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## River Basin Management

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Basin planning provides the most rational basis of development of water resources under the influence of one or more major rivers. International river basins, however, such as the Ganges basin, the Brahmaputra basin, and the Meghna basin present special problems. Due to its location as the lower-most riparian, Bangladesh has no control over the rivers entering through its borders. The adverse effects of this are the floods and water scarcity, which occur frequently. Although the 1996 Treaty on Sharing of the Ganges Waters with India has brought some relief to the drought-prone area of the southwest, the water shortage problem during the dry season is likely to aggravate in the Ganges and other basins with rising demands of the increasing population. It is, however, encouraging to note that the relevant provision of the treaty will provide the basis in the future for discussion on sharing of waters of the common rivers.

It may take considerable effort and time for Bangladesh to work out joint plans for different river basins with other co-riparian countries. As a long-term measure, therefore, it is the policy of the government to undertake essential steps for realizing basin-wide planning for development of the resources of the rivers entering its borders.

The Government will endeavor to enter into agreements with co-riparian countries for sharing the waters of international rivers, data exchange, resource planning and long-term management of water resources under normal and emergency conditions of flood, drought and water pollution. While moving towards the attainment of basin-wide plans in the long run, it will also be necessary for Bangladesh to concentrate on the development of individual hydrological areas to meet short and intermediate term requirements.

The policy of the Government of Bangladesh, in the short and intermediate term, for fostering international cooperation in water management is, in *italics letter*, to:

- a. Work with co-riparian countries to establish a system for exchange of information and data on relevant aspects of hydrology, morphology, water pollution, ecology, changing watershed characteristics, cyclone, drought, flood warning, etc., and to help each other understand the current and emerging problems in the management of the shared water sources.
- b. Work with co-riparian countries for a joint assessment of all the international rivers flowing through their territories for better understanding of the overall basins' potentials.
- c. Work jointly with co-riparian countries to harness, develop, and share the water resources of the international rivers to mitigate floods and augment flows of water during the dry season.
- d. Make concerted efforts, in collaboration with co-riparian countries, for management of the catchment areas with the help of afforestation and erosion control for watershed preservation and reduction of land degradation.
- e. Work jointly with co-riparian countries for the prevention of chemical and biological pollution of the rivers flowing through these countries, by managing the discharge of industrial, agricultural and domestic pollutants generated by human action.
- f. Seek international and regional cooperation for education, training, and research in water management.