

SESSIONS AND MEETINGS

Eighth Session of the Council of the IJSG

Eighth Session of the Council of the International Jute Study Group (IJSG) was held at its Secretariat in Dhaka on 2-3 May 2007.



The Council, the highest authority of the IJSG, discussed establishment matters as well as administrative and financial matters of the Group. A series of important issues including membership of the Group, development of market for jute products, observance of the International Year of Natural Fibres 2009, assessment of world jute situation and other related matters to formulate appropriate strategies for the growth of the world jute sector were also discussed during the Session. The Council stressed upon the need for continuous and collective efforts by the present Members to take diplomatic initiatives to persuade potential member countries to become Members of the Group to strengthen its activities. The Council focused on the interest and participation of the private sector and underscored the need to make Private Sector Consultative Board (PSCB) more effective and a vibrant Body by increasing the number of Associate Members which can contribute to the improvement of the jute economy.

The Council appointed Mr. Sudripta Roy as the Secretary General of the International Jute Study Group for a period of three years with effect from 1 September 2007.

Ms. Elisabeth Andrea Bösch Malinen, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Switzerland (ex-officio) and Jute Commissioner, India

were re-elected as Chairman and Vice-Chairman, respectively, of the IJSG Council for the jute year 2007/2008.

Alongwith all Members of IJSG - Bangladesh, India, Switzerland, and European Community-EC (representing its 27 Member States) and Associate Members, the representatives of Pakistan, Indonesia, Morocco, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, The Russian Federation, Vietnam and FAO attended the Session as Observers. In the inaugural ceremony on 2 May 2007, Mr. Md. Abdur Rashid Sarkar, Secretary, Ministry of Textiles and Jute, Govt. of Bangladesh delivered the inaugural speech on behalf of the Chief Guest - Mrs. Geeteara Safiya Choudhury, Honourable Advisor to the Caretaker Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and in-charge of the Ministry of Textiles and Jute. Mr. A.F.M. Sarwar Kamal, the Secretary General of the IJSG spoke on the occasion. Ms. Elisabeth Andrea Bösch Malinen, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Switzerland and Chairman of the IJSG Council presided over the ceremony.

Speakers urged upon all the potential member countries to come forward in joining the IJSG to help achieve the mandate of the Group and make the organisation an effective forum for international cooperation and to work for the betterment of the global jute sector. The speakers also stressed on producing innovative diversified products to go with the consumers' choice and build new market opportunities. It was also highlighted that IJSG which is now five years old, should be the international resource centre to provide relevant information on jute sector to all concerned and undertake more promotional activities.

Seventh Meeting of the Committee on Projects (COP)

Seventh meeting of the Committee on Projects (COP) of the International Jute Study Group (IJSG) was held on 13-14 November 2006 at the IJSG Headquarters, Dhaka under the Chairmanship of Mr. Golam Mostaqim, Joint Secretary (Administration), Ministry of Textiles and Jute, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Mr. A.F.M. Sarwar Kamal, the Secretary General of the IJSG made a statement on IJSG's activities related to projects on the opening day. In the meeting, the reports of the recently completed projects such as, A New Road Map for Jute Industry, Implementation of IJO Standard 98/01 for Food grade Jute Bags, Productivity Improvement in the Jute Industry (A Workshop in Pakistan) were reviewed. The committee was informed of the progress of the on-going projects like Jute Reinforced Polyolefines for Industrial Applications: Phase II: Material Optimisation and Process Up-scaling for Commercialisation, Small Scale Entrepreneurship Development in Diversified Jute Products, Design Workshop (Phase II), Printing of a Catalogue/Publicity Brochure for Jute Diversified Products, A Publication on Jute and Kenaf etc. The updated positions of the approved pipeline projects like Development and Application of Potentially Important Jute Geo-textiles, Production of a Video

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Film on Jute, Low Cost Retting of Jute/Kenaf/Mesta for Quality Up gradation etc. and the positions of the approved unfunded projects were discussed in the meeting. Some new project proposals/concepts/activities like Collaborative Research Projects, Market Promotion of Diversified Jute Products, Observance of the International Year of Natural Fibres 2009 were also presented by the IJSG Secretariat for consideration of the COP.



The meeting suggested IJSG Secretariat to take initiative to formulate a priority-wise programme based on the recommendations of the Road Map Report in harmony with the mandate and strategy of IJSG. The Committee emphasised on production of high quality jute fibre, diversified jute products, machinery up-gradation and market promotion of jute products. The Committee elected Jute Commissioner, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India as Chairman, and Joint Secretary, Ministry of Textiles & Jute, Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh as Vice-Chairman of the COP for the jute year 2006 - 2007.

