

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2ND JUNE, 2005 AT 17:00 HRS
VENUE: DRAGON GUEST HOUSE, GELEPHU, BHUTAN.

Members present at the meeting were

- 1) Gyaltshen Drukpa, Vice President, BIFA, Gelephu.
- 2) Dr.Karma Wangchuk, Secy.General, BIFA, Gelephu.
- 3) Thinlay Dorji, Park Manager, RMNP, Gelephu.
- 4) Sonam Dechen, Member, BIFA, Gelephu.
- 5) Supratim (Raj) Basu, Secy.General, IBFA, Siliguri.

Mr.Gyaltshen and Mr.Basu having exchanged their views through fax and telephone that there is an immediate need to implement conservation awareness programs in the trans-border protected area Royal Manas National Park and Manas Tiger Reserve, and accordingly this meeting was fixed at Gelephu.

Mr.Basu explained that after his interaction with the BIFA President, HRH The Crown Prince at Thimphu last June, he has been working along the Dooars areas of North of West Bengal and Bodo Territorial area of Assam. Numerous positive steps were taken, specially in the Eastern core region of Manas Tiger Reserve controlled by the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU), Chapaguri Koklabari Anchalik Committee. He insisted that there should be a link between the conservation initiatives on both sides of the border to confirm protection of the trans-border World Heritage Site, Manas and attract International attention/recognition.

The Park Manager, Mr.Dorji threw light on issues of the last one decade or more of terrorist activities in the park area which restricted all kinds of conservation activities within the park and though the Royal Manas National Park is the first National Park of the country yet development of the park was slow in comparison to the other seven protected areas of the country.

Mr.Gyaltshen expressed his views on the people to people relation in the past, which safely allowed the Bhutanese citizens use the Gelephu-Bongaigaon passage even at night and any joint program will help relation between the people of both countries at the present time.

Dr.Wangchuk insisted that we should start with smaller collaboration programs and create a better ground for future programs on greater issues.

Mr.Dechen said that the concept paper of Mr.Basu on the International Biodiversity Workshop for the school level would be a good start keeping in view that it would be held simultaneously at Guwahati, Koklabari and Gelephu.

The following points were generally agreed upon by all the members:

- 1) This was the right time to start with joint programs in the trans-border protected area.
- 2) School level programs involving teachers and students would be the right thing to start with.
- 3) December, 2005 winter vacation for schools would be the right time to hold the International Biodiversity Workshop for teachers.
- 4) Involving Globio would mean a common and internationally accepted format for a Biodiversity Workshop.
- 5) Involving an International organization would also draw the attention of several International Nature Conservation Organizations and establish the fact that peace prevails in the trans-border areas.
- 6) The ground work in regard to the International workshop would only start after the consent from the head quarters at Thimphu.

All the officials of BIFA present and the Park Manager expressed that they would immediately establish contacts with their respective offices at Thimphu to prepare the ground for the International Biodiversity Workshop which would be the first joint program for people to people participation between the two neighbouring countries of Bhutan and India for conservation of the World Heritage Site, Manas.

Signed by:

Supratim Basu SUPRATIM (RAJ) BASU

gyaltshen

Dr. Sonam Dechen

Thirley Dorji

Date:

02/06/2005

02/06/2005

2/6/2005