

## **SALIENT FEATURES OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES**

Pakistan is an agricultural country with largest contiguous irrigation network in the world. About 64% its population resides in the rural area, 57% of rural workforce is engaged in agriculture and 23% of GDP is attributed to agriculture. However, the per capita availability of water, which was 5650 cubic meters in 1951, has been reduced to 1200 cubic meters and is projected to drop to the critical limit of 1000 cubic meters by 2010. This is a very alarming situation and it is, therefore, of utmost importance that water is used judiciously, efficiently and wastage of water should be avoided.

2. Pakistan largely depends on the flow of Western Rivers (Indus, Jhelum and Chenab) after the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 with India. Flows of Western rivers are highly erratic with a maximum flow of about 186 MAF to a minimum of 97 MAF. There is also seasonal variation in the flows with 84% in Kharif. This necessitates that surplus water in Kharif be stored for supplementing water when its availability is inadequate. Pakistan's current storage capacity is only 9% of the available water resources against World's average of 40%.

3. The Salient Features of recommendations and views of the Technical committee on Water Resources (TCWR) appointed by the Government are as given below:-

- (1) *Water Accord of 1991 is sacrosanct and should be followed in letter and spirit.*
- (2) *There is consensus that on the average 35.2 MAF water is available annually which had been going to sea during 1976-2003. It should be harnessed for development of future reservoirs and uses.*
- (3) *There is unequivocal consensus on immediate construction of new reservoirs.*
- (4) *There is complete satisfaction over the studies regarding escapages below Kotri.*

- (5) *All members agree that Kalabagh and Basha Dam can be constructed. One member has, however, observed that no diversion of water should be allowed from the dams. The Chairman of the Committee has observed that the construction of only one of the two dams, of which feasibility is available, can be started with edge for Basha Dam over Kalabagh Dam.*
- (6) *All members have no objection to the current distribution methodology being followed by IRSA. Chairman of the Committee is, however, of the view that exempting NWFP and Balochistan from sharing of shortages in water is a violation of the Accord. IRSA's view is that NWFP and Balochistan are unable to fully utilize even their due share during surpluses and can be allowed flexibility under Para 3 of the Accord. Decisions taken by majority vote by IRSA for water distribution are in accordance with the IRSA Act.*
- (7) *Seven members, giving the majority views, have expressed full satisfaction over IRSA's filling of Mangla reservoir and operation of link canals, as IRSA is the competent authority under the Act. The Chairman TCWR and one member have shown reservations and emphasized the need for legal guarantees and assurance that the criteria will be faithfully followed. Chairman of TCWR also differs with the current regulation by IRSA. IRSA has stated that the operation of these canals is being done on the basis of actual water availability in the rivers and the principle of equitable water distribution according to Water Accord Allocations.*

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