

March 7, 1984

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

Subject: GM's visit to Karachi March 7-8, 1984

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Meeting with Chairman, AKRSP Board of Directors

The Chairman and the GM had a very free and frank exchange of views of different aspects of AKRSP with special reference to the relationship between Karachi and Gilgit. The Chairman assured GM of his fullest cooperation to ensure smooth functioning of the programme and instilling of confidence in the staff working at Gilgit. The GM undertook to do everything possible to allay the impression that the AKRSP staff at Gilgit was doing a favour to Karachi by implementing the programme. The openness and frankness on both sides was fully appreciated and it was agreed that such deliberations should take place regularly for establishing better rapport between Karachi and Gilgit.

March 8, 1984

Attended by: Chairman, Vice Chairman, Mr. Nizar Mecklai, Mr. S. Hashwany, Mr. Hakim Feerasta and Mr. Taj Mitha.

The concept of a National Forum for resource mobilization was explained by Taj Mitha and the role of the International Coordinator i.e. Mr. Taj Mitha, was clarified. The detailed NFR has already been issued by Resource Mobilization Unit of the Aga Khan University.

Luncheon meeting at Aga Khan University

Detailed minutes already circulated to the members of the MG.

Coordination and collaboration meeting ... 1700 hours at AKU

Participants: Representative of Central Education Board
Representative of Central Health Board
Representative of Central Housing Board
Representative of Economic Planning Board and
Representative of Industrial Promotion Services.

In addition, the Chairman, Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors and Executive Officer AKF also participated.

The Chairman in his opening remarks informed the meeting of His Highness's concern about multiplicity of organisations and the need for cooperation and coordination between organisations working within the Northern Areas. In this regard, he advocated the use of VOs fostered by AKRSP in the Northern Areas of Pakistan for provision of services to the villagers by the other agencies.

The Central Education Board while welcoming the offer pointed out the constraints in terms of resource inhibiting its capacity to respond to the demands of VOs. However, he fully supported the idea of using the village forums for identifying the means as well as the scope in the field of education for community participation.

The Chairman, IPS pointed out the difficulties in setting up agro-industries in the Northern Areas because of lack of enough raw material and marketing facilities, communication problems etc. He further observed that as a commercial company, IPS cannot function without adhering to the economies of scale.

Secretary, Economic Planning Board pointed out the increased credit resources made available through the efforts of the Board by the local Cooperative Bank. He suggested that AKRSP should help in recovery of these loans.

He also mentioned the outcome of the seminar on Cooperatives organised by EPB with the support from the AKRSP, for drawing up terms of reference to forge a more meaningful coordination between AKRSP and EPB. The Board was in the process of drawing up the terms of reference.

The representative of Housing Board identified water and sanitation and self-school construction as areas of possible cooperation and coordination with AKRSP. However, he cautioned that unlike AKRSP, the Central Housing Board was neither Gilgit based nor had full time technical expertise, resources or funding arrangements to mount a programme which would be comparable to the approach and dimensions of AKRSP. Being Karachi based the parameters of the Central Housing Board were limited and not compatible in structure to work like AKRSP in the Northern Areas.

The Chairman, reiterated His Highness's concern about the total development of the villages in the Gilgit area and asked the GM to spell out possible areas of cooperation and coordination between AKRSP and other Central Institutions, for the achievement of the long term goals of development.

The GM explained that over a period of one year AKRSP has helped fostering of nearly 150 VOs in the Gilgit district and approximately 50 VOs in Chitral. In nurturing the VOs, the objective of AKRSP is to provide a forum through which all development activities could be channelled to the villagers. The VOs, he outlined were dynamic, active bodies which represent majority of the households in the villages which hold meetings every month on a weekly or fortnightly basis and carry on savings with the objective of stimulating their own capital. Thus these organisations are not only on paper but on the ground ready to interact with any development agency willing to coordinate its activities through the organisation. Citing examples of areas of cooperation and coordination, the GM pointed out that the Central Education Board could use these forums for getting a feedback from the villagers as to the type of services they need and how much of these they could support. As regards health sector, some of the organisations have already identified, the need for training one of their representatives as a health volunteer. If the Board was ready to formulate a training programme for health volunteers, AKRSP would be willing to get health volunteers selected by the concerned VOs and provide necessary facilities for conducting the training at Gilgit at the Extension Training Centre. Similarly the VO being fostered by AKRSP, could be used by Central Health Board for extending women's health programme suitable for the area. In regard to agro-industries, the GM explained AKRSP's experience in the field of marketing and its encouraging results and requested assistance from IPS in processing and drying of fruits. As regards provision of additional credit, GM pointed out that there was no lack of capital of the small farmers and recovery of loans. AKRSP was in no position to guarantee recovery of loans which are given without obtaining guarantees from village organisations. Its own experience has been that loans given through the VOs have been recovered 100%. Loans given by banks on individual basis, is the responsibility of the banks concerned.

There was consensus that the valuable experience achieved as pointed out by the Vice Chairman, should be exploited to its maximum, by all the institutions under AK network and that a meeting should be held between the representatives of the Central Institutions and AKRSP at Gilgit to identify areas of cooperation and coordination.

After the meeting, Mr. Ahmad Ali Merchant, Chairman, Central Education Board hosted a lavish dinner at his newly constructed house in Clifton.