

## Pakistan – National Drainage Program Project: World Bank Board of Executive Directors authorizes Inspection Panel to conduct investigation

Washington, December 15, 2004 – The World Bank’s Board of Executive Directors approved, on December 8, 2004, the Inspection Panel’s recommendation to conduct an investigation into the matters alleged in a Request for Inspection related to the Pakistan: National Drainage Program (NDP) Project. The objective of the Project is to assist the Borrower and the Provinces in implementing the first phase of the NDP, which is designed to restore environmentally-sound irrigated agriculture, inter alia, through the minimization of saline drainable surplus and the eventual evacuation of all saline drainable surplus to the sea, and to that end: (a) promote the carrying out of policy and institutional reforms in the water sector; (b) strengthen drainage and irrigation research and sector planning capabilities; and (c) finance investments in drainage and irrigation infrastructure. The Board’s decision was taken on a no-objection basis and without judgment on the merits of the claimants’ Request.

The Panel’s Report and Recommendation was prepared on the basis of a Request for Inspection submitted on September 10, 2004, by Khadim Talpur, Mohammad Ali Shah, Mustafa Talpur, Munawar Hassan Memon, Iqbal Hyder, Mir Mohammad Buledi, and Najma Junejo on their own behalf and on behalf of “*others who live in the area known as district Badin, Sindh, Pakistan,*” a Management Response to the Request submitted on October 19, 2004, and a field visit undertaken by the Panel between November 3-6, 2004.

The Requesters claim that the design of the NDP Project is faulty and unsustainable. They consider that it failed to take into account the Bank’s social and environmental safeguards and failed to explore possible alternative routes. They claim that the saline effluent coming down the Left Bank Outfall Drain (LBOD) system and the incoming high tide water from the Arabian Sea, cause the Kadhan Pateji Outfall Drain (KPOD) to overflow and inundate the surrounding agricultural land and villages including the fishermen (*mallah*) villages, causing loss of livelihood and life.

They also consider that the Project failed to deal with issues such as coastal ecology, safe disposal of saline effluent into the Arabian Sea, and protection of wetlands (*dhands*), which are an important natural habitat and a migratory route for waterfowl and nesting grounds for important bird species. They further allege that the Project affects cultural sites in Badin. The Requesters claim that they raised the matters of their complaint with the Bank and attempted to discuss their concerns but no response was received.

On the other hand, Management considered that the Requesters rights and interests are not, nor will be, directly and adversely affected by the manner in which the Bank has implemented its policies and procedures in the project. Nevertheless, Management stated that the Bank has made efforts to work with the Government of Pakistan and the Project's co-financiers to realize the objectives of an extremely large and complex Project. Finally, Management stated its intent to pursue the issues raised in the Request concerning the Sindh Province with the Borrower so that the Requesters' concerns be addressed.

As part of the foregoing, Management proposed to undertake several actions, *inter alia*: a) to establish a Panel of Experts to review the ecological, hydrological and water quality monitoring data in the LBOD outfall area and propose a course of action within the next three to six months; b) to carry out a diagnostic study focused on livelihood improvements in the area to determine the extent and severity of losses incurred, and formulate a livelihood assistance program within the next three months; and, c) to assist the Government of Pakistan with a Country Water Resources Assistance Strategy and a Strategic Country Environmental Assessment.

In its investigation, the Panel will be looking into the Bank's actions and omission in the observance of its policies and procedures in relation with the Project. The allegations of the Requesters could constitute violations of the following Bank policies and procedures: Environmental Assessment (OD 4.01), Natural Habitats (OP 4.04), Indigenous People (OD 4.20), Involuntary Resettlement (OD 4.30), Management of Cultural Property (OPN 11.03), and Disclosure of Information (BP 17.50). The Panel will be making plans for its investigation in the near future.

The complete text of the Panel's Report and Recommendations, the Request for Inspection, and Management's Response, are available on the Panel's website at: [www.inspectionpanel.org](http://www.inspectionpanel.org). Hard copies are available upon request at the Bank's Infoshop (1818 H Street NW, Washington DC 20433. Tel.: (202) 458-5454. Fax: (202) 522-1500), Public Information Centers in Paris and Tokyo; and the Bank's field office in Islamabad.

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