

THE AGA KHAN RURAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME, GILGIT

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

**By: Shoaib Sultan Khan
October 3, 1992**

Subject: Meeting of the Multi-donor Support Unit for SAP on September 29, 1992 at the World Bank, Islamabad.

The initiative to organize the meeting, was taken by the World Bank vide note of the meeting and the list of invitees (enclosed). Almost everyone came and the session lasted two hours. This was a sequel to my previous meeting with the Director of the World Bank, when he was on a visit to Pakistan in early September.

The donor group was keen to know the nature, structure and government controls on NRSP, in view of the fact that the funding was being provided by GoP. They also were anxious to know NRSP's linkages with SAP, as the release of the second instalment of SAP to the provincial governments, has been made dependent on the provinces coming up with mechanics and modalities of involving communities in implementation of SAP.

We explained that NRSP was a means and a vehicle for implementing SAP amongst other activities, interventions and projects. However, institution building can not be done overnight, hence GoP decided to implement SAP through village organizations, wherever these exist. For areas not yet covered by VOs, interim arrangements shall be made to involve the communities, which shall be replaced by the more sustainable and effective community involvement system of VOs.

The donors discerned in this decision a fundamental change of approach towards implementation of grassroots programme by GoP.

The donors welcomed the NRSP initiative and advocated a change in attitude and approach of donors in line with the GoP transformation.

c.c. Section Heads/RPOs
Chairman, AKRSP Board of Directors
General Manager, AKF Geneva.

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Subject: Visit to rain affected areas in Gilgit district.

In view of PM's announcement of a grant of Rs. fifty million for rehabilitation of damaged irrigation channels, through AKRSP, by the village organizations, HWK and SSK undertook a damage survey reconnaissance tour of the Gilgit and Ghizar districts, by helicopter.

Our first landing was at Chapursan, where ten persons had lost their lives when they had gone to rescue four shepherds in the high pastures. They were all caught under a landslide killing ten of a party of twelve. Flying over the nine villages of the valley from Yarzrich to Zodkhun, situated at an altitude of over 10,000 feet, the area appeared remarkably unscathed by the unprecedented havoc caused by rain only three weeks back. Life appeared so normal as if nothing had ever happened. The harvest was lying stacked in the fields and the water was flowing in most of the channels in the flat ground. We landed next to the Shehrsabz school, which was in session and soon a few villagers gathered including Ali Akbar, an activist of the area. He complained for our late arrival to the valley after the visits of the Regional Council, N.A. Administrator and the N.A. Councillor. We explained that AKRSP is not equipped to deal with emergency relief and aid, whereas the other agencies are. Now that we have been given a specific task falling within our mandate, we have come at the earliest opportunity and also to offer our sympathies and condolences at the loss of precious lives. HWK gave the channel assessment damage forms to the activist, with the request to get these filled up by all the Managers and sent to the local Social Organizer by October 5, at the latest. The villagers promised to do so and urged more frequent visits to their valley by us and especially by the S.O.

Our second landing was at Soust, where we were met by the S.O. Mansur. A rather unimaginative nincompoop who seemed to have no initiative of his own. Since September 16, he had been sitting idle (granted that the roads were blocked and his vehicle was stranded at Gilgit) and did nothing to find out how the VOs were. On HWK's query, his naive response was that he was awaiting instructions from headquarters, when he was fully aware that the headquarters was totally cut off either by road or by telephone. HWK gave him the form to get the damage assessment done from the VO managers quickly. We also picked a couple of stranded passengers from Soust who had come from China two weeks earlier. The road to Khunjarab was still blocked and so was the road between Shishkat and Aliabad. We also picked up the AKES guests from Khaiber, whom we had dropped on our way to Chapurson and all of them disembarked at Karimabad.

Our third landing was at Broshal Hoper in Nagar where a large number of villagers gathered, including VO office bearers and the Chairman of the Union Council. We explained to them the background of PM's

announcement and the responsibility of the VOs to undertake the rehabilitation work with greatest of care and diligence. The need for accurate assessment of damage was also emphasized. It was also explained that this was the first step in PM's grand design of entrusting all grassroots level development responsibility to the VOs including the social sector interventions, encompassing even the monitoring and supervision of such activities. The villagers assured their full cooperation in the matter and expressed willingness to undertake the responsibilities of monitoring and supervision.

Our fourth landing was at one of the most isolated villages in Gilgit district, namely, Hispar. There are 120 families living in the village. Both Broshal and Hispar are cut off from the rest of the district. Broshal due to damage to the road and Hispar has no road as yet like Shimshal. But here again things looked very normal from above, as if, there was no devastation. The people, however, painted a horrendous tale of the happenings and the extensive damage caused by the unprecedented rains. Obviously it would need close scrutiny to assess the true and real extent of damage to the irrigation channels. Both Hispar and Hoper had not been visited by any other agency.

Our fifth landing was back at Gilgit for refuelling, whereafter, we flew to Barkulti. All the cluster activists greeted us and presented us with their assessment of the damage to irrigation channels in the Yasin and Thoi valleys from Gupis to Darkut. On hearing the news on the radio about PM's announcement, the Field Accountant Abdullah Baig had taken the initiative to activate the VO/cluster activists. What a contrast from Soust, where SO awaited instructions from the headquarters. HWK suggested the use of VO activists by NRSP during winter months. It seemed an excellent idea to overcome the lack of trained staff at NRSP. The villagers promised to fill in the damage assessment forms latest by October 5, 1992./

Our sixth and the last landing of the day was at Phandar, where cluster activists of 16 VOs had assembled. They gave us the details of the damage caused to their irrigation channels and how many days it took them to repair these. They had already done most of the work. We gave them the forms and discussed other issues also, such as, their idea of the valley corporation for marketing their produce and dealings in consumer goods.

We returned to Gilgit late in the evening after a day, in which we covered from one corner of Gilgit district bordering with Wakhan corridor to the extreme corner of Ghizar district touching Pamirs and the Afghan side. Thanks to the helicopter. By road this should have taken over 10 days and left us totally exhausted for the next few days.

c.c. Section Heads/RPOs
 Chairman, AKRSP Board of Directors
 General Manager, AKF Geneva.