

MINUTES OF THE 10TH MEETING OF GOA STATE WETLAND AUTHORITY (GSA)

TYPE OF MEETING: REGULAR MEETING.

DATE: 23rd July 2021;

TIME: 5.15 PM Onwards

VENUE: "1ST FLOOR, MINISTERIAL BLOCK, SECRETARIAT, PORVORIM, BARDEZ, GOA

MEETING WAS CHAIRED BY SHRI. NILESH CABRAL, HON. MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE AND CHAIRPERSON OF GOA STATE WETLAND AUTHORITY (GSA).

The following members attended the meeting:

Sr. No.	Name	Designation
1.	Shri. Nilesh Cabral, Hon. Minister of Environment & Climate Change	Chairperson GSA
2.	Shri. Kunal, IAS, Secretary (Environment & Climate Change)	<i>Ex-Officio</i> Member
3.	Shri. Dashrath Redkar, Director, Department of Environment and Climate Change (DoE&CC)	Member Secretary GSA
4.	Dr. Pradip Sarmokadam, Member Secretary, Goa State Biodiversity Board and Head of Nodal Agency GSA	HOD, Nodal Agency, GSA - <i>Ex-Officio</i> Member
5.	Shri John M. Fernandes, RFO Campal, Forest Department	<i>Ex-Officio</i> Member
6.	Shri. G. R. Teli, Dy. Director, Department of Tourism	<i>Ex-Officio</i> Member
7.	Shri Nazareth Vaz, SW, Circle I, Water Resource Department(WRD)	<i>Ex-Officio</i> Member
8.	Prof. Pranab Mukhopadhyay, Economics Department, Goa University	Expert Member
9.	Arch. Manguesh Prabhugaonker, Landscape Architect	Expert Member
10.	Shri. Devanand Kavlekar, OSIR-MIO.	Expert Member



11.	Shri. Mahesh Patankar, Geologist.	Co-opted member of GSWA
12.	Smt.Asavari Kulkarni, Environment Officer.	Co-opted member of GSWA
13.	Shri. Siddhesh Naik Tuenker, DSLR	<i>Special Invitee</i>
14.	Shri. Mandar Nanajkar, Senior Scientist, CSIR-NIO	<i>Special Invitee</i>
15.	Shri. Akhil Parambil, CSIR NIO	<i>Special Invitee</i>

Secretary - Forest, Secretary – Urban development, Rural Development, Fisheries, Revenue, Director – State Remote Sensing Centre, Member Secretary – GSPCB, APCCF, Expert Members – Dr. G. N. Nayak, Dr. Sreekanth G.B. and Adv. Atrey Kakodkar were absent for the meeting.

At the onset, Dr. Pradip Sarmokadam, Member Secretary, Goa State Biodiversity Board and Head of Nodal Agency (HNA, GSWA) extended a warm welcome to the Chairperson and the present members of the 10th Goa State Wetland Authority (GSWA) Meeting. He also welcomed the invited villagers present to express grievances and requested that since the meeting was delayed that the agenda point no 4 to be taken on priority to be able to address grievances first. This was unanimously accepted by the members and Chairperson. The proceedings are recorded as per the serial numbers in agenda as given below.

Agenda 1: Confirmation of the Minutes of the 9th Authority Meeting.

The Minutes of the 9th Authority Meeting of GSWA were placed before the Authority members for confirmation. The same was confirmed.

Proposed by Shri. Devanand Kavlekar

Confirmed by Arch. Mangesh Prabhugaonkar

Agenda 2: Action Taken Report of the 9th Authority Meeting

Action Taken Report of the 9th Authority Meeting of GSWA was placed before the members present by the Head of Nodal Agency (GSWA), for perusal of the actions taken. The same was deliberated and approved.



Agenda 3: Approval of the 8 waterbodies with revised Zone of influence as per guidelines for final notification

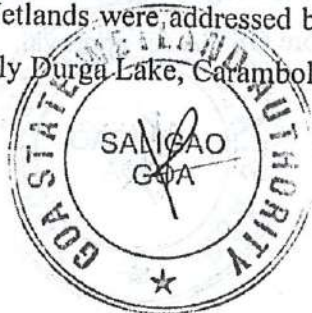
HNA (GSWA), explained that as per the approved guidelines of GSWA for delineating and regulating activities for the zone of influence for wetlands identified under Wetland (Conservation & Management) Rules 2017, the 8 identified wetlands are divided into two categories i.e. Category I: wetlands located in pristine habitat and Category II: wetlands located in urban habitat. The maps and other details were displayed on the screen for the benefit of all.

