

# Monthly Update Local Governance Cluster

UNDP, Bangladesh

June 2008



**Improved and participatory local governance can contribute to socio-economic development and poverty alleviation by assisting to build capacity of local government bodies to plan, finance and manage basic development activities in a responsive and accountable manner.**

## CLUSTER ACTIVITIES

**District Orientation** Six district orientation sessions held between 12 and 14 June 2008 in six LGSP-LIC project areas, which are Satkhira, Narshingdi, Feni, Hobiganj, Sirajganj and Barguna. The aim of these orientations was to inform and make understand to all stakeholders about the implementation process of LGSP-LIC.

Mr. Md. Nojibur Rahman, Joint Secretary (Administration) and Mr. Swapan Kumar Sarkar, NPD, DG M & E Wing, LGD and a number of Deputy Secretaries from LGD attended the orientation workshops. The Additional Deputy Commissioners (ADC) of the respective areas chaired the orientation sessions. Most of the Deputy Commissioners (DC) in the respective districts attended the orientation, as well. Most of the UNO, UCO from 41 Upazilla, DDLG from 6 districts, Upazilla and District Engineers, UP Chairmen and Secretaries from selected 80 UPs of 6 districts participated to the orientation. The sessions were facilitated by the LIC Project Monitoring Advisor, Trainers from RDA, LGD, NILG and BARD. The orientation was organized by LGD.

The sessions were carried out in a participatory and interactive manner. The stakeholders from UPs raised many questions regarding the implementation of the project. They have also conveyed many recommendations from their practical experience for better performance of the UPs within the LIC framework and to establish accountability and fiscal transparency within the entire local government system.

### **Publishing Supplement on LGSP-LIC in Major Dailies**

A Two-Page special supplement on LGSP-LIC was published on June 25, 2008 in the Daily Prothom Alo, The Ittefaq and The Daily Star. This supplement highlighted information on the project activities. Moreover, this supplement also revealed the names of all UPs which have received Supplementary Block Grants (SBG) and Expanded Block Grant (EBG) from LGSP-LIC. This supplement will help mass people to know how much money their UPs have received for development purposes which in turn help them to oversee the activities of UPs. This will increase transparency in Local Governance and ensure accountability of UPs to mass people. However, UNDP received thanks from LGD, the World Bank and other organizations for such initiatives.

### **80 UPs received Supplementary Block Grants (SBG)**

80 UPs in six LIC districts have received Tk 53221347 as SBG from LGSP-LIC project in June 2008. Each UPs received Tk 665266 on an average as SBG. These UPs will spend this money in implementing various schemes through participatory planning and budgeting process. Thirty percent of this SBG will be spent by female for the welfare of women members in the society. To spend this money, each UP will form a Ward Development Committee (WDC) comprising of 5-7 members from the respective area. Moreover, a Scheme Supervision Committee will be formed to oversee the implementation process in local area.

## CLUSTER ACTIVITIES



**Participatory Planning Session at Ward # 01 of Subidpur Union of Baniachang Upazila, Hobiganj**



**SBG funded scheme: Road improvement giving better access to local people nearest market. Local people under the supervision Ward Development Committee members and the UP Chairman, are seen to undertake the work of mending the road.**

**Participatory Planning and Budgeting** Most of the UPs who have received SBG have conducted participatory budgeting and planning process in their respective areas. A large number of people in all areas participated to these meetings and took part in the discussion. Many of them have already undertaken various schemes. Most of the schemes are on road construction.

**TOT for Master Trainers** A 'Training for Trainers' was held on 11 June, 2008 at NILG with participants from NILG, RDA, BARD and LGD. The objective of the TOT was to orient the facilitators about the process of arranging district orientations. The training was facilitated by Project Monitoring Advisor and LGD officials.

**Meeting with LGD** A meeting with LGD officials and project staff of LGSP-LIC and UNDP staff was held on 9 June, 2008 at LGD. The aim of this meeting was to introduce the project staff to LGD officials. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Md. Nojibur Rahman, Joint Secretary (Administration), LGD. Mr. Swapan Kumar Sarkar, NPD, Director General M&E Wing, Mr. Shahajahan Ali Molla and Mr. Ashok Madhab Roy, Deputy Secretary, LGD attended the meeting. The LGD officials urged the project staff to work for the poorest of the society.

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

**Upazila Parishad Ordinance 2008 gets final approval** The cabinet has given final approval to the Upazila Parishad Ordinance 2008 on June 15 with a provision for a chairman and two vice-chairmen, one of them would be a woman to be elected by direct vote. The main features of the Ordinance are:

**Removal of MP's influence:** Upazila Parishads will function independently, free from interference of local MPs in the day to day decision making of the Upazila Parishad

**Duration:** The duration of the Upazila Parishad is of five years.

**Women Representation:** The ordinance provides 30% reserved seats for the women.

**Case against the results:** Any case challenging the results of Upazila elections must be filed in 30 days from the publication of a gazette on results. The case must be disposed of in 180 days from its filing and an appeal against the verdict must be submitted in 30 days and the verdict on the appeal must be delivered in 120 days.

**Political affiliation of the candidates:** Political leaders could contest the polls but the elected people must give up their political posts before taking oath.

**Declaration of wealth:** The chairman and vice-chairmen will have to declare their wealth through affidavit during oath-taking.

**Ineligibility to contest:** The people will be ineligible to contest the polls if they are accused of defaulting on loans in the last one year before elections. If a person is punished for embezzlement of Upazila Parishad funds or is an absconding accused he/she will be ineligible to contest the Upazila polls. Persons convicted as war criminals by any national or international court would be barred from contesting the Upazila polls.

*Source: The Independent, 16 June 2008*

**Local Government Polls** The Election Commission has announced the schedule for the elections to four city corporations and nine municipalities. The four city corporations are Rajshahi, Barisal, Sylhet and Khulna. The nine municipalities are Naohata in Rajshahi, Dupchanchia in Bogra, Sreepur in Gazipur, Fulbaria in Mymensingh, Golapganj in Sylhet, Sitakunda in Chittagong, and Chuadanga, Manikganj and Shariatpur district headquarters. According to the schedule, the submission of nomination closes on July 3. The scrutiny of nomination papers will be held during July 6-7 and July 13 is the last date for the withdrawal of nomination papers. The day of election is 4 August.

POLLS SCHEDULE	
Filing of nomination papers	July 3
Scrutiny of nomination papers	July 6-7
Last date for nomination withdrawal	July 13
Polling	August 4

  

OTHER FEATURES	
EPR eased in polls areas for July 13-August 4	
AL, BNP-led alliance reject schedule	
Army troops to be deployed on polls duty	
No procession during submission of nomination papers	

*Source: The Daily New Age, June 21, 2008*

*The views in this article are those of the author alone and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations or UNDP."*