Keynote speech on stakeholder participation in climate change adaptation

Francesca Bernardini
Secretary to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes
The Water Convention: a living instrument

Objective: to protect and ensure the quantity, quality and sustainable use of transboundary water resources by facilitating cooperation

The Convention is based on three main pillars:

• Principle of prevention
• Principle of reasonable and equitable utilization
• Principle of cooperation

• Sustainability of resources is the overarching objective

Support to transboundary water cooperation thanks to:

A sound legal framework

An active institutional framework

Activities and projects on the ground
Programme of work for 2016-2018

- Support to implementation and application
- Identifying, assessing and communicating the benefits of transboundary water cooperation
- Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins
- Water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus in transboundary basins
- Opening, promotion and partnerships
- European Union Water Initiative and National Policy Dialogues
Climate change activities under the Convention

- Task Force on Water and Climate created in 2006
- Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change adopted in 2009
- Programme of pilot projects on climate change adaptation in transboundary basins (Chu Talas, Neman, Dniester, Sava rivers)
- (Global) Platform for exchanging experience on this: regular workshops and web platform
  **Workshop on water scarcity and Task Force on Water and Climate on 11-13 December in Geneva**
- Global network of 14 basins working on climate change
- Collection of good practices and lessons learned published in 2015 together with INBO
- Policy work in global processes, such as UNFCCC, ISDR: Development of a Words into Action on “water/river basins management and transboundary cooperation”
Basins in the global network of basins
Working on climate change

International River Basins

© Transboundary Freshwater Dispute Database
Oregon State University, 2009
Mollewiecke World Projection
WGS 1984 Geographic Coordinate System
What is stakeholder involvement?

Co-decision and co-production
- Balanced share of power among stakeholders involved

Partnerships
- Agreed-upon collaboration between stakeholders
- Characterised by joint agreement

Representation
- Structural level of engagement with the objective to develop collective choices
- Often embedded in the organisation’s structure

Participation
- Provide opportunities to take part in the policy/project process
- Does not entail that participants have an influence over decision making

Consultation
- Gather comments, perception, information and experience of stakeholders
- No obligation to take stakeholders’ views into consideration in the final outcomes

Communication
- Make water-related information and data available to other parties
- Share information unilaterally, bilaterally or multilaterally
- Make targeted audience more knowledgeable and sensitive to specific water issue
- Encourage stakeholders to relate to the issue and take action

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Lessons regarding stakeholder involvement

- Start climate change project with a thorough baseline study and stakeholder analysis e.g. Neman project
- Build transboundary teams of experts, authorities, NGOs, etc.
- Involve relevant stakeholders in all steps of the adaptation strategy development to ensure acceptance:
  - Impact assessment: Citizens science, make data available to public
  - Vulnerability assessment and scenario development: participatory workshops, e.g. Garonne
  - Strategy development: open consultation, workshops
- Combine adaptation strategy development with concrete measures implementation (e.g. in Dniester project 12 measures were implemented)
Stakeholders to involve

- Use existing consultation mechanisms such as basin councils
- Consult and involve affected communities
- Involve also water-related sectors as relevant e.g. energy, hydropower, agriculture, climate - by identify their relevant interests
- NGOs can play a crucial role: to push governments, to provide expertise, as a convening power
- For implementation of measures, consider also the private sector as financing source
Communication and capacity-building

• Assess capacities and try to bring diverging capacities in basin countries to similar level through trainings etc.: develop capacity building plan
• Ensure exchange of knowledge between technical experts and decision-makers, eg through working group
• Develop communication plan and tailor messages and communication means to audiences: e.g. film in AMICE
• Organize stakeholder conferences, e.g. Mekong
• Involve young people- example of the Dniester: Art basin contest «Dniester aquarelles», Dniester expedition, Afforestation
Conclusions

• Stakeholder involvement is crucial for acceptance of adaptation and mitigation measures; can lead to better more sustainable outcomes

• Measures carried out at basin level can improve transboundary cooperation at local level, and vice-versa, increasing trust and common understanding

• Basin – wide cooperation on climate change adaptation can foster transboundary cooperation more broadly

• But it is challenging:
  – RBOs are not anymore «only» supposed to manage water (communication specialists, process specialists, intersectoriality)
  – How to «institutionalize» involvement?

Water connects – be the connector
Thank you for your attention!

More information

http://unece.org/env/water
www.unece.org/env/water/water_climate_activ
https://www2.unece.org/ehlm/platform/display/ClimateChange

Francesca.Bernardini@unece.org
Water.convention@unece.org