With a new Labour government taking over in Israel, Damascus may feel it has to move quickly and show the world it can still be relied upon to deliver a solution for the Lebanon. Syria notched up a major success with the signing of the Taif agreement in 1989, aimed at reforms to reflect the new demographic as well as political realities of the country. However, that agreement was ratified by deputies elected nearly 20 years ago, and it is imperative that a new, freely-elected parliament reiterate its commitment to uphold the Saudi-brokered deal. Syria is no doubt aware that a Christian boycott would not only rob the elections of legitimacy, it may also jeopardise the Taif agreement. Neither Damascus nor Beirut can afford to let that happen, especially in view of Israel's continued occupation of the south which is unlikely to change under a Labour government. A continued stalemate cannot be in the best interest of the country, and it is to be hoped that Syria, with help from the United States, may be able to lessen Christian opposition to polls. The last thing the US would want in the Lebanon is another round of fighting which the Christians cannot win, and recognition of that reality may lead to some strong pressure from Washington on the Christians to ease up a little.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT FOR DHAKA CITY- III

Feasible, Cost-effective Systems Should be Preferred

by Mohammad Nurul Islam

THE content and volume of municipal wastes vary from country to country depending on physical, social and economic factors. In the context of most developed countries practice, local landfill is the most preferred and cost-effective option for waste disposal. But this may not hold to the same degree in LDCs such as Bangladesh.

Bangladesh does not possess such a legal framework and institutional infrastructure to fully protect the environment. The environmental policy is embodied properly in terms of legislation that can be implemented effectively. There is no specific legislation to deal with solid waste disposal; partly as a result of this, the methods of solid waste disposal practised in Dhaka are unsatisfactory in many respects. For a variety of reasons, the responsible organisation for solid waste management is unable to accomplish the task. The necessary organisational systems are non-existent, the technical skill is not available, the appreciation of the importance of the work is lacking, there are insufficient funds, and there is probably also a lack of motivation towards this work.

Solid waste collection has yet to emerge as a well-organised programme in Dhaka city as well as Bangladesh. Traditional methods (i.e. labour intensive) with marginal inputs are commonly used. Optimum utilisation of the labour force which is pre-requisite for an effective performance is not practised. The number of employees involved in solid waste collection has no direct correlation with the cleanliness and promptness of service which is assessed in terms of collection efficiency. Transportation of refuse is by open trucks, thus the materials tend to be split on the roads. In the present system, the workers come in contact with dust and odours at a number of points, thus exposing them to infection and other health hazards.

By contrast to the standard operations, no treatment method or technique is practised in Bangladesh. Many valuable wastes, often in significant quantities, are never used because of lack of markets, technology, or just awareness. The reclamation industry depends on a huge network of extremely poor scavengers who barely subsist and who are grossly exploited by the merchants and the industrialists, who buy from them.

It may be that a gap in the industrial structure of Bangladesh can be filled by the expansion of an orderly reclamation industry with substantial employment resulting, and this has not been appreciated by planners and Government. The other benefits of extending and developing a vigorous reclamation industry in any LDC are: (a) savings in foreign exchange by substituting locally collected wastes for imported raw materials; (b) savings in energy consumption by industry which requires far less energy to manufacture from waste than from primary raw materials; (c) reduction of waste collection and disposal demands on municipalities; and (d) a reduction of litter as wastes are given a cash resale value.

Neither sanitary landfilling nor controlled tipping is practised at all in Bangladesh. The responsible organisation is presently disposing of solid waste by uncontrolled dumping in low-lying land, water ponds, ditches, and disused tanks as part of land reclamation in and around Dhaka city. Carefully planned and controlled tipping leads to the reclamation for valuable purposes of hitherto useless land.

The physical and chemical characteristics of Dhaka city refuse indicates that composting of city garbage can produce good quality organic manure and soil conditioner at a cost which is much lower than that of artificial fertilisers.

In developing countries — and Bangladesh is no exception — it is often found that institutional factors give rise to more difficulties than technical problems. Success in solving the latter can only be achieved by devising systems acceptable to the population at large and within the political will and ability of the Government to implement recommended measures. Master plans are often prepared more in a spirit of hope than of expectation, and while long-term planning is essential to assist governments in their long-range economic forecasting, priority in solid waste management projects may well be given to measures which will bring about environmental and health improvements to population sorely in need of both.

Recommendations

Bangladesh should have suitable legislation in which an adequate organisational framework and guidelines are provided to cope with solid

waste disposal. The need is to ensure that solid waste disposal does not adversely affect the community, the environment and public health.