The meeting was attended by the delegates from India, European Community, Bangladesh and representatives of Associate members of IJSG.

Sixth Meeting of the PSCB

The Sixth Meeting of the Private Sector Consultative Board (PSCB) of the International Jute Study Group (IJSG) was held on 24-25 November 2006 in Kathmandu, Nepal. Mr. Sanjay Kajaria, Chairman of the PSCB chaired the meeting. Dr. Ram Saran Mahat, Honourable Minister for Finance, Government of Nepal inaugurated an international workshop on Jute Cultivation and Manufacturing in Nepal: a Challenge and the Sixth PSCB meeting as the Chief Guest. Mr. A.F.M. Sarwar Kamal, Secretary General of the IJSG was present in the meeting and made a statement.

Honourable Minister for Finance, Government of Nepal emphasized the importance of jute in the social life of Nepal and remarked that growth of jute sector in Nepal would generate employment and alleviate poverty to a great extent. Nepal should endeavour to adopt new technologies for the production of better quality fibre and diversified jute products, he added. In this context he stressed on the necessity of co-operation among the producing countries. He hoped that appropriate recommendations will emerge from the meeting.

The Secretary General, IJSG in his statement remarked that PSCB is the direct linkage between the IJSG and the Private Sector which provides a forum to discuss various challenges faced by

the jute industry. Mr. Kamal hoped that the delegates would come up with productive ideas and proposals for the overall improvement of the jute sector and make the PSCB more effective. He urged the Government of Nepal to consider becoming a Member of the IJSG for the benefit of poor farmers, and to generate employment, particularly for women and for the overall growth of the global jute economy.

During the Business Session, Dr. Deva Bhakta Shakya, Executive Director, Agro Enterprises Centre-FNCCI presented a paper on Jute Production in Nepal: Prospects and Problems. Another paper on Challenges faced by Jute Industries in Nepal was presented by Mr. Prakash Mundhra, Vice President, Nepal Jute Mills Association (NJMA).

In the Sixth PSCB meeting important issues like harmonisation of raw jute standards, cooperation between buyers'/consumers' organizations, strategy for promotion of technical textiles including geo-textiles, improvement of processing machinery and overall strategy for the jute sector etc. were discussed.

The Chairman of the PSCB in his speech drew attention to some basic issues like necessity of good quality seed and fibre, improvement of processing machinery, market promotion etc. He pointed out that attempts should be made to popularize technical textiles, geo-textiles so that bulk quantity of jute could be utilised.

Mr. Diwakar Golchha, First Vice President of FNCCI highlighted the Jute Industries in Nepal. Mr. Bharat Bahadur Thapa, Secretary, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, Government of Nepal and Mr. R.K. Poddar, Chairman of the Indian Jute Mills Association (IJMA) spoke in the inaugural Session. Mr. Imtiaz Ahmed, Ambassador of Bangladesh in Nepal also attended the function.



Among others Mr. Humayun Mazhar, Vice-Chairmen of the PSCB & Chairman, Pakistan Jute Mills Association (PJMA) and representatives of various jute related Associations and Jute Mills of Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan were present in the meeting.

Meanwhile, Mr. A.F.M. Sarwar Kamal, the Secretary General of the IJSG met separately with Mr. Bharat Bahadur Thapa, Secretary, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, and Mr. Ganesh Kumar K.C., Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Government of Nepal to discuss among others, Nepal's joining the IJSG as a Member and the outcome of the discussion was encouraging. It may be mentioned that Nepal was an active Member of the erstwhile International Jute Organisation (IJO).

PROJECTS/ ACTIVITIES

Completed Projects/ Activities

Design Workshop for Jute Diversified Products (Phase II)

The objectives of the project was to promote new, innovative, unconventional/diversified jute products, to provide inputs in terms of designs, dyes & dyeing, printing, finishing techniques to the jute diversified products manufacturers and to establish links among the designers, experts and the jute diversified products manufacturers.

National Centre for Jute Diversification (NCJD), India implemented the Design Workshop (Phase II) at Ahmedabad, India in collaboration with National Institute of Design (NID). A two weeks training on different techniques of tie & dye, batik, block printing and other hand-on techniques on jute fabrics, preparation of colour chart using different natural dyes and mordants was conducted under the project for potential entrepreneurs.