Two wetlands were classified in Category I, namely Toyyar Lake and Sarzora Lake, these two were presented to the Authority, and were approved by the authority for final notification unanimously. The Other Six wetlands that were classified in Category II and ZOI has been revised as per guidelines and confined to feeder water channels, namely Dhashi Lake, Xeldem Lake, Cottambi Lake, Nanda Lake, Bondvol Lake and Saulem (Pilerne) Lake. HNA (GSWA) informed the Authority that, subsequent to revision by CSIR-NIO, Dept. of SLR and TCP have approved the same. Grievances of all the above lakes have also been considered and addressed by the Grievance committee & placed further placed before GSWA, after the perusal of the revisions made by CSIR-NIO in the maps, **all the members of GSWA unanimously approved the Eight (08) Wetlands that were presented for final Notification in the Official Gazette of the Government of Goa.**

Furthermore, Secretary (Environment & Climate Change), suggested to prepare a brief graphic design explaining wetlands, ZOI, Buffer Zone, permitted activities and prohibitions in local languages so as to further spread awareness & address the apprehensions of the locals. He also suggested to create awareness about Wetlands through social media & other platforms. The above was agreed by the GSWA members present.

Agenda 4: Addressal of Grievances regarding Carambolim lake (Carambolim, Tiswadi), Batim Lake (Batim, Tiswadi) and Durga Lake (Chichinim, Salcete). Hearing to be given to the representatives of the grievant's.

HNA, GSWA briefed the authority that after draft notification of 11 Wetlands, the received grievances were placed to the Grievances Committee (GC) of GSWA. Grievances, suggestion and complains with regard to 8 Wetlands were addressed by GC however with regard to the three (3) remaining wetlands namely Durga Lake, Carambolim Lake and Batim Lake, GC was



of the opinion that the grievances need to be heard by authority to address them. Hence the following cases were presented to the Authority.

1. Representatives of the grievant related to the Draft Notification of Durga Lake (Chichinim, Salcete) as Wetlands.

Mr. Doura Fernandes, Ms. Melcy Barreto, Ms. Evonne Cardozo, Mr. Chalton Furtado and Mr. Valentino Barreto were the representatives that were present for the meeting. The representatives highlighted the following issues as the major reason from opposing Durga Lake to be notified as Wetland.

- a. That it is not Durga Lake but it is Durga Bund, it is only channel of water flowing to the tributary which joins the River Sal.
- b. That it is indicated as water channel in regional plan 2021.
- c. That Durga lake is seasonal and water only retains around rainy season.
- d. That land Survey shows Durga bund as Paddy field and local residents identify this land as agricultural land, and are ready to henceforth cultivate.
- e. That the residents will face difficulties in constructing new structures.
- f. That VP had taken initiative to ensure that ecological character of land won't be changed and Chichinim VP had passed the resolution by public hearing proceedings that the stakeholders claimed that the fields were cultivated the past and are proposed to be cultivated and some are presently being cultivated.
- g. That there is strong opposition from the farmers and VP to not convert this land to Wetland.

Considering all the grievances, the Chairperson GSWA explained that Hon.ble NGT has directed to notify the Wetlands on priority & is also mandate of GSWA. He suggested that the residents, farmers and VP must find a common ground and declare the area wetland so as to further the aim of water conservation however the suggestions and apprehensions will be taken on record and resolved by the authority. He also assured that all the traditional activities that the residents or locals wish to continue or take-up in the wetland will be considered in the final notification. After incorporations of all the suggestion into the brief document the Hon. Chairperson directed that the suggestions regarding permitted activities be incorporated in brief document and further be placed before GSWA for approval.



2. Representatives of the grievant related to the Draft Notification of Batim Lake as Wetland.

Ms. Delara V. Fernandes and Ms. Maria F. Rodrigues were the representatives that were present for the meeting. The representatives highlighted the following issues as the major reason from opposing Batim Lake to be notified as Wetland. As per grievants

- a. That the Batim Lake is actually a field or an agricultural area and also the VP was not informed when land was being surveyed. That the existing houses may be demolished.
- b. That the major concern is that the locals will not be able to cultivate their fields.

To these grievances the Chairperson, GSWA informed that the agricultural activities & traditionally existing activities are allowed under pre-existing rights, privileges and traditional activities like plantation of indigenous varieties in the buffer zone are also not prohibited. He also assured that the Zone of Influence (ZOI) that was marked prior to the revision will now be sizably reduced as after revision. Only prohibition is on the construction activities in the buffer zone. Furthermore, HNA (GSWA) explained that the existing structures won't be demolished, also any houses existing in the Buffer Zone will be allowed 5 meters relaxation from all sides in-case they want to increase the plinth area subject to legalities of the construction, which are beyond the purview of this authority.