The basis of all activities regarding the disposal of solid waste should be laid down in a new set of "Waste Disposal Laws" which should cover the following points:

(a) The definition of the term solid waste: The right must be established for the owner of waste material, the processing of which would not pay, to declare such material to be solid waste. The requirement of the government to declare moveable material to be waste must be laid down; **disorderly removal of such material would damage the public health;**

(b) The rights and obligations of producers and owners of solid waste: The related questions of costs involved must be clarified. The owner of the waste must act responsible in the interest of public well-being. The relationships between the originator and remover of wastes should pay due consideration to the social situation;

(c) Clarification of the question as to who is responsible for the removal of certain types of waste: Rights and obligations binding certain institutions to the removal of wastes must be laid down. This includes, inter alia, the authorities for those responsible for waste disposal to demand from the producer or owner thereof to make available such waste for collection at specified times;

(d) Determine how waste should be disposed of: The objective should be that waste should be turned to profitable re-use if at all possible, and that the environmental nuisances connected therewith should be limited to the least possible degree;

(e) Determine the type and scope of punishment in the case of violations of the law according to our existing socio-economic situation.

The handling and sanitary disposal of solid wastes are part of physical planning. Moreover, it is a measure of hygiene which is the basis for a successful public health policy. A new organisation with the proposed name "Solid Waste Management Board" should be established and attached to either the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives or the Ministry of Environment and

Forest. In its capacity as a semi-independent organisation it would be responsible for the operation, maintenance and financing of solid waste facilities which includes solid waste collection, treatment, recycling and disposal.

Bangladesh is in need of an EIA legislation that will permit the Government to insist on an EIA for major development and establish a legally binding set of procedures which seek to safeguard the environment while permitting development. EIA legislation should include: Types of Projects shall be made subject to an assessment; when an EIA is necessary; an indication of what the EIA must contain; a Section which empowers a certain body to settle disputes; a Clear indication of who will pay EIA related cost; an indication of the legal/administrative sanctions if the law is not complied with.

The essential steps in EIA should consist of the following:

(a) Preliminary Activities which include identification of decision maker(s), selection of co-ordinator, decision of work allocation, writing up of description of proposed development and reviewing of existing legislation.

(b) Impact Identification (Scoping) — a means of controlling the extent, and hence the cost of an EIA which should be applied to magnitude, extent, significance, and special sensitivity.

(c) Baseline Study — simple record of what existed in an area prior to a development.

(d) Impact Evaluation (Quantification) — quantification of impacts of the proposed development.

(e) Mitigation Measures — to reduce the impact intensity.

(f) Assessment (Comparison of Alternatives) — the environmental losses and gains will be combined with the economic costs and benefits to produce a full picture for each project alternative.

(g) Documentation — the documents for an EIA will be reference documents and working documents.

(h) Decision-Making — a team of experts will decide on the basis of information provided by the developer and checked and analysed by the reviewing authority, and compare which alternative has less environmental impact and is less costly.

(i) Post Audits — when a choice is made, the project

will proceed. Post audits are conducted to determine how close the predictions made earlier were to the reality.

A careful analysis of the present status of solid waste management in Bangladesh would lead to the inevitable recommendation that better standards could be achieved by prudent and well planned allocation of available resources through the application of appropriate technology. It is possible to attain a higher level of environmental protection for the community at a lower cost primarily through:

(a) appropriate designs for community containers, primary collection, transport vehicles, transfer locations and disposal facilities; and (b) better management and optimal utilisation of men and materials.

The following detailed proposals could be appropriate for planning and management of urban solid waste services in Bangladesh.

The expansion of primary collection and the reduction of motorised transport through the introduction of low-cost locally-made pedal tricycles or hand-carts and an optimal number of simple short-range transfer stations, would substantially reduce the cost of collection and transportation.

Small well-designed community containers to cover 10-15 houses would gradually eliminate the present practice of throwing refuse on the ground. As a rule, the people should keep the waste bins in the inner courtyards, and they should either make them available for emptying at the pavement of the kerbside or the dustmen should pick them up from the inner courtyard. In squares, on the main roads, at business quarters, or wherever deemed necessary or expedient, there should be brickbuilt refuse banks with removable containers, each with a holding capacity of, say, 75 litre. All of these containers should have a lid secured against unauthorised removal. The people would have to buy their own containers, or they would receive them from the refuse department against payment.

