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6th World Water Forum : INBO and UNESCO coordinators of priority 1.5 : "Contribute to Cooperation and Peace" for better Transboundary River Basin Management

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The International Committee of the Sixth World Water Forum to be held in Marseilles from 12 to 17 March 2012, appointed INBO and UNESCO as coordinators of priority 1.5 : "Contribute to Cooperation and Peace through water", which mainly deals with Transboundary River Basin Management.

During the Forum, 100 thematic sessions, involving all stakeholders, should propose practical solutions, allowing free discussion of all issues to reach a consensus.

For this priority 1.5, the partners decided at their second meeting (Paris, January 2011) to focus their proposals on the following nine targets, each of which will be dealt with in an official thematic session from Tuesday 13 to Thursday 15 March 2012, at the Conference Center of Marseilles - Parc Chanot :

- 1 : Increase the political acceptance and implementation of the principles of existing international, regional and local water law in the international community ;
- 2 : Increase the number of new agreements and enhance the quality of existing agreements related to transboundary surface and/or groundwater ;
- 3 : Develop or improve cooperation mechanisms for joint management of transboundary aquifers within the framework adopted by the United Nations General Assembly ;
- 4 : Increase the number of transboundary basins organizations or aquifer systems capable of ensuring sustainable water resources management ;
- 5 : In local and international conflict situation, develop pragmatic solutions to water related issues through cooperation and dialogue involving the principal actors ;
- 6 : Create sustainable financial mechanisms for transboundary organizations ;
- 7 : Develop mechanisms to share and validate information and data at transboundary basin level ;
- 8 : Increase training in transboundary water management and conflict resolution of decision makers, senior and high-level water professionals, junior water professionals, journalists and the public at large ;
- 9 : Establish and support twinning programs between basin organizations to foster knowledge and exchange.

A synthesis session will conclude work on 16 March 2012.

The proposed organization of priority 1.5 sessions on Transboundary Basin Management has been widely disseminated and submitted for discussion to the partners who sent new proposals for solutions.

INBO organized or participated in several international meetings with all interested parties to work as part of an open and fruitful dialogue :

- * National Forum of Brazilian Basin Committees, Rio de Janeiro, August 2011 ;
- * Ministerial Conference of UNECE countries, Astana, Kazakhstan, from 21 to 23 September 2011 ;
- * "EUROPE-INBO 2011", on the Implementation of the Water Framework Directive, Oporto, Portugal, from 27 to 30 September 2011 ;
- * UN Water Conference on Water Management, Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 19-20 October 2011.
- * General Assembly of the Latin American Network of Basin Organizations, Panama, 24 - 25 November 2011 ;

Tentative conclusions :

River basin management it works !

- * Tangible results can be obtained when there is a strong political will ;
- * Significant progress has been made since the 1990s ;
- * Integrated Water Resources Management should be organized at the level of local, national and transboundary basins of rivers, lakes and aquifers ;
- * Transboundary rivers, lakes and aquifers should be given special attention and be managed in cooperation between riparian countries ;
- * Clear legal frameworks should allow the continued application of these principles, which will be facilitated by the creation of Basin Organizations or Agencies ;

- * The creation and strengthening of International Commissions or Transboundary Basin Authorities facilitate dialogue, information exchange and joint implementation of the actions needed for better management, anticipating the future and allowing the solving of potential conflicts between the countries concerned.
- * Partners must agree on a "shared vision" of the basin, resulting in a medium and long term Management Plan and Programs of Measures and of priority investments ;
- * Appropriate financial mechanisms should be established and based, inter alia, on the application of the "user-polluter pays" principles ;
- * Basin Information Systems should allow monitoring the implementation of policies and measuring their results ;
- * This management must be based on a strong participation of all basin's stakeholders and on the involvement of their representatives in Basin Committees ;

Where there a will, anything is possible !