



Extrait du OIEau

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# **9th World General Assembly of the International Network of Basin Organizations DECLARATION OF FORTALEZA**

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**The 9th General Assembly of the International Network of Basin Organizations took place in Fortaleza, in Brazil, from 13 to 16 August 2013.**  
**It gathered 319 delegates, coming from 49 countries.**

The meeting dealt with the adaptation to the world great challenges that are population growth, increasing food and energy demand or the effects of Climate Change, which were discussed during five round tables :

- **Water management in the new post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals of the UN ;**
- **Adaptation to the effects of climate change and prevention of extreme phenomena of floods and droughts ;**
- **Institutional frameworks for action of Basin Organizations and participation of local authorities, water users and the public ;**
- **Management of transboundary rivers, lakes and aquifers,**
- **Financing of water management and of basin organizations.**

From the debates, it emerged that integrated water resources management in basins, whether local, national or transboundary, is essential worldwide.

The experiments of integrated basin management carried out today in many countries, some of which are fifty years old, show the relevance of this approach.

The General Assembly reaffirmed some conditions to guarantee the success of basin management :

It is compulsory to develop approaches which integrate surface, ground and coastal waters, seek cross and inter-sectoral solutions, reduce pressures on available resources, restore the hydro-morphology of rivers and protect or restore aquatic ecosystems.

Integrated information systems should allow having knowledge on resources and their uses, on polluting pressures, ecosystems and their functioning, risks and evolution follow-up.

Production and availability of reliable information and data are essential to enable a constructive dialogue between partners, facilitate decision-making and evaluate the results of the implemented policies.

These information systems should take data on climate change into account.

Basin management plans or master plans, established through dialogue with all the stakeholders should define the medium and long-term objectives to be achieved, through the development of Programs of Measures and successive multiyear priority investments.

Sustainable financing of water resources management and of the basin organizations that are in charge of it must be guaranteed regarding investments and operation, and based on the application of the "polluter pays" and "user pays" principles, ensuring all necessary geographical and cross-sectoral equalizations, and true solidarity between all categories of users and combining national or local administrative taxes, the pricing of community services, and taxes specific to objectives selected through dialogue.

At the side of the relevant Governmental Administrations, active participation in decision-making of the local Authorities concerned, including municipalities, representatives of different categories of users and associations for environmental protection or of public interest should be organized.

The establishment of Basin Committees or Councils seems to be the best way of ensuring all the stakeholders' participation, provided that they have the necessary resources made available.

These Basin bodies should be involved in the decision-making related to water policy in their basin, with procedures and a mandate clearly defining their role. They allow establishing the necessary cross-sectoral links for the exchange of information and dialogue among all the partners.

Their establishment or their reinforcement should be a priority for the donors.

"The World PACT for better river basin management", initiated by INBO in March 2012 during the Marseilles 6th World Water Forum, and signed today by 128 organizations from the whole world, is based on all these principles.

Adaptation to the effects of global and climate changes is a local and world priority !

The social, economic and ecological consequences may be very significant and require a quick mobilization to prepare the necessary adaptation programs in each basin, taking account of surface and groundwater.

This applies to many sectors such as hydropower and cooling of thermal and nuclear power plants, food production with irrigation, fisheries and aquaculture, urbanization with the needs for drinking water supply and sanitation or inland waterways transport, etc.

The water sector is one of the most directly affected by changes in the hydrological cycles, and thus in the spatial and temporal availability of resources and in impacts on all uses.

The assessment, using various scenarios, of the hydrological consequences of global changes, is quickly required in each basin.

Research and prospective efforts should be increased and accelerated to give local field decision makers the essential elements for designing appropriate and necessary diversified programs.

It is also essential to prepare future generations by developing educational tools and youth participation, relying particularly on Youth Water Parliaments.

Anticipation, the taking into account of uncertainty and the capacity to plan on the long term should be the new bases of water management policies.

The exchange of information on good practices is essential : UNECE and INBO have started to establish a network of pilot basin organizations to test measures for adapting to climate change.

With regard to floods, the "upstream-downstream" common cause should be the basis of consistent and coordinated management on the scale of basins and sub-basins both for prevention and protection. This is especially true in transboundary basins where cooperation between riparian States should be promoted.

The prevention of droughts must be planned in the long term in each basin, by solving the structural problems which occur, in order to prevent, in the best possible way, their effects and to avoid the total degradation of water resources.

All the uses are concerned, especially water use in agriculture, which must be rationalized as well as possible.

Pressures on water resources require looking for new ways, such as the use of non-conventional water and reuse of treated water. Mobilizing new resources and creating new reserves are needed ; this should be done after making sure that water demands are rationalized and that projects are ecologically acceptable and economically reasonable. "No regret" approaches should be sufficiently flexible to adapt to highly fluctuating situations in the future.

Cooperation between riparian Countries of transboundary rivers, lakes and aquifers should be improved. It is urgent

that existing cooperation agreements, conventions or treaties be broadened and strengthened.

Where there is no agreement yet, it is essential that the riparian countries establish one and create common institutions necessary for its implementation.

The 1992 Helsinki Convention on the protection and use of transboundary watercourses and international lakes, on the one hand, and the United Nations Convention of 1997 on the other give a framework for improving transboundary cooperation in the field of water. In addition, the European Water Framework Directive proposes regional cooperation in the field of water based on the principles of integrated basin management. It may inspire other regions of the World.

While thinking has started for defining the UN post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals, INBO considers essential to include water resources management in the top priorities as this more and more scarce resource is essential for economic, social and environmental development.

It intends to get mobilized for the next major world events on water, especially for the 7th World Water Forum, the United Nations Climate Conferences and for the first International Environment Forum for Basin Organizations to be organized by UNEP in 2014.

INBO member organizations have more and more recognized experience and know-how which they intend to share, disseminate and put at the disposal of all the countries and institutions which would like to follow them in an effective basin management approach.

The General Assembly thanked the National Water Agency (ANA) and REBOB for their outstanding welcoming in Fortaleza.

It congratulated OMVS and its two High Commissioners, Their Excellencies M.S Ould Merzoug and R. Komara, for the masterful way in which they have assumed the World Presidency of INBO since the General Assembly in Dakar in 2010.

Mr. Lupercio Zirolto Antonio, President of the Brazilian Network of Basin Organizations was elected new INBO President until the next General Assembly that will take place in Mexico in 2016.

For better basin management over the world !

The website of basin management worldwide