

# Improved Planning and Technology Transfer through FAP

by Zahir Uddin Ahmad

One of the very positive aspects of the Flood Action Plan (FAP) seems to have always been overlooked in the earlier discussions by different authors. This is the improved planning aspect through the technology transferred in the FAP process. This article is intended to touch upon a few points in this regard.

FLOOD Action Plan has always been criticized by its opponents for high cost incurred during the study phase. This statement can also be balanced by comparing the cost of study with the cost of the planned implementation programme, which is reasonable. There is a Chinese saying that the water sector projects might take ten years to study and only one year to implement. This is true because all the water sector projects intervene the natural eco-system. The importance of studying the effect of any intervention is more important than the intervention itself. Hence the criticism is partly nullified. The critics also came up with the issues of lack of people's participation, poor environmental and socio-economic consideration etc. Very little has been discussed or focused about one of the very positive aspect of FAP, which is improved planning through the technology transferred in the FAP process.

It can be stated beyond doubt that technology transfer has significantly taken place in the FAP process. Before the inception of the FAP, water sector project planning would mainly mean flood control, improved drainage and increased production through irrigation facilities. The approach has significantly changed with the introduction of FAP. Bangladeshi experts along with their foreign counter-

parts in the technically assisted donor-funded projects acknowledge the fact that the beneficiaries' view should be taken into account throughout the project phase, which means during planning, design and implementation. Accordingly, the Ministry of Water Resources has circulated the Guidelines for People's Participation in the Water Development Projects. In the planning process, there would be a budget for compensation for the project affected people. Mitigation measure would also be considered in this process. Anticipated negative impact on the environment and on the fishery would also be minimised during the planning phase.

The issue of 'equity' would be given importance in terms of socio-economic viability. The long-term sustainability with regard to operation and maintenance would also be a burning issue in the planning process. Hence water sector planning would no longer be the isolated responsibility of the water resources engineers only, but the team work of the environmentalist, the socio-economist, the fisheries expert, the agriculturist, the

agronomist and so on. Inclusion of all the other sectors during planning is the outcome of the FAP process. It is worth mentioning here that the aforesaid concept and approach had never been the part of the course work in the engineering degree. Recently, BUET has started a course along with the Delft University of technology (DUT) which is called BUET-DUT programme under the technical assistance of the Government of Netherlands which covers these new issues in the field of integrated water resources management. This innovative course would broaden the view of the students of masters level in the water resources planning. The course also consists of one and two dimensional mathematical modelling which is a sophisticated tool for planning.

Contribution of FAP in the field of flood forecasting is praiseworthy. Flood forecasting method adopted in the past was old fashioned and was based on classical hydraulics. A modern technique has been introduced in the FAP process which makes use of the fully described computer based one dimensional mathematical model for the major river system of Bangladesh. This is a major breakthrough in the field of flood forecasting and, more importantly, Bangladeshi engineers are capable of handling this new technique.

Geographic Information System (GIS) technology has also been introduced in the FAP. In the modern world, no efficient planning can be conceived without the help of this new technology. GIS technology simplifies and saves lot of time in the planning exercise. This technology also gives much better insight in to a particular scenario by distributing it over space and making an easily understandable presentation. In the traditional method, the area-elevation curve of a catchment could have consumed few days to compute. Whereas, in the new technology, it is a matter of few minutes with the help of computer, once the elevation data is fed into the system. A significant number of Bangladeshi engineers, socio-economists and environmentalists can now handle the system on their own.

FAP technically improved the topographic mapping. It also introduced the most sophisticated equipment in the river survey which is of utmost importance in planning. This has enhanced the scope of the future work. It should be noted with appreciation that Bangladeshi engineers are actively involved in this process.

Flood Management Model (FMM) which is developed under the purview of FAP is very important tool to understand the flooding process and to find an optimal solution. Mathematical modelling and GIS technique are coupled together to achieve this goal. The FMM has already been applied in the flood impact assessment in the Compartmentalisation Pilot Project (CPP) in Tangail as a test case and may, in the long run, become a useful planning tool. It is planned that the Flood Management Model would be coupled with the Flood Forecasting Model to further improve the forecasting. Local engineers are fully involved in all phases of its development.

In conclusion, it can be said with a note of appreciation that the Flood Action Plan (FAP) has successfully brought in new technologies and transferred the technology to our local staffs which is prerequisite to a sustainable development of any country. The writer, a former consultant to SWMC, is presently working as Programme Officer, Water Sector in the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Dhaka. The views expressed are his personal.

