

**STATEMENT OF ISSUES & COMMENTS OF THE APPLICANT AT THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SANITARY LANDFILL SITE FOR AIZAWL CITY UNDER THE NORTH EASTERN REGION CAPITAL CITIES DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT PROGRAMME (NERCCDIP)**

**VENUE: Y.M.A HALL, ZEMABAWK, AIZAWL, MIZORAM**

**TIME: 17<sup>th</sup> June 2011; 1:00 P.M**

**Background**

The Government of India (GoI) has made initiative to encourage economic development in the North Eastern Region (the Region). The GoI requested the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to provide assistance for a North Eastern Region Urban Development Project. In response, ADB provided an advisory technical assistance (ADTA) for the North Eastern Region Urban Sector Profile Study (the Sector Study), which was completed in December 2003. The Sector Study assessed the socio-economic situation in all eight capital cities of the North Eastern States, outlined infrastructure development programs and identified institutional, environmental and social issues. ADB then provided the Project Preparatory Technical Assistance (PPTA) assess the feasibility of and prepare an investment program North Eastern Region Capital Cities Development Investment Program (henceforth called as NERCCIP or the Investment Program) to upgrade urban infrastructure and services and improve urban management in the five capital cities of the five states in the North Eastern region, namely Agartala (Tripura), Aizawl (Mizoram), Shillong (Meghalaya), Kohima (Nagaland), and Gangtok (Sikkim).

The North Eastern Region Capital Cities Development Investment Program (NERCCDIP) envisages achieving sustainable urban development in the Project Cities of Agartala, Aizawl, Kohima, Aizawl and Aizawl through investments in urban infrastructure sectors. NERCCDIP will be implemented over a six-year period beginning in 2010, and will be funded by a loan via the Multitranches Financing Facility (MFF) of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The Hearing was presided over by Shri J. Hmingthanmawia, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) at the scheduled date and venue at 1:20 P.M which was 20 minutes later than the scheduled time. The delay was due to another public meeting with the concerned MLA in the same building. Chairman explained why public hearing was hold and few points regarding the project that the public might wished to know. He said that the total coverage of the proposed

plant site was 72.42 Bigha in area for which 7 (seven) land owners have been approached. These land owners with area as reported were as below:

<u>Name of owners</u>		<u>Area</u>
1. B.Dawngliana	-	24.23 bigha
2. B.Bualchhuaka	-	8.85 bigha
3. Lalzawni	-	11.21 bigha
4. Ramzauvi	-	9.76 bigha
5. Lalchhawna	-	3.73 bigha
6. Lalrinmawia	-	10.91 bigha
7. J.Lalthlamuana	-	3.73 bigha

After introducing officials present in the hearing, the chairman invited Smt. P.C Lalmuanpuii, Asst. Environmental Engineer, Mizoram State Pollution Control Board, to clarify the objects and need of holding the public hearing. She mentioned that some developmental projects require environmental clearance for which, public consultation is obligatory as per the Environmental Impact Assessment Notification, 2006. She reported that Public hearing was notified in two Mizo & English daily on 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> May 2011 and that no objection or suggestions were received on the proposed project during the 30 days period of Notification. She also informed the public that the proceeding of the hearing would be recorded in writing and in video as well, which shall be sent to the Ministry of Environment & Forest. She also highlighted the Public Hearing Procedures and roles of various stakeholders in the Public Hearing. The Chairman subsequently invited Smt Lalzuimawii, E.E., SIPMIU, for a presentation on the proposed project. She explained about the origin, details about the project like the site, and proposed plan of actions for implementing the project, environmental impact assessment studies conducted and the environmental management plan and the expected beneficial outcome. She also highlighted about the present status of solid waste management in Aizawl city which is violating MSW Rules.

