

IWRM AND BASIN MANAGEMENT THEME

DRAFT STATEMENT

Key issues

The key issue confronting most countries today is that of more effective *governance*, improved *capacity* and adequate *financing* to address the increasing challenge of satisfying human and environmental requirements for water.

We face a *governance crisis*, rather than a water crisis. Water governance is about putting Integrated Water Resources Management, IWRM, with river and lake basin management and public participation as critically important elements of it, into practice.

IWRM addresses *economic efficiency, environmental sustainability and equity*. And with good reason: global figures of water scarcity, billions without adequate water supply and sanitation, devastating floods and droughts, environmental degradation, water related health problems and poverty tell a story of failure to act.

The three basic "pillars" of IWRM are the *enabling environment* of appropriate policies and laws, the *institutional roles* and framework, and the *management instruments* for these institutions to apply on a daily basis. IWRM addresses both the management of water as a resource, and the framework for provision of water services to all categories of users, and it addresses both water quantity and quality. In doing so the basin (river, lake or groundwater) must be recognized as the basic unit for planning and management, and a firm societal commitment and proper public participation must be pursued.

Actions

New *national policies, strategies and laws* for water resources development and management are being developed in a large number of countries worldwide, most often following the principles of IWRM. Such plans have often led to restructuring of the institutional framework as a result, including *river and lake basin organizations* as the basic institutional entities for implementing IWRM.

Many regions, countries and local communities have come to realize that water is a multi-stakeholder issue, and that *partnerships* of all interested and affected parties are a viable mechanism to translate this into practice.

Encouraging actions in IWRM and basin management are also taking place between states at the regional level, both in terms of *regional conventions and protocols* for shared waters.

The *vital role of ecosystems* in sustaining water as a resource and providing livelihoods to human beings and other species is increasingly being recognized in national and local planning and management of water.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Prepare national IWRM strategies: Pursue Article 25 of the WSSD Plan of Implementation: "develop IWRM and water efficiency plans by 2005, with support to developing countries, through actions at all levels". This objective should be pursued in close coordination with the UN Task Force for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

In doing so it is critically important to integrate policies and strategies on water with other relevant sectors such as agriculture, energy, health, transport, education etc.. In this context the integration of water into poverty reduction strategies (and PRSP's) must be pursued.

Recommendation 2: Build multi-stakeholder partnerships: Multi-stakeholder partnerships at regional, country and local levels should be promoted, including the water related Type II Partnerships launched at WSSD in Johannesburg. Such partnerships include governments, private sector, academia, NGO's and civil society organisations.

Recommendation 3: Create and support river and lake basin management structures: As also stressed in the WSSD Plan of Implementation there is a need to "develop and implement national/regional strategies, plans and programmes with regard to integrated river basin, watershed and groundwater management", including "programmes for mitigating the effects of extreme water related events".

The creation and support to river and lake basin organizational structures involves all stakeholders, and include public participation through the mobilization and empowerment of the users and other relevant interest groups.

The support required for basin management spans from policies and laws through regulations, standards, financial arrangements and information management to practical capacity building at all levels.

Recommendation 4: Disseminate and implement the World Lake Vision: A World Lake Vision (WLV) has been prepared as a major basis for developing and implementing individual lake visions and action plans. It should be supported to promote immediate actions to address the major environmental and socio-economic challenges facing lakes and their drainage basins.

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