

Visit of International Lake Environment Committee, Japan to Nepal

1. Introduction to ILEC

The management and conservation of the world lakes and reservoirs are at crisis point. On the one hand, the human population is steadily increasing, with six billion people already inhabiting the planet. On the other hand, the ability of the world lakes and reservoirs to meet the needs of the world's population is rapidly decreasing. The problem is exacerbated by several phenomena, all of anthropogenic origin, which are lowering the quality of water in lakes and reservoirs. The most important of these are: lake acidification, eutrophication, siltation, salinisation, contamination with toxic chemicals and the introduction of animals and plants from elsewhere. Unable to remain indifferent to such events, the International Lake Environment Committee Foundation (ILEC) was formed in 1986 as an international non-governmental organization (NGO), and given legal status in 1987 by the Japanese Environment Agency and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. ILEC aims in promoting environmentally sound management of natural and man-made lakes and their environments consistent with sustainable development policies by promoting international research and investigation, and by facilitating the exchange of findings and knowledge among the experts throughout the world. ILEC's broad vision is that *all lakes and reservoirs in the world be managed and conserved on a sustainable basis for the long-term and future benefit of all mankind*. To achieve objectives, ILEC has adopted seven *general* strategies:

1. the collection and provision of information and data on environmental aspects of lakes in all parts of the world;
2. the promotion of scientific research on environmental management of lakes;
3. assistance to developing countries with the environmental management of lakes and the planning of environmentally sound development of lakes;
4. the promotion of training on technical and management aspects of lake environments;
5. the support of activities on environmentally sound management of lakes, which UNEP promotes for developing countries;
6. the promotion of interchange with governmental agencies, regional agencies, and research institutes in the world which undertake international cooperation on environmentally sound lake management; and
7. undertaking any other activities which become necessary to achieve the mission of ILEC.

To implement these strategies, ILEC has adopted Integrated Lake Management (ILBM) that focuses on the lake governance, local participation, awareness and resource mobilization (including financing mechanism). ILEC has undertaken a wide range of activities since its foundation in 1986. The most important of these are: a survey of the state of the world lakes; biannual organization of a world lake conference; regular publication of information materials; organization and running of training sessions, seminars and workshops (including expert group workshops in river/ lake basin approaches to environmentally sound management of water resources; technical training course; group training course; workshops on lake and reservoir environment management; training courses on limnology; training course on remote sensing and GIS for lake basin management; environmental education and so on).

ILEC has been working in collaboration with UNEP, UN Centre for Regional Development, Thai Office of National Environment Board, Prince of Songkhla University, Japanese Environment

Agency and many others. ILEC has enlisted 217 lakes in its global list including 28 lakes into the network of ILBM. Lake Rara has been included one of Nepal's lake in the global list of ILEC.

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2. The Nepalese Context

The Himalayan landscape of Nepal has tremendous topographic diversities followed by lakes and wetlands diversity way-down from the Himalayan high altitude to lowland the Terai. Nepal is a bearer of more than 6000 rivers, 2323 glacial lakes and several tectonic and ox-bow-lakes. They provide various means of supporting life to the people and particularly the needs of rural communities to wetlands resources are very intact and unavoidable. They provide water for irrigation; maintain biodiversity/biological gene pools; provide a basis for cultural and spiritual development; inspire many for natural studies and researches; and helps enhancing livelihoods. Wetlands and lakes cover 3-5% of total country's land. These are considered as ecosystems of multiple values. Nepal government has foreseen values of the lakes and wetlands to reciprocate domineering roles in uplifting livelihoods standards of the Nepalese people particularly through wetlands eco-tourism. For example, more than 60 million US dollars earning Nepal made in 2006 due to foreign visitors i.e., tourism, 5 % of this also visited to Pokhara to observe nature glamour offered by the Phew and Begnas lakes with their exquisite background supplemented by the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri Himalya in the North. Such foreign income could appreciably be augmented if Nepal's lakes and wetlands are objectively promoted.

Conservation of lakes, wetlands and biodiversity is priority areas in the 9th and 10th five year plans of Nepal. Obviously, peace building, restoration and poverty alleviation are recent focus of current three-year interim plan, though the contribution that lakes and wetlands paying to the livelihoods of people is an unavoidable reality whenever any efforts are made to achieve the objectives of this interim plan. However, the state and conditions of mountain lakes and wetlands are still unheard, deteriorating and under great anthropogenic pressure that need appropriate intervention in time. Further, Nepal has also ratified several international treaties related to natural resources like CBD (1992) and the Ramsar Convention (1972) that have core values on lakes and wetlands conservation. Considering all these, government of Nepal has envisioned lake and wetland issues as one of the national agenda to address people's livelihoods. Such government's commitment has been reflected in the formulation of National Wetland Policy in 2003 and establishment of the National Lake conservation and Development Committee (NLCDC) in 2006. This committee has following objectives:

1. formulating and recommending appropriate policy measures to the government for the conservation and development of lakes in Nepal;
2. planning and implementing programs with regards to lake conservation in coordination with concerned ministries and departments in Nepal;
3. developing lakes as the recreational and tourism destination sites in Nepal;
4. identifying and publicizing lakes of religious and cultural importance;
5. developing programs on lake management and use of lake resources that generate income for the local people;
6. maintaining and updating lake inventory of Nepal;
7. demarcating lake areas of Nepal;
8. resolving lake encroachment issues prevailing in Nepal;
9. controlling lake pollution;

10. developing and implementing overall lake development schemes benefiting to communities and stakeholders by involving them in lake management;
11. preventing all activities that depressingly effect lake environment, biodiversity and beauty; and
12. coordinating national and international organization as per the need of conservation and development of lakes.