The Chairman then requested the audience to speak out their mind comfortably on the project while requesting them to clearly tell their names and addresses. The main issues raised and clarifications from the project proponent were as summarized below:

**1. Shri K.Lalzidingliana, Village Council President, Tuirial Airfield**

“Have you acquired land from the owners? If yes, I would like to ask the VCP of Zemabawk whether he has signed the NOC or not? Zemabawk area has been used as refuse dump area from before. A facility like oxidation pond for treating septic wastes has also been installed. Almost all of our youngsters are now diagnosed with asthma. This is the place where we work everyday. As such; I, as a VCP, have objected this kind of wastes treatment in this area

**Chairman (ADC):**

“DC office has processed land acquisition. It is not yet officially procured, but agreements with the owners of Land have been signed”.

**Responses: 1) Shri Dunglema, Team Leader Gherzi Eastern Ltd:**

“Borne and brought up in Aizawl, I appreciate this project which could develop Aizawl City. The present system of wastes dumping as practiced now is not acceptable and requires rectification. The process will no longer be mere dumping of wastes. It is planned to process as per the approved technology of the government of India. Besides, the plant will be established and operated by qualified engineers under the supervision of experienced consultant. Hence this project will ensure better environment, improving all the existing improper practices, and will be beneficial for all the people in Aizawl City”.

*(Pu Dunglema, Team Leader requested Smt. Lalzuimawii, EE, SIPMIU to explain the detail process of the proposed project with power point presentation as there was no power supply during her earlier presentation)*

**2) Smt. Lalzuimawii, EE, SIPMIU:**

“The present system of solid wastes management is dreadful and illegal. It is therefore required to adopt method, which will least affect human being. As seen from the picture, all liquid wastes called leachate arising from compaction of various kinds of wastes will be collected by pipes and the entire landfill site will be lined with HDPE so that there is no infiltration into the soil. Leachate so collected by pipes will be recirculated to wastes pile. If the quantity of leachate is large, it will be concentrated and sun dried in a pit lined with HDPE. As such, there will be no problem of water contamination. Moreover, vent off gas will be collected and flared if the concentration is enormous”. Your suffering due to the present practice of solid waste management is true and we acknowledge it. Burning of wastes can affect human’s health to a

great extent. It can damage not only the respiratory system but can also result into cancer especially from burning of plastics wastes which release dioxin. Gas like Methane will also be released from the proposed land fill site which will be vented off through pipe into air. The quantity of the gas will be continuously monitored and will be flared if the concentration is high.

We are giving our best effort for the sanitation of Aizawl City. However, it is impossible to achieve the task only by SIPMIU or the consultant. Public cooperation is very vital in this regard. Awareness campaign will also be carried on”.

**2. Shri David C.Vanlalfakawma ,Research Scholar, MZU, Zemabawk**

“I guess this project will be very useful for development of Aizawl City and it will be highly appreciated if the project is fully implemented. However, I feel that holding Public hearing before awareness creation may not be too suitable. It is desirable to have knowledge about the project before the hearing and it will be better not to rush the process. My request now is to make us aware about the project before public hearing”.

“There is some Wet Rice Cultivation beside Damte stream which flows below the proposed site. This cultivation provides the livelihood to many families in this area. Will this area be affected”.

**Responses: Shri Dunglema, Team Leader Gherzi Eastern Ltd:**

“Public Hearing is not meant to educate the masses. Initial Environment Examination and Draft EIA Report have been prepared. (He was interrupted by the same person saying that public consent is necessary during preparation of draft EIA report). Public Hearing is the one of the first step for according Environmental Clearance. As a result, it is required to hold Public hearing in the first phase. The state government has no authority to grant Environmental clearance and we have to approach the Ministry. Meanwhile, awareness campaign is being carried out in three wards out of the 19 wards and will be continued before and after the work is started”.

**3. Shri K. Vanlalthanzauva, Zemabawk :**

“Inducing awareness to the public was pointed out before. I believe that the project proponent is neglecting the affected people. You had said that awareness campaign have been held in

three wards. Why should awareness be given to wards other than the affected one? Residents of Zemabawk can no longer put their wastes into collection vehicles as they are too packed by the time they reach here. Is there any hidden monetary agenda behind the project or is it really for the benefits of the people?