After the discussion and addressel of the complaint the representatives requested the authority to arrange an awareness program explaining the local community about this entire notification process and the benefits and other relevant pre-existng rights & privilges. Secretary Environment & Climate Change also mentioned to the representatives that the notification Batim lake will only benefit that village. He also recommended that physical marking of the boundaries and demarcation of the buffer zone to be undertaken. HNA, GSWA ensured that the NIO-CSIR along with DSLR will demarcate the area as per the locals request.

3. Carambolim lake Grievants Representatives.

Mr. Vaman R. Pilsalkar, Mr. Tilau Vargaonkar, Mr. Uttam Murgaonkar, Mr. Rajesh Datta Naik Mr. Sanmesh Sawant, and Mr. Caetano M. S. Po, were the representatives that were present for the meeting. The representatives highlighted the following issues as the major reason from opposing Carambolim Lake to be notified as Wetland. As per grievant



- a. That the Carambolim lake is agricultural area and the locals intend to cultivate the area
- b. That nearby the lake within the Buffer Zone there exist developed plots where owners have built and intend to build houses.
- c. That Gram Sabha opposed notification of Carambolim wetland however requests for ground truthing.

HNA GSWA perused before the authority the letter received from the Central Government stating that Carambolim Lake is Wetland of international importance. HNA GSWA informed that once the lake is notified the traditional activities (cultivation of Paddy) and operation of sluice gates by the stakeholders is allowed (albeit the ecological character of the wetland is maintained). Firstly, the Chairperson, ascertained that the construction will be not allowed within the buffer after notification. However, a Lake Management Committee (LMC) will be formed with locals and GSWA official as the members who will be responsible for the conservation, management and wise use of the Notified wetland and its resources. Chairperson, GSWA also explained that once declared as wetland the Carambolim Lake will come under the purview of GSWA. This will also resolve the issues with the operation of sluice gate and help get the control of the wetland back to the locals and it will be possible to work with Forest department who is currently the caretaker of Carambolim Lake or necessary procedure will be initiated in this regard. Furthermore GSWA members agreed that ground demarcation of the buffer must be undertaken and general awareness programme should be conducted at Village level. Understanding the assurances the representatives were satisfied with the addressal of their grievances.

Agenda 5: Matter related to Hadfadkar family requesting to allow Pisciculture in Saulem tollem (Pilerne, Bardez).

HNA (GSWA) informed the members that a request for pisciculture in the Saulem (Pilerne) Lake has been received from Hadfadkar family regarding pisciculture. The Authority deliberated on the request and decided to allow the activity as permitted activity under the wise use of the wetland by the locals but not to give exclusive right to any particular individual or family as it will depend upon other ownership related aspects & those traditionally pre-existing rights & privileges.

Agenda 6: Application for No objection Certificate received for construction in the buffer zone of Carambolim Lake (Carambolim Tiswadi). Or any other similar matter.



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Chairperson directed to issue letter to such request stating that the application may be resubmitted only after the final notification of the concerned wetland, in any area.

Agenda 7: Letter received from Goa Heritage Action Group and Goa Bird Conservation Network regarding conservation of Batim Lake.

GBCN had communicated their objection and concern to the beautification of Batim Lake. HNA, GSWA requested the WRD to Communicate with GBCN and have a dialogue to resolve the apprehensions & inform the compliance to GSWA. WRD agreed to the request however informed the Authority that they are only repairing the sluice gate and certain culverts and not beautifying the area.

Agenda 8: Any matter relating to GSWA pertaining to WRD as Nodal Agency in O.A. 325/2015 NGT matter for compliance

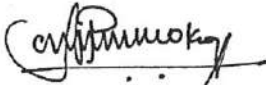
In the matter of O.A. 325/2015 HNA (GSWA) requested the WRD to report in writing, any progress done regarding this matter to GSWA as the all parties stay updated and for further needful from GSWA.

Agenda 9: Any other matter with the permission of the chair.

HNA GSWA informed about the approval granted to the NIO-CSIR regarding extension of project of the identification of wetlands. The same was agreed by GSWA members.

The meeting ended with vote of thanks by Head of Nodal Agency, GSWA.




Dr. Pradip Sarmokadam
Head of Nodal Agency,
Goa State Wetland Authority