Jute Diversification Promotion Centre (JDPC) implemented the project in Bangladesh. A number of training workshops were conducted among the producers of diversified jute products for providing technical /design supports and to upgrade skills in producing quality jute diversified products. Buyers-Sellers meets were also organised under the project to improve market prospect and facilitate marketing of the products.

Design and Market Development of Handloom based Jute Floor Coverings

The project aimed at creating opportunity and access of technology processes and designs to the weavers of rural areas in producing jute based floor coverings and to revitalize the handloom clusters through promoting jute based activities in different traditional handlooms of the rural people especially women of specific areas for additional income generation/poverty alleviation. It was intended to encourage and train rural craft persons to use jute as a substitute for other raw materials (e.g. coarse cotton/sheep wool, etc.), upgrade skills and bring in design innovations in jute-based floor coverings. The project exposed the producers/small entrepreneurs to the market of handloom floor coverings and provide them opportunity of marketing their produce.

The project was implemented by NCJD and JDPC to provide adequate practical trainings to cluster of weavers so as to enable the weavers of India & Bangladesh respectively to attain the required skill for producing attractive jute floor coverings of marketable quality. NCJD implemented the project through a cluster-based approach in eight states of the North-Eastern region of India and JDPC implemented the project in the greater Rangpur and Narsingdi areas of Bangladesh with the aim of imparting skill development to handloom weavers, providing design & market support services, organizing buyers-sellers meets and fair/exhibition and making advocacy campaigns.

Printing of a Catalogue/Publicity Brochure for Jute Diversified Products

This project was undertaken to prepare/print an attractive Catalogue/Brochure of international quality with adequate necessary information, photos, codes of the products, manufacturers /suppliers list for promotion of jute diversified

products and expansion of both local and international markets. NCJD has printed the Catalogue and sent requisite copies to IJSG. The Secretariat is awaiting the final version of the Catalogue from the JDPC.

Study in the Residual Silica/Silicate in Raw Jute and Scope for Elimination/Reduction

The study was initiated by the IJSG on receipt of information from a European raw jute importer (M/s WG Clasen) regarding presence of silica in raw jute fibres much above the permissible limit (0.02%). In view of serious concern of the speciality paper pulp producers in Europe, who use jute fibres for making speciality paper, IJSG felt it necessary to conduct a study.

The Consultative Committee of CFC agreed to provide fund for the study submitted by the IJSG Secretariat in pursuance of COP decision, as a Fast Track Project. Bangladesh Jute Research Institute (BJRI) and Institute of Jute Technology (IJT), Kolkata, India implemented the project.

On the basis of the final technical /financial reports of the project implemented in India and Bangladesh received from IJT and BJRI respectively, IJSG Secretariat prepared the Project Completion Report (PCR) and has submitted it to CFC. The study has revealed and confirmed that the intrinsic silica content in jute is very negligible. That jute sometimes contains silica above acceptable limit of 0.02% is mainly due to external contamination. This is again possible to be reduced by simple washing and a simple sequence of chemical treatments, which has been described in the Project Completion Report (PCR) and also in the aforementioned Protocol.

On-going Projects

Small Scale Entrepreneurship Development in Diversified Jute Products

This project is intended to increase the use of jute fibre in domestic and export markets and assist in diversification of jute products in the home textiles sector, based upon jute/cotton blended yarns. It was also aimed at introducing new small-scale technology, training and support services to the rural community and to develop a culture of entrepreneurship at the local level.

The Project is funded by the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) and is being implemented by the NCJD and JDPC. Under this project, Raw Material Banks (RMB) and Jute Entrepreneurs Service Centres (JESC) have been established at different places of the participating countries through which entrepreneurs are provided with raw materials such as fibre, yarn, fabric etc. for production of various jute products and they are being trained to upgrade the skill in various aspects of jute processing including bleaching, softening, dyeing, printing etc. Expert designers are providing training to the entrepreneurs on the products design suitable to the market demand.

Jute Reinforced Polyolefines for Industrial Applications: Phase II: Material Optimization and Process Up-Scaling for Commercialization

The project Agreement has been signed between the PEA, CFC and IJSG and the project activities started from August 2004. The kick-off meeting of the project was held in January 2005 at A&F. Collaboration Agreements between the PEA & Azip Pipes Limited of Bangladesh and the PEA & Birla Corporation Limited of India,