Depending on the density of population, one transfer station may cover 10,000-20,000. The operatives would transport the contents to transfer station on hand-carts. With the assistance of the local road sweepers, such carts could be used to deal with road litter as well.

A hand-cart, preferably with three rubber wheels and sufficient room to carry 4 contain-

ers of 75 litre capacity each, can take away approximately 130 Kg of waste per trip. It is assumed that the collector operating hand-carts will be able to make three trips a day thereby taking away 3 x 130 = 390 Kg/day.

On this basis a fleet of 1500 — 2000 hand-carts will be able to service the community bins twice a week. A fleet of 160 — 240 lorries/trucks with a payload of 5 tonne would then be needed for the onward transportation of the waste from the transfer stations to the disposal sites.

For disposal sites within 3 km of the transfer stations, motorised transport could be totally or partially substituted by pedal tricycles. For disposal sites within 5-10 km of the stations, tractor-trailer units could be cost-effective.

Disposal by several small landfills could be chosen at sites, if feasible, close to the urban areas on low-lying, swampy or disused land. Travel distances should be kept to a minimum if possible, so as to minimise traffic delays from the pedal tricycles or the slow moving tractor-trailer units.

Small manually operated sanitary landfilling sites could be operated fairly satisfactorily on a cut and cover method. Apart from the small sites, a number of other low-lying areas, measuring thousands of hectares, could be available as sanitary landfill sites. Careful planning and operational strategies are required for large-scale landfill sites.

Manually operated compost plants could be used to produce good quality compost. Composting in windrows could be a favoured option if appropriate measures are undertaken for maintaining competitive quality of the products as well as marketing. Inorganic materials, which could be between 30 and 50% of the total volume, would be rejected for composting and sent for private landfilling without causing a health hazard.

Appropriate measures should be undertaken to ensure that the scavenging population enjoy respect within society by providing them with working uniforms, hand-carts and of prime importance, guaranteed market prices for the materials they collect.

Proper steps should be taken for the expansion of an orderly reclamation industry with substantial employment. Training should be given to the scavengers for the proper reclamation of the recyclable and valuable wastes.

To the Editor...

Uniformity of clothes in educational institutions

Sir, Presently, development has been the major concern of the Third World countries. There are different dimensions of the concept 'development', namely, social development, economic development, political development, cultural development etc. One may disagree but I emphasise on the point that only education can cause the rapid development needed in all those dimensions. Let us at least assume, firstly, that we need educational development. Now, the question follows: how to bring forth this? For development of anything, constant

reforms are required. New strategies are to be devised and implemented. A suggestion is pointed out below, which is although not new but needs wider implementation.

I have been a student for seventeen years. In this long period, I have experienced that the youngsters are most vulnerable to inferiority complex. I have seen many prospective students lastly had to be dropped out due to their inferiority complex over clothes and poor living standards.

I am forced to write this letter having seen a student holding excellent results in the SSC and HSC examinations who is presently on his brisk march towards oblivion in the

International Relations Department of Dhaka University due to inferiority complex over clothes as well as his poor living standard. One may ask that if his inferiority complex over clothes and poor living standard is mainly responsible for his present academic debacle, then how could he cut excellent figures in the SSC and HSC examinations? This question can be answered in the manner that the competition with regard to clothes and living standard at those two previous levels was perhaps less than in the International Relations Department of Dhaka University.

Curiously, I came in close contact with him to know the facts and after long association,

lastly my hypothesis was proved.

I, therefore, fervently appeal to the concerned higher authorities to reform the educational system of Bangladesh starting with introducing uniformity with regard to clothes in all academic institutions. This measure could catalyze the flourishing of latent talents of the students of all strata of life leading to rapid educational development and on the overall national development.

Although, I know very well that this sort of fervent appeals very often go unheeded, yet I speak it out to disburse my moral responsibility to the society. The people with decision-making power are urged

to weigh the substantiveness of my argument.

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Professionals

Sir, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia while addressing the grand national Convention '92 of engineers, agriculturists, doctors and Bangladesh Civil Service Coordination Committee expressed her firm belief that under a democratic system there can be no difference among various service cadres. She said that all in the cadre services are substitute for each other because all have common goal of attaining development for the

welfare of people. The Prime Minister further said that her government was aware of the demands of the 23 cadres which, she assured, would be fulfilled in phases.

As a member of the professional group, I sincerely hope that the government of Prime Minister Begum Zia would take prompt measures to solve the professional problems of the engineers, agriculturists, doctors and members of the 23 cadres. We expect the Government to frame a professional based administrative system in the greater welfare of the nation.

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