

4th World Water Forum
(Mexico, march 2006)

African Session on
” The Management of Transboundary water
courses”

RECOMMENDATIONS

The local actions presented by African water actors have highlighted the major challenges and constraints associated with the management of transboundary watercourses at the level of the continent. These watercourses relate to rivers, lakes and aquifers shared by at least two countries.

With a total volume of about 4,200 billion cubic meters, shared waters in Africa represent more than 80% of available water resources. In the continent considered as a whole, these resources that are scarce, scanty and variable are contingent upon various factors, among which the mechanical effects of climate changes and anthropic activities that constitute as many phenomena that threaten the very existence and future of the continent's populations who, in their large majority, are rural ones.

In the countries concerned, capacities do not allow for creating the conditions conducive to a rational and equitable management of the available water resources which constitutes a prerequisite towards achieving sustainable development in these countries.

Notwithstanding, a number of experience carried out in Africa have evidenced the relevant nature of an approach based on regional

integration whose primemover might be the management of shared water resources.

To this end, there is a strong need to establish frameworks for a shared, concerted, solidarity- based and sustainable valorization of the available resources; said frameworks should be endowed with adequate institutional, legal, human, technical and financial means.

Based on the foregoing, participants to the African session on transboundary water courses:

- considering the challenges and constraints associated with development of transboundary water resources as highlighted in the local actions presented by African water actors;
- Aware of the relevance of an implementation of the principles of good” governance “ as spelt out in the course of international fora, namely those of Rio (1992), Paris 1998, the Hague (2000), Johannesburg (2002) and Kyoto (2003);
- Concerned about strengthening inter-states cooperation through Basin Organizations for the purpose of achieving the “Millennium Development Goals”;
- Convinced of the need for a framework likely to help federate African basin Agencies, each one in its field of competence, towards facilitating both bi- and multilateral initiatives;

Hereby strongly appeal to all African countries, to AMCOW, to African Basin Agencies and to partners in development:

1. To support and backstop the IWRM process both at the level of shared basins and at the level of countries considered individually.
2. To support the setting up of new transboundary Basin Agencies;
3. To strengthen capacity building at the level of existing Basin Agencies, namely in the framework of NEPAD and AMCOW water components, of the European Union water facility and to facilitate their access to financial resources;

4. To organize at the level of each basin integrated, reliable and harmonized systems for observation and monitoring purposes as well as for the exchange of informations based on transparency and user-friendly access
5. To organize, at continent level, a system for the monitoring of transboundary water resources based on systems set up at the level of the various basins;
6. To elaborate and implement in a concerted and transparent way Master schemes or Basin management plans designed to set the objectives to be achieved in the medium and long terms; these schemes shall be accompanied by concrete multi -annual action programmes and dynamic systems for the follow-up of their implementation.
7. To improve the systems of education, information and awareness raising for the benefit of populations and to foster the evolution of behaviours vis-à-vis water resources use and management;
8. As the key to a successful approach in Africa, to further involve users, especially women and the poorest populations, in the management of their own water resources;
9. To backstop the African Network of Basin Organizations which, under AMCOW and in its capacity as a federating agency and frame of permanent consultation, exchange of field experience, monitoring and dissemination of good practices;
10. To think over the opportunity to elaborate an International “African Charter of waters”

Participants to this session express their thanks to the Mexican Organizing Committee of the forum and to the Mexican authorities for the warm welcome extended to the various delegations as well

as for the perfect organization of this water rendezvous of give and take.

Done in Mexico on 18 March 2006
The session secretariat