

Participation of NGOs in decentralisation of services soon

3 Citizens' Action Groups set up

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

BANGALORE

THREE categories of Citizens' Action Groups have been informally constituted, pending a formal order to this effect by Dr A Ravindra, Chairman, Bangalore Development Authority, to facilitate a participatory role for them in their efforts to improve the administration and increase transparency and accountability in the BDA.

At a follow-up meeting with various citizens' groups recently, it was decided to set up three separate core groups - a Planning Group (Group I), a Decentralisation Group (Group II) and a Systems Improvement group (Group III). The development follows the initial meeting of June 15, when it was decided to initiate measures for collaboration between various public interest groups and the BDA for an improved perception and functioning of the latter as regards the citizen.

At the recent meeting with the various NGOs, which was chaired by Dr Ravindra, it

was agreed that Group I will study significant policy documents such as the Comprehensive Development Plan and the Metro Rapid Transit System (MRTS) besides review the status of development features such as lakes and tanks in order to offer constructive suggestions either in terms of changes or measures for implementation. The composition of the group is yet to be decided as also the methodology for putting the proposals into practice. Mr S Manjunath of CIVIC was nominated as Coordinator of the Group.

Group II, a seven-member group is expected to draw up an action plan that will facilitate NGO participation in the decentralisation of services in some of the layouts in the city. To start with, the group will take up one or two of the several that were identified, including Old Madras Road, Lingarajpuram, BTM Layout, Koramangala and the Hosur-Sarjapur Road. The NGOs' role will be in terms of ensuring services such as garbage clearance, protection of public property from encroachments and misuse, building licence and permits, water supply, electricity supply, street lighting and coordination of action on

the issue of property tax notices.

Since the process requires coordination between various public utilities like the BWSSB and the KEB as well, Dr Ravindra will issue a formal notification to this effect, besides ensuring coordination between the BDA staff and the NGOs. In the next few months, the whole process will be formalised through proper procedure, the Chairman assured. Mr Anant Nadkarni of the Public Affairs Centre is the Group Coordinator.

Group III which will take up systems improvement proposals, will initially participate in such interactive functions as routing and addressing redressal issues through the BDA's Public Relations Cell, which is to be activated. It is being headed by Ms Prabha Murthy of the Karnataka Forum for Consumer Action.

Among the various NGOs represented in these groups include AVAS, Mythri and Bangalore Environment Trust, besides CIVIC, Public Affairs Centre and Karnataka Forum for Consumer Action.