# Garbage Menace in the City

by Obaid K Rahman

THE environment is one of the greatest challenges facing us as we stand on the threshold of a new millennium. We have passed the point when it is

garbage they contracted such diseases as trichinosis, which was then passed along to



humans. Disease such as this may infect other animals as well which comes to feast at the refuse. As this refuse becomes a food source of some animals like dogs and cats, we often have to bear with the unpleasant noise they make while fighting each other over their meal; besides the putrid stench coming out of the mess is simply unbearable!

Now the first step to be taken to redress the garbage disposal problem is to develop a civic sense and be very particular about dumping garbage in the right place — inside the garbage pit. Though it is a pity that there are insufficient garbage pits all over Bangladesh we should nevertheless make the best use of the garbage pits we already have. People should dump their domestic refuse right inside the garbage pits and not just in front of them. We should make sure that ev-

ery kitchen has a garbage — can and also that garbage originating in the kitchen are dumped inside those cans. The servants should be well instructed about the proper disposal of garbage; they should first put the garbage originating in the kitchen into polythene bags and tie a knot, so that the garbage doesn't come out. Then the polythene bags should be taken outside the house and dumped into the community garbage pit. The City Corporation garbage trucks will then come and collect the garbage and take it to the refuse dumping site. The City Corporation should keep the garbage disposal trucks in proper order. It is not an uncommon sight that the shutters of the garbage trucks remain open — mainly because of rust in the shutters. As a result refuse is spill all over the streets and make the air unbearably smelly — not to mentioned the horrible sight.

Isn't night-soil a better synonym for garbage which is carried in this stocks? If so, the DCC should be more particular about carrying night-soil only at mid-night! This gives us all the more reason to use polythene bags — at least then all the DCC trucks will be picking up a bundle of polythene bags and not just raw stinking garbage all the way! It would not be wise to compare our garbage disposal system with that of the more developed countries of the world.

# CHOGM — Action or Just Words?

## Nigeria Goes into the Commonwealth Dock

Centre-stage at the Commonwealth summit in Auckland (10-13 November) happens to be Nelson Mandela, attending his first meeting since South Africa resumed membership. It could be the most difficult meeting since the rows over how to end apartheid. But this time Nigeria and nuclear testing are the big issues.

Derek Ingram writes from Auckland



### The 30th Summit

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Auckland is 30th since series began in 1944. In that year five countries attended. This year 49\* will be there.

This is the 13th meeting outside London.

Others:	
Lagos	1966
Singapore	1971
Ottawa	1973
Kingston	1975
Lusaka	1979
Melbourne	1981
New Delhi	1983
Nassau	1985
Vancouver	1987
Kuala Lumpur	1989
Harare	1991
Umassol	1993

**Commonwealth facts**

Largest Commonwealth country: India (pop:900 million)

Smallest: Nauru (pop:8,000)

\* As special members, Nauru and Tuvalu do not attend summits

JAMES BOLGER Prime Minister of New Zealand who chairs the talks



spot for private talks. This year the presidents and prime ministers go to Millbrook Resort, Queenstown, in the South Island, where they can walk and play golf and tennis in what the brochure describes as a "spectacular amphitheatre of snow-capped mountains and breathtaking rolling country". Or they can sit around at the Italian Cafe or Hole in One Bar.

The 1995 summit is shorter than in the past, but it promises more offstage fireworks for many years — Nobel prizewinner Wole Soyinka leading Nigerian protesters against the regime of General Sani Abacha and strong demonstrations against nuclear testing being certain. And, with more

overseas journalists in New Zealand than ever before, the Maoris see this as the biggest opportunity to make known their grievances to the international community.

In addition, members from the Hong Kong Legislative Council are there to meet delegates to the last Commonwealth summit before the colony is handed over to China. They hope some formula can be found by which non-government organisations can keep some Commonwealth links after 1997.

But it is Nigeria and the problem of ridding the Commonwealth of military government that will generate the real heat. The British are working hard to stitch up a compromise that will re-

lieve pressure on Nigeria. Their policy is one of carrot and stick. Nigeria is oil-rich and therefore to be treated carefully.

The British stick does not go much further than verbal disapproval of continued political jailing and demands for an early return to civilian rule. The carrot is to stave off calls for sanctions and for the exclusion of Nigeria from some Commonwealth meetings.

A conference on investment in Nigeria has just been held in London, for which the British government hosted a reception. Nigerian democrats are deeply disappointed at British failure to be tough with Abacha. Prime Minister John Major has talked to Abacha on the tele-

phone, perhaps roughly, but publicly comment is muted.

