

CONSTITUTIVE MEETING OF AN INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF BASIN ORGANISATIONS

Aix-les-Bains, Chambéry (FRANCE)
4-5-6 May 1994

FINAL RESOLUTIONS

The representatives of the governmental organizations, responsible for managing water resources, and the basin organizations of Brazil, Chile, the Ivory Coast, France, Hungary, Indonesia, Morocco, Mexico, Peru, Poland, the Czech Republic, Rumania, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, Ukraine and Venezuela, meeting in Aix-les-Bains and Chambéry on 4, 5 and 6 May, at the invitation of the French Basin Committees and Water Agencies, and in the presence of the main bi and multilateral cooperation organizations involved, have adopted the following resolutions :

BACKGROUND

To ensure the quality of life of our planet, and the sustainable socio-economic development of our societies, water resource management needs to be both rational and balanced.

These questions are complex.

The answers must at one and the same time make it possible :

- to control natural phenomena and the risks of erosion, flooding or drought,

- to reliably satisfy the needs of urban and rural populations for good quality drinking water, in order to improve hygiene and health, and to prevent large-scale epidemics,
- to ensure sufficient food by improving agricultural land drainage and appropriate irrigation,
- to harmoniously develop industry, energy production, leisure pursuits and, in some sectors, tourism and water transport,
- to prevent and to contend all kinds of pollution, in order to preserve the aquatic ecosystems, especially with a view to protecting the fauna and optimising piscicultural production for food or sport, and, generally, to satisfy the requirements of different uses.

None of these problems can be tackled in a sectorial or localised manner, nor some separately from others. On the contrary, to find a solution, national Authorities and local Powers must be brought together with the users, in an integrated approach which respects the natural environment and which is organized at the catchment area level.

A number of international and interregional organizations is engaged in special water related issues as standards and monitoring science, technology and engineering. Important networks, information exchange and systems of data banks have been established during the last three decades. However, there is a lack of general basin-wide network involving managers, policy makers and major user groups on sustainable use of water resources.

In future, agreements and strategies, programmes, financing and controls must be designed at the river basin level. For large rivers, inland seas or international seas, cooperation agreements between the riparian countries should be strengthened.

Several countries in liaison with international organizations and programmes have already established an appropriate basin organization and a large number are considering doing so.

International countries have been made for several border rivers or aquifers.

Such agreements were established on a bi-lateral or multi-lateral basin between the countries concerned. International Organizations as United Nations have in the last years made initiatives to establish international river commissions and thus creating important scientific, technical economic and political cooperation on a total basin-wide level.

To give impetus to these activities, the Brazilian and French delegations, during the United Nations Conference for the Environment and Development, which was held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, proposed, in association with all the countries concerned, the creation of an International Network of Basin Organizations.

OBJECTIVES OF THE NETWORK

The network must have as its objectives :

- to promote an exchange of information on a mutual technical basis, experiences and expertise between countries and organizations interested in basin management,
- to promote in the cooperation programmes water management for a sustainable development,
- to participate in the national and international discussion on rational management of water resources and the integrated development of the large river basins and aquifers and to make a concerted effort towards international cooperation in these areas ;
- to facilitate the development of tools for institutional and financial management, programme planning, the organization of data banks, and of models adapted to needs ;

- to promote training programmes for the elected representatives, and user representatives, especially industrialists, agriculturalists or installation and local service managers etc... as well as for the directors, managers and technicians of the member organizations,
- to encourage training and educational actions for youth,
- to evaluate the activities undertaken and to circulate the results.

THE NETWORK PARTNERS

The network is open to :

- management organizations of the national, and if necessary, international river basins, as well as to the cooperative structures which they have developed between themselves ;
- governmental administrations, responsible for managing water resources, of the countries interested in setting up basin organizations ;
- bi or multilateral cooperation organizations supporting activities to establish institutional structures at the large river basin or aquifer level.

THE FOUNDING PRINCIPLES

With reference to the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment held in Rio de Janeiro United Nations Conference (June 1992), and to the International Conference on Water and Environment held in Dublin (January 1992), the Network partners must apply, or declare themselves willing to apply, the following common principles :

- * to organize, at the catchment area level, procedures for the

integrated management of water resources, aimed at preventing hazardous and catastrophic natural phenomena, satisfying in a rational and equitable manner the different uses for sustainable economic development and protecting and restoring the aquatic environments ;

* to establish systems of financing pluriannual development programmes and of protection based on the "user-polluter pays" principles, and on the river basin common cause concept ;

* to find procedures for associating national authorities and, possibly, international organizations to local powers, water users, and concerned representative non-governmental organizations with programme planning and the management of the basin organizations ; ad to develop information and training capabilities for the representatives of these partners to enable them to fully assume their responsibilities which are theirs within the context of basin policies.

PROCEDURES FOR CREATING THE NETWORK

All the interested partners adhering to the founding principles will meet together, within one year.

Spain and Mexico have kindly offered to accomodate the two next plenary meetings and they will jointly make a decision as to their venue before the fall 1994 meeting of the liaising committee.

In the meanwhile, a liaising committee made up of representatives from :

- France
- Brazil
- Indonesia
- Ivory Coast
- Mexico
- Poland

- Rumania
- Spain

will make all the contacts necessary to define the procedures for the constitution and running of the network and to examine all the membership applications from new partners which are received.

The French Government and basin organizations having agreed to cover the costs, the secretarial services of the liaising committee will be handled by the International Office for Water.

In order to finance the activity of the network, the support of the concerned Governments and of the international donor agencies should be considered.

The participants at the Aix-les-Bains meeting have expressed the wish that their resolutions be presented at the next assembly of the Commission for Sustainable Development.