#### **4. Shri J. Lalhimthanga, Zemabawk**

“It is very disappointing to hold public hearing before mass awareness campaign. As per the new project, wastes are to be segregated into bio-degradable and non-biodegradable. This implies that all members of the family especially housewife are to be educated which will take time. It will not be an easy job. You have prepared a very big plan but I don't think it will be successful. The Oxidation pond for treating septic wastes was overflowing during monsoon thereby contaminating water source frequented by farmers of Zemabawk area. Similar programmes have failed before and I fear that it will be the repetition of the same. What does Pollution Control Board do? I have several complaints against smoke from burning of refuse? They often responded by saying that complaints were not received. I don't want us to be used as only some source of money. It will attract flies again and if you are to take lunch or dinner during April & May, you will have to eat inside your mosquito net. It is too near to residential area. Your plan is good but will the site be enough to hold the project? There are people who are earning their livelihood from just adjacent to the site? Let us shift the site. I don't think there is any wastes management plant just beside the highway”.

#### **5. Shri Lalrindika, Tuirial Airfield**

“The site is being used for treating septic wastes which are overflowing contaminating Damdiai stream. Will the use of Oxidation pond for treating septic wastes be continued after commencement of this project? This wastes management plant is rather near to our locality. Is it possible to shift to other places? Although the proposed project appears to be very systematic, and I believe that it may not be bad; but wastes will be transported to our locality anyhow. You will require some time to store before you could process the wastes which I think will attract flies again. The dumping area now attracts many flies which are controlled by spraying insecticides. This results into severe cough and we have become prone to various diseases. In fact some of our relatives have already expired because of the chemicals. Is there any chemical

which is good enough to control these flies? Will the same staff look after the site? Will you be able to appoint person in the affected on MR basis”?

**Responses: Smt. Helen Rodingliani, EE, SIPMIU**

“I would like to say that we are on your side. The proposed site has been visited several times and Village Council President (VCP) had also come to our office. Even the Ministry has been telling us to stop the present practice and to opt for better technology. We acknowledged your agony. In order to change the present system, we are adopting proven technology which developed countries are use implementing successfully. I have visited the site this morning also along with these experts from Ministry of Urban Development, Govt. of India, N. Delhi. They were aghast to see the existing dumping site and they have enquired on to how many people have died of asthma in this area. The Ministry of Urban Development, Govt. of India wants us to stop this illegal dumping and that is why we are introducing this technology”. This Public hearing is to obtain views, suggestions and criticism of the draft Report which is prepared as per the ToR from the Ministry of Environment & Forests, G.O.I and the process of holding the hearing is right.”

“This is your time to speak out. All views, suggestions, complaints that are expressed are recorded and will be sent to the Ministry of Environment & Forests, Govt. of India without any modifications. We are not planning to proceed against the wishes of the public. The previous plans of the government have failed the public and we admitted it. Septic Wastes Treatment as you now see is only a stop gap arrangement and will be treated separately in Bethlehem Vengthlang where plot of land has already been acquired”.

**6. Shri Lalthianghlina, Chairman, Local Council, Zemabawk**

“I have appreciated the new project. All the views expressed before regarding wastes management are true. We have reported our agony to sanitation officers and have made several suggestions so that the wastes transporting vehicles are covered but to no avail. We have become suspicious due to failure of the Oxidation pond. Farmers around the pond and Damdiai stream are the most affected. Let the masses be educated first. We don’t want our offspring to blame today’s leaders. The public lost trust because of the contamination of water sources and issues arose from land occupied by Army.”

**Responses: Smt. Lalzuimawii, EE, SIPMIU**

“It is very offensive to see the present wastes dumping site and we want to stop this practice. The site has been inspected several times as a part of the implementation programme of this project. Regarding the previous question on the availability of space in the area, it is projected to be enough for the project. Wastes will be segregated and all transporting vehicles will be covered. The present system of wastes management adopted by the government will be totally changed. Gas like Methane will be released from the landfill site the quantity of which will not be high and continuous monitoring will be done. The gas will be flared if concentration is high”.

“Public hearing notice inviting views, suggestions and complaints were made a month back and no response was received by Mizoram Pollution Control Board and SIPMIU till date. Regarding employment, it is not possible to say at the moment whether affected people will be employed or not as the project will be handed over to the Municipal Council of Aizawl which is the authority to look after solid wastes management. If there is any complaint on construction or project implementation, you are always welcome to come to our public grievances cell”.