The British see the key players on Nigeria in Auckland as South Africa and Zimbabwe. President Nelson Mandela is attending his first Commonwealth summit and Britain has been encouraging him and President Robert Mugabe not to give the Nigerians too rough a ride.

Britain is taking greater interest in the Commonwealth as an organisation than for a couple of decades and the 1997 summit is likely to be in Edinburgh — the first time Britain has offered to host CHOGM for 20 years.

British foreign policy now is to look again beyond Europe. This shift is a nod to right-wing critics of the European Union and follows the realisation that several Commonwealth countries in Asia are becoming key markets.

For years Britain was out of tune with the Commonwealth because of differences over how to deal with apartheid South Africa. With that chapter over, Britain hopes for a better rapport which will enable it to increase its influence in the organisation.

That may not be so easy. At Auckland it also wants to head off attacks on France over nuclear testing, Australia, New Zealand and the rest of the Pacific Commonwealth are angry with Britain for its failure to condemn the Pacific tests.

To defuse this anger and to avoid being put in the dock in Auckland, Britain has persuaded France and the United States to agree to endorse a nuclear-free zone in the Pacific under the 1985 Treaty of Rarotonga after the French have completed their current series of tests at Mururoa Atoll.

The British will push for as mild a paragraph on testing as possible in the Commonwealth communique. But the French are to hold more tests, and most leaders in Auckland want everything possible done to stop them. The British are said to have urged France to delay their next test until CHOGM is over.

Perhaps to placate CHOGM, the French now say they will carry out only four more tests instead of the six more planned. New Zealand says even one more test is unacceptable.

At the Cyprus CHOGM, the leaders "urged all nuclear weapons states to refrain from testing" pending conclusion of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. At the 1991 summit, the communique merely said "most" heads of government called for a permanent halt to testing. Britain was not among "the most."

The Pacific states want much tougher words this time from Auckland, where the chairman is Prime Minister James Bolger of New Zealand. — GEMINI NEWS

DEREK INGRAM is covering his 14th Commonwealth summit. He was Editor of Gemini News Service for 28 years and is now Consultant Editor.

## Mandela, the Most Famous New Face in Auckland

MORE than a dozen new leaders have moved into power in the past two years and are attending a Commonwealth summit for the first time.

For 33 years, the Commonwealth waited and agonised for the return of South Africa. So the high point in Auckland is the moment when Nelson Mandela makes his appearance on the platform as President of the republic that rejoined last year.

Of all the new faces at this meeting, his presence spells success for the Commonwealth. It recalls the major role the organisation played in breaking apartheid — through sanctions, sports boycotts, the provision of constitutional and electoral expertise and many other actions.

New Zealand was itself the scene of bitter controversy and riots over its rugby links with the white regime, which were finally broken off.

Mandela might recall that, ironically, it was the man who is currently Nigeria's most famous political prisoner, General Olusegun Obasanjo, who visited him in prison in South Africa as an envoy for the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group. The group achieved the diplomatic breakthrough in 1986 that led to the end of the apartheid regime eight years later. Now, Mandela may find himself discussing how Obasanjo and others can be freed from jail.

In Auckland, the focus is also on Paul Biya, 62-year-old President of Cameroon — a brand new member of the Commonwealth — who is unique in being the only leader from a francophone country to sit with the organisation. Biya first came to office as prime minister 20 years ago.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga of Sri Lanka is the daughter of two premiers — Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the first woman in the world to become Prime Minister and now in the post again, and the assassinated Solomon Bandaranaike. Kumaratunga was elected exactly a year ago.

She has a war on her hands in Sri Lanka, while Jean Chretien has been facing a crisis of a different kind since he became Prime Minister of Canada at the time of the 1993 Cyprus summit. He ousted Kim Campbell, briefly Prime Minister after the resignation of Brian Mulroney.

President Bakili Muluzi of Malawi makes his first appearance at a Commonwealth summit following his election victory last year over the longest serving leader Kamuzu Banda, who is now on trial, accused of plotting the murder of four ministers.

The Caribbean has produced a clutch of new leaders since Cyprus — Prime Ministers Owen Arthur of Barbados, Edison James of Dominica, Keith Mitchell of Grenada, and Denzil Douglas of St Kitts and Nevis. Prime Minister Patrick Manning of

Solomon Islands and Maxime Carliotkorman of Vanuatu.

Notable absentees: Prime Ministers Narasimha Rao of India, P J Patterson of Jamaica, and Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, and President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda. — Gemini News.

— Derek Ingram

### Faces of the Commonwealth



### TOM and JERRY

