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Govt draws up plan for 26 actions

Working out a strategy along with donors for fast, effective use of funds

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The government has drafted 26 action plans including those for framing a new civil service act, dredging rivers and canals, and setting up IT centres in rural areas.

The plans are based on agreements reached between the government and the development partners during February 15-16 meet of Bangladesh Development Forum in Dhaka.

Drawn up by the Economic Relations Division (ERD), they would be finalised by this week.

Once the action plans are implemented the donors would assist more readily, said ERD officials.

Apart from this, the government and development partners are working to devise a joint cooperation strategy (JCS) to ensure quick and effective use of foreign assistance.

The main objective of the JCS, which will be firmed up by June, is to offer a forum where the government and the donors can hold each other accountable in efforts to make concrete and tangible progress towards greater aid effectiveness.

The JCS will include a development result framework setting out key indicators and means to monitor progress in relation to national poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP).

The JCS will cover issues like how to improve aid management capacity, streamline the project approval and implementation processes and harmonise donor support.

According to the action plan, the government will have the new civil service act by 2010 and the development partners will provide necessary support in this regard.

The government gives high priority to management of water resources, including dredging of silted rivers and climate-change issues and climate-change adaptation. With the help of development partners it will implement water related development programmes comprehensively, involving all parties concerned, reads a draft joint statement of the government and the development partners.

A climate-change Multi-donor Trust Fund will be set up under the government's leadership and with the World Bank providing technical support. The administrative and fiduciary arrangements will be worked out shortly. Development partners will provide substantial grant funds.

The government will look for ways to connect Bangladesh with neighbouring countries--India and Myanmar--and allow Nepal and Bhutan use Bangladesh as transit country. Government expects development partners to back this.

The government will strive to deliver vital information and services regarding information and communication technology (ICT) to citizens even in remote areas, the draft statement reads.

ERD sources said the government would set up one IT centre under public-private partnership initiative at every union. If people at rural areas have any complaints, those would reach the high ups in the government through the centres.

Various programmes for improvements in energy and power sector have been planned. The plans include setting up of an energy development agency and energy and power fund, the statement reads.

The donors had urged the government to further strengthen the Anti-Corruption Commission, the National Human Rights Commission and the Election Commission. They also recommended revision of "Domestic Violence Bill" and the government had declared its intention to review the bill.

The government and the development partners may review the Action Plan at Local Consultative Group meeting to monitor progress in its implementation.