Given the priority to these, the major thrust of NLCDC would always remain in conserving and developing lakes and wetlands through community collaboration that help promoting lake tourism and culture in Nepal.

3. NLCDC-ILEC Inter-relationship

Since establishment, NLCDC has been engaged in developing its secretariat, coordinating different governmental and non governmental institutions, and initial implementation of the lake conservation programs especially in the Rupa lake areas. Evolution of NLCDC-ILEC relationship initiated through participations in the international workshop held in Jaipur in 2007 followed by expert group workshop in Hyderabad in August 2008 India. NLCDC shared its experiences of such international workshop among its board members, and realized ILBM approach adopted by ILEC to be very instrumental in many ways to address sustainable conservation of lakes and wetlands of Nepal. NLCDC therefore determined to widen its functional linkage with ILEC and invited scientists of ILEC to visit Nepal.

4. Visit Period

December 14 to 20, 2008.

5. Team Composition

Name	Designation	Address
1. Prof. Masahisa Nakamura	Chairman, Scientific Committee, ILEC	Sigha University, Sigha, Japan
2. Prof. Walter Rast	Vice-Chairman, Scientific Committee, ILEC	Texas State University, USA
3. Prof. Kodarkar Mohan	Member of Scientific Committee, ILEC	Osmania University, Hyderabad, India
4. Dr. Thoru Udea	Prefecture, Sigha State, Japan	Sigh State, Japan
5. Representative (s)	<i>NA yet.</i>	Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Singha Darabar, Kathmandu, Nepal
6. Mr. Khaga Raj Adhikari	Chairman, NLCDC	Dillibazar, Kathmandu, Nepal
7. Mr. Kapil Shah	Executive Director, NLCDC	Dillibazar, Kathmandu, Nepal
7. Mr. Shailendra Pokharel	Program Coordinator, NLCDC	Dillibazar, Kathmandu, Nepal

Note: Representations from other potential partners in the visit team are yet a subject to decision.

6. Objectives of Visit

1. Rapid assessment of lakes conservation in Nepal.
2. Rapport build up among government, non-governmental and other institutions for the cause of sustainable lakes and wetlands management in Nepal.
3. Share ILBM approaches and strategies among the Nepalese scientists and experts.

4. Review of lake-brief to recommend Nepal's lake in the international network of lake conservation.
5. Linkage establishment with the ILEC with regards to the ILBM approaches/strategies.
6. Explore ways and means to promote and manage lake conservation in Nepal i.e., HR development, information generation and access to potential funding sources.

7. Proposed Actions

1. Meeting with focal ministry and department personnel.
2. Meeting with concerned ministries and departments' personnel.
3. Interaction with experts, groups and journalists.
4. Interaction with local government institutions and communities in the field.
5. Technical presentations.
6. Exploratory and site visits to the Pokhara lake cluster sites, Lumbini wetlands, Beeshazari tal and lake Rara,

Note: Sites other than lakes in Pokhara are provisional and yet to finalize by Dec 7, 2008.

8. Potential Collaboration

1. Nepal Forum of Environment Journalists, Kathmandu.
2. Nepal Tourism Board, Kathmandu.
3. Nature Trust for Nature Conservation, Kathmandu.
4. International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources -Nepal.
5. World Wildlife Fund – Nepal.
6. The Mountain Institute, Nepal.
7. DDC Kaski, Kaski.
8. Pokhara Sum-Municipality, Kaski.
9. Lekhnath Municipality, Kaski.

Note: ICIMOD is required to be within this list. However, NLCDC has not yet been succeeded to contact ICIMOD.

9. Anticipated Outcomes

1. Establishment of functional linkage with ILEC.
2. Review of lake-brief and preparation of final lake-brief through technical collaboration to present in the international lake conservation conference to be held in China in 2009 to recommend Nepal's lake into the ILBM network.
3. Recently, the Ramsar Bureau has recommended the proposal of NLCDC for the designation of the lake-cluster in the Ramsar List. The visit of ILEC team would be a comparative advantage in accessing technical inputs for the initial preparation of recommending the lake-cluster of the Kaski district into the Ramsar List.
4. The visit of ILEC team would accelerate opportunities for HR development through training, workshop and conservation education with regards to the ILBM applicable to the Nepalese context.
5. Expansion of ILBM strategies and approaches among the Nepalese wetlands experts.
6. Need assessment of the lake conservation and development that helps emergence of the larger scale proposal for funding through international assistance.

10. Contact Address and Persons

Address	Persons
<p>National Lake Conservation Development Committee, Dillibazar, Near to Bajaj Show-Room Kathmandu</p> <p>Telephone: +977 1 4 420 173; Fax: 977 1 4 421 954; Postal: 25253, Kathmandu, Nepal; email: taal@nepallake.gov.np</p>	<p>1. Kapil Shah, Executive Director, NLCDC Quick contact during this visit period: 9841 28 27 23 Personal mail: statisticskapil@gmail.com</p> <p>2. Shailendra Pokharel, Program Coordinator, NLCDC. Quick contact during this visit period: 9841 69 82 27 Personal mail: shailendrapokharel@gmail.com</p>

