

Government constitutes a High Level Committee for proper management of water resources in North Eastern Region

Posted On: 04 OCT 2017 2:13PM by PIB Delhi

The Government has constituted a high-level committee for proper management of the water resources in the North Eastern Region (NER) under the Chairmanship of Vice-Chairman, Niti Aayog. This is a sequel to the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's visit to Guwahati in August this year to review the flood situation and relief work in the North Eastern States.

The Committee would facilitate optimising benefits of appropriate water management in the form of hydro-electric power, agriculture, bio-diversity conservation, reduced flood damage erosion, inland water transport, forestry, fishery and eco-tourism. Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) will serve as the coordinating point. The Committee will submit its report, including Plan of Action, by June, 2018.

During the review of the flood situation with the Chief Ministers of Assam, Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh, the Prime Minister had announced constitution of a High-Level Committee for holistic management of water resources in the NER. The meeting noted that the optimum management of water resources is a cross-cutting task which requires multi-sectoral interventions and concerted strategy, including management of catchment areas in upper reaches involving concerned Central Ministries and State Governments.

The Brahmaputra and Barak river systems which account for one-third of India's run off, are highly prone to floods. Brahmaputra is one of the largest river systems in the world and causes considerable distress and costs on the region through frequent flooding and erosion.

The terms of reference of the Committee include:

- i) Appraisal of existing mechanism/institutional arrangements for management of water resources of the North Eastern Region.
- ii) Identification of gaps in the existing mechanism/institutional arrangements for optimal management of water resources of the NER.
- iii) Suggest policy interventions required for optimally harnessing the water resources for accelerating development in the NER
- iv) Spelling out of actionable measures required for optimizing the management of water resources in the North-East.
- v) Chalking out a Plan of Action for dovetailing of the schemes/programmes of concerned Union Ministries, their attached offices and autonomous bodies as well as the schemes of the respective North-Eastern State Governments.

The Committee includes Secretaries from the Ministries of Development of North Eastern Region, Department of Border Management, Department of Space, Power, Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation and National Disaster Management Authority and Chief Secretaries of all the 8 states in NER as Members. The Committee may co-opt or invite as special invitees Secretaries of other Ministries / Departments as well as experts who have domain knowledge in the matter.

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(Release ID: 1504777) Visitor Counter : 378

