

Agreed Points of Action on Trans-Boundary Conservation of Elephants in India-Bangladesh Landscape held at Shillong on 27th July 2017

Whereas, long ranging animals like Elephant, do not permanently lodge at any particular location and migrate many kilometers for survival including food; and

Whereas, migration of elephants between India and Bangladesh helps in maintenance of genetic diversity, especially in small population of around two hundred resident elephants in Bangladesh; and

Whereas, migratory nature of elephants brings them in close proximity of human settlements, especially those located in and around their regular migratory paths; and

Whereas, though the problem of Human Elephant Conflicts is very old, with degradation and fragmentation of natural habitats of elephants due to increasing human activities, the problem of Human Elephant Conflict needs to be addressed comprehensively along the India-Bangladesh landscape; and

Whereas, in the process, loss of human lives and property from migratory elephants and the need for long term conservation of elephants in India-Bangladesh landscape is drawing attention of the Governments of India and Bangladesh for past several years; and

Whereas, to develop and implement a coordinated and holistic approach for trans-boundary conservation of elephants; and to monitor, minimize and mitigate Human Elephant Conflicts caused by migratory elephants, the Governments of India and Bangladesh mutually agreed to hold Dialogue at regular intervals; and

Whereas, the first India-Bangladesh Dialogue on Trans-Boundary Conservation of Elephants was held on 19-20, August, 2015 at Kolkata and the Second Thematic meeting on human-wildlife conflict was held at Sunderbans, Bangladesh on 12-14, December 2015; and

Whereas, keeping in view that the major corridors for Trans-Boundary migration of elephants to Bangladesh are in Meghalaya, Tripura, Assam and West Bengal the Governments of both the countries mutually agreed to hold the 2nd such Dialogue at Shillong on 27th July 2017; and

Whereas, a detailed day long deliberations on relevant issues were held; and

Now Therefore, based on deliberations held during the 2nd Dialogue, to ensure long term conservation and natural migration of elephants in the India-Bangladesh landscape with minimum danger and loss to human life and property, the representatives of the Governments of India and Bangladesh agreed to:

1. Constitute a Joint Working Group within 60 days to evolve and develop protocols and Standard Operating Procedures for Trans-Boundary Conservation and Management of elephants in India-Bangladesh landscape;
2. Identify, periodically update and share the locations and critical periods for trans-boundary migration of elephants on real time basis across the India-Bangladesh Border;
3. Facilitate the process of trans-boundary natural migration along the India-Bangladesh border through appropriate openings and mechanisms at local level;
4. Monitor and detect presence and movement of elephants on identified migratory corridors by deployment of

mutually agreed technologically assisted aids/devices during migration and create authentic database of migration;

5. Establish response teams and deploy squads to guide such elephants, which may stray into human settlements and fields, towards their natural habitats;

6. Ensure sharing of information, through authorised officials, on presence and movement of elephants in border areas between Forest officials and Border Guards (Border Security Force on Indian side and Border Guard Bangladesh on Bangladesh side) on real-time basis through telephone, e-mail, whatsapp and other social media apps;

7. Constitute a Joint Coordination Group at district level across the international border consisting of the Divisional Forest Officers and the Commandant of the Border Guards in each Forest Division having one or more trans-boundary migratory corridor for elephant to facilitate timely sharing of information and resolution of problems related to trans-boundary migration of elephants;

8. Endeavour to empower district authorities (Deputy Commissioner) of both the countries to permit trans-boundary movement of elephant rescue teams;

9. Provide technical support, early warning systems, technology supported & other infrastructure along the migratory corridors to:

- monitor and transmit information on movement of elephants on real-time;
- establish knowledge sharing mechanism for management of elephant movement; and
- put in place preventive mechanisms for use of elephant corridors by anti-social elements;

10. Discourage and regulate erection of electric fences for protection of agriculture and horticulture crops in the areas falling in identified migratory corridors to prevent death of elephants from electrocution;

11. Exchange information on trans-boundary smuggling of elephants, elephant products, other wild animals and products/derivatives thereof and prevent such happenings;

12. Promote sustainable and compatible livelihood practices in areas frequented by elephants;

13. Endeavour to protect, improve and expand natural habitats for elephants;

14. Review and monitor implementation of each of these activities periodically and meet on annual basis;

15. Build capacities of Border Guards, frontline forest officials and communities to handle situations arising out of elephant movement across border;

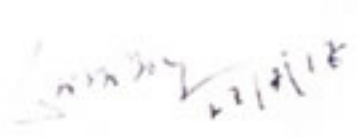
16. Enable research and data exchange for conservation of elephants; and

17. Hold the third round of Dialogue in Bangladesh preferably by June, 2018.

All above agreed action points should lead to finalization of Protocol between India and Bangladesh on trans-boundary conservation of elephants and leading to signing of the same.


(Siddhanta Das)

Director General of Forests &
Special Secretary to the Government of India
27.07.17, Shillong


(Mohammad Safiul Alam Chowdhary)

Chief Conservator of Forests,
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