

**Global Alliances for Water and Climate - International Network of Basin Organizations**  
**GCAF 2018 – SAN FRANCISCO – CHALLENGE**

**Fresh water is a time bomb on the planet in the very near future!**

**If the greenhouse-effect gases are responsible for climate change, fresh water is the first victim...**

**Business as usual cannot continue and adaptation of water management to global changes is urgently needed worldwide!**

**Initiating or strengthening necessary adaptation actions in the basins of rivers, lakes, aquifers, large wetlands as well as coastal areas are key issues.**

**GENERAL STATEMENT**

Climate change is already affecting and will increasingly affect the quantity and quality of freshwater and aquatic eco- systems, especially through the intensity and greater frequency of extreme hydrological events, such as floods and droughts, as well as the increase in ocean level, which threaten security, economic and social development and the environment.

Adaptation actions should be undertaken without delay to minimize the impacts of climate change on the populations' health and safety, on economic development and the environment, considering the importance of the protection of water-related ecosystems.

The basins are natural areas where water flows on the surface and in the subsoil: they are the relevant territories for organizing water resources management.

In order to ensure more effectiveness, these actions to adapt to climate change should thus be implemented at the level of river, lake and aquifer basins, through a joint, participative, integrated and sustainable water resources management.

**Well-functioning watersheds and basins are necessary to support healthy forests, floodplains, wetlands, and other carbon sinks to meet the climate goals.**

**We should act quickly before it is too late!**

Therefore, new basin organizations and existing ones should be financed and strengthened to facilitate the cooperation, coordination and exchange of information, dialogue, consultation and prevention of conflicts between stakeholders and to enhance the implementation of adaptation measures and the sharing of benefits on the basin scale,

To that end, in particular, mobilizing new and increasing funding dedicated to climate change adaptation in basins is essential,

Donors are encouraged to support prior assessments and actions for adaptation to climate change in basins,

Local authorities and communities, economic sectors and the civil society should be better associated and involved in basin management, including in the definition and implementation of adaptation measures.

Cooperation and exchange should increase between the institutions involved, especially among the basin organizations at the global, regional and international levels in order to facilitate the transfer of experience and know-how on best practices in basin management and adaptation to climate change.

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**OUR COMMITMENT: Supporting and implementing Water resources adaptation to Climate Change in the UNFCCC Climate Action Agenda.**

**① Reinforce capacity development and knowledge:**

- establish basin-wide networks for monitoring and data exchange and water information systems, which are integrated, permanent, reliable, open, representative, inter- operable and accessible, as a decision making support tool for adaptation measures,
- develop an interface on the effects of climate change and water between decision makers and research organizations on environmental and human sciences,

**② Adapt basin management planning to climate change:**

- at the level of the basins, assess the impacts of climate change and the vulnerabilities and produce strategies for adapting water management to climate change,
- develop basin management plans and actions programs for the implementation of these strategies and measures for adaptation to climate change, and organize regular performance reviews based on suitable indicators,
- develop a more efficient and sustainable use of water resources (including groundwater) by better controlling the demand and increasing water availability through inter alia: water efficiency programs, retention measures, modernization of systems, reuse of treated wastewater, artificial recharge of aquifers, rainwater harvesting, application of the polluter-pays principle, etc.,
- enhance the services of water-related ecosystems in adaptation to climate change through inter alia protection and restoration of wetlands and coastlines, reforestation and other Natural Water Retention Measures (NWRM),

**③ Reinforce governance:**

- build the institutional capacities of basin organizations for adaptation to climate change through existing networks and platforms (UNECE-INBO global network of pilot basins) and improve the abilities of their staff through professional training,
- support mechanisms for the involvement of the stakeholders in basin management, including in vulnerability assessments and planning and implementing adaptation measures, in order to strengthen participative governance and to improve consistency of adaptation policy of the water sector with adaptation policy of water-related sectors (agriculture, energy, transport, tourism, fish farming etc.),

**④ Ensure adequate financing:**

- establish investment program and sustainable financing mechanisms for the implementation of the action plans and programs.

**We will report on our actions and share the progress made in the forthcoming international conferences on water and climate, such as the next San Francisco Global Climate Action Summit or COP24 2018 in Poland and within existing networks, including UN SDG 6 HLPF, the UNECE-INBO global network of pilot basins and the OECD Water Governance Initiative Steering Committee.**