**7. Shri David C.Vanalfakawma , (Research Scholar, MZU), Zemabawk**

“In Slide No 6 sub no. (iv) under the head Municipal Solid Wastes (Management & Handling) Rules, 2000 where it is written that Bio Medical Wastes and Industrial wastes will be handled and managed separately as per the Municipal Solid Wastes (Management & Handling) Rules. This is very sensitive. My first question is whether the rule will be followed exactly or not. Will it be monitored and do you think you will be able to accomplish the task”?

Next is, regarding disposal. It is said that non bio-degradable wastes and incineration ashes will be land filled. In the last page of the EIA Report, it is reported that about 30% of wastes are bio degradable, about 10-15% are recyclable and about 50-60% will be land filled. Is not this the existing condition? If so, huge quantity of leachate will be released and this inturn will increase the moisture content of the soil. How can that problem be solved? Besides, what is the designed life span? As there are objections form Sihphir area, dumping in that area are stopped. We have raised similar demand but no actions were taken. You are biased in site selection. Why don't you go to Sihphir which is more favoured?

**Responses: Smt. Helen Rodingliani, EE, SIPMIU**

“Regarding closeness of the landfill site to national highway which was expressed before, I would like to clarify that the proposed site is about 1 km from highway. It is connected by bamboo link road. This site is very ideal for Sanitary Landfill as it is approachable by vehicle till its bottom. In sanitary land filling, wastes will be compacted and covered after every dump of wastes. Ultimately, it will become a big Field/playground”.

“In Sihphir area or any other site, there are no dells. There are no other sites which could be suitable for Land filling”.

“The people around the site will surely reap the benefits”.

“We are not concerned with bio-hazard wastes but we will be handling only Municipal solid wastes. The only wastes that will be landfilled from hospitals are inerts and incineration ash”.

“Awareness campaigns are being carried on and we are holding such programme in Saron Veng (locality) tonight itself. All these campaigns are held through concerned councilors of the Aizawl Municipal Council. As you are aware, SIPMIU has only a handful of staff, it is not possible to summon the public. Organize such programme, we will be pleased to come at anytime. All expenditures will be reimbursed from our side”.

“All those who are now working in the dump site especially those who dig the site to make room for more wastes are our main concern. Our officers will surely think about their employment. We are also intending to make plan for setting up of small scale Industry. The residents in close proximity will gain the benefits”.

“Besides, the designed life span of the Landfill site is 25 years”.

**8. Shri Lalchhuanmawia Hnamte M/S Teacher**

“Since this project is the need of the people of Aizawl and Mizoram, we have examined all the possible ill-effects for the people of this area. This locality has had misfortunes, for instance, TB Hospital etc. No wonder we are being cautious now. Benefits for the local people like Employment generation is what we are most concerned with. We would like to be ensured that if this project is implemented, the affected people are given priority with employment benefits.

**9. Lalzawni, Member, MHIP, Zemabawk Vengthar**

“If we look into the negative sides, we feel uncomfortable with it. However, looking into all the benefits that this project would bring to us, we are happy with it. If the project would bring employment benefits to the affected local people and if the project is properly implemented, then we look forward to it”.

**10. Shri R. Keitawna Tuirial Airfield**

“If this proposed project would be beneficial for the people, we are into it. We live in Airfield locality. We have noted some trucks unloading wastes at different inappropriate places creating nuisances to the local people. Can you take action to stop this ill practice? If we record the vehicle numbers of the defaulters, would you be able to follow up?”

**Responses: Smt. Lalzuimawii, EE, SIPMIU**

“Presently, municipal waste management is in the hands of UD & PA department. Perhaps it would be best to submit complaints to the Municipal Council Authority”.

**11. Shri H.Lalzuala, Preseident, YMA, Zemabawk Branch**

“We have been dumped with all the municipal wastes of Aizawl city for a long time now. We won’t mind if these wastes go to other localities for a change. Why is it that our locality is chosen again for dumping site? We have been suffering because of the smoke from the continuous burning of waste at the dumping site. This needs to be stopped. However, we fear that all these action plans of your proposed project will not be properly implemented and we suffer again. We have had bad experiences with oxidation pond of septic waste. We fear the same problem will occur with your project”.

**12. Village Council President, Zemabawk**

“You are the experts here. Kindly tell us about the possible hazardous effects of your proposed project?”

**13. Name not recorded.**

“I feel that you are trying to make final decision here to go ahead with the project. If you do so, I am afraid that you will have to bear the consequences of public’s anger later. It appears you came here with a confirmed decision. Try listening to our words also. Why don’t you organize another Public meeting like this?”

**Responses: Shri Dunglema, Team Leader, Gherzi Eastern Ltd**

“We are not here to make decision. We came here to conduct public hearing which is mandatory for obtaining Environmental Clearance. Only the Ministry of Environment & Forests is empowered to make the final decision”.

**14. Shri Lalhmachhuan, President, YMA, Tuirial Airfield Branch**

“For a long time, you have been dumping municipal solid and effluent wastes in our locality. Stop this and shift your dumping site in other locality. We have suffered enough. You may dump in other places like Dawrpui. Please abandon the dumping site urgently”.

**15. Shri K.Lalzidingliana , Tuirial Airfield VCP**

“The location is simply not agreeable with us. The project Plan looks good, however, we request for shifting the proposed location to other locality. Though we have raised complaints for the existing oxidation pond of septic wastes, there is no improvement till now despite several steps said as taken for the same. We keep on suffering. Likewise, your project is neither trusted; we have no trust any longer with the implementation of good proposed projects. Even the existing dumping site was said that it would be utilized for generation of fertile soil, however, even after 20 years; we see no such thing from it”.

**Responses: Shri Dunglema, Team Leader Gherzi Eastern Ltd**

“You are not to be blamed for having no trusts with the state govt. However, we should! If we refuse this, who would take up? MPCB notified about this public hearing through newspaper and local TV, however, today number of participants is too less. It’s as if only people with negative mindset for the project came forward. As the existing dumping site is at Tuirial, let us all give our hearts for its improvement. Otherwise, it will be regrettable for you”.

**16. Shri K.Lalzidingliana , Village Council President, Tuirial Airfield**

“We will never be convinced if we go on like this”

**17. Name not recorded.**

“We should try to listen to both the parties. You didn’t comply when requested to highlight the ill-effects that could arise from the project. Right now, it looks more like you are simply trying to score points for the project. Why don’t you simply change the location to avoid all these un-pleasantries?”

**18. Shri David C.Vanlalfakawma, (Research Scholar, MZU), Zemabawk**

“If I may speak in non-mizo, I would like to say that I was very shocked to hear such a sarcastic remark from Chairman, Mizoram Pollution Control Board. What did he mean by saying that our negative responses to this project could be bad for us? Now, we are even more against it. Personally, I have tried my bests to create awareness among our local people through local newspaper and other means on the benefits that the project would bring us, but now I have changed my mind about this. There is no reason why we should suffer anymore”.

**Responses: Smt Helen Rodingliani, EE, SIPMIU**

The possible hazardous ill effects of the proposed project are:

- 1) If there is spillage of waste from the transporting vehicles, it would be hazardous.  
= The waste transporting vehicles will be provided with cover, hence there would be no question of spillage of wastes from the vehicles.
- 2) The leachate from the landfill could contaminate water sources.  
= To reduce the chances of water contamination, it is proposed to install proper lining for the landfill pit.
- 3) There would be chances of explosion of gases formed from the landfill unit.  
= All the gases generated from the landfill unit is proposed to be collected in a Pipe line, to be flared if the volume is high to ensure safety and prevent explosion of gases

**CONCLUSION:**

On invitation from the Chairman, the summary of the Public Hearing was read out to the public by Smt. P.C. Lalmuanpuii, AEE, Mizoram Pollution Control Board, and as there was no objection from the public it was signed by the chairman. Then, after a vote of thanks from the chairman the meeting was dissolved.