

## **International Hydrological Programme**

17<sup>th</sup> session of the Intergovernmental Council  
(Paris, 3 – 6 July 2006)

### **DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR UNESCO'S WATER CENTERS**

Item 8.5 of the provisional agenda

#### **SUMMARY**

The 38<sup>th</sup> and 39<sup>th</sup> sessions of the Bureau discussed the desirability of developing a strategy for UNESCO's water centers, both category I and II. This document provides the context for a more in-depth consideration of this matter. It also puts forward suggestions for setting in place a process for developing such a strategy, which would then be fed into the UNESCO-wide strategic planning process, the Strategic Plan of IHP-VII, and the UNESCO Programme and Budget for 2008-2009.

As instructed by the Bureau, the Secretariat has drawn up (i) a draft outline of elements to facilitate the development of such a strategy (Annex II) and (ii) a draft resolution for consideration by the Council (Annex III).

Decision required: paragraph 11.

1. Any discussion about UNESCO's water centers needs to take place in the context of (1) overall discussions on UNESCO's category I and category II centers<sup>1</sup> in particular within the Executive Board and the General Conference, and (2) the role of these centers with respect to the International Hydrological Programme (IHP)<sup>2</sup>.

### **Overall UNESCO context**

2. The 33<sup>rd</sup> session of the General Conference (2005) approved the "Principles and guidelines regarding the establishment and operation of UNESCO institutes and centers (category I) and institutes and centers operating under the auspices of UNESCO (category II) (33C/Resolution 90), as well as a model agreement for the establishment of new centers (ref. document 33 C/19). This decision was based on extensive discussions by the Executive Board. These new guidelines supersede the ones contained in document 21 C/36 (1981) under which the centers had been established thus far.

For the IHP, this means that any new centers will need to conform to the approved principles and guidelines, most of which had already been applied for the water-related centers approved so far. For the category II water related centers, attention is drawn, however, to criterion II.14 entitled "sunset clause", which stipulates that:

"The designation as a category II institute or center should be reviewed by the Director-General every six years in the context of the preparation of a new Medium-Term Strategy for the Organization (C/4 document). This should ensure that the focus and coverage of the activities of a category II entity is in line with the strategic objectives of the Organization and the agreed criteria. Unless such a complementarity is determined, a renewal should not be recommended to the Executive Board and its designation as category II institute/center should lapse." (33 C/19, Annex, page 18).

3. A new UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013 will be approved by the General Conference at its 34<sup>th</sup> session in 2007.

### **IHP context**

4. There are now 12 water-related centers (category II) operating under the auspices of UNESCO. The full list is provided in Annex 1, along with the date of entry for each center. A number of new centers are under discussion. The last few years have seen a rapid increase in the number of centers reflecting heightened interest in water within Member States, and as a response to the designation in 2001 of "water and associated ecosystems" as a principal priority of UNESCO. Proposals for several new centers are in the pipeline. The implications of this rapid expansion of the network have not yet been assessed.

5. In addition to these category II centers, in 2003 UNESCO-IHE was integrated into UNESCO as a category I center. The important role that UNESCO-IHE can play with respect to the IHP and the category II centers has been fully recognized by the Council, notably in

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<sup>1</sup> Category I centers are an integral part of UNESCO, and come under the authority of the Director-General. Category II centers operate "under the auspices of UNESCO". They are closely linked to UNESCO's programmes but operate independently from the Organization.

<sup>2</sup> Document IHP/IC-XVII/6 is also relevant to this discussion.

Resolution XVI-2. The Director-General of UNESCO has said that UNESCO-IHE should serve as the “hub” of the “wheel” consisting of the category II centers.

6. Until now, the attention of the Council and the Bureau has been focused primarily on the review and establishment of new category II centers, a process which requires review by the Executive Board and approval by the General Conference. With UNESCO-IHE and 12 category II water-related centers, there has been concern expressed in the Executive Board and the General Conference about how these centers are operating with respect to UNESCO’s programmes. It has also been pointed out that it is time to take stock of the geographical and thematic coverage of the centers. The intent is to maximize their contribution to the solution of regional and global water problems, and also to build an effective network among them which avoids overlap, promotes cooperation, and provides coherence vis-à-vis Member States.

7. Within the 38<sup>th</sup> and 39<sup>th</sup> sessions of the Bureau, there was some discussion along these lines (ref. IHP/Bur-XXXVIII/3, para. 10-14 and IHP/Bur-XXXIX/3, para 17-19). A number of recommendations and suggestions were made in this regard, which would need to be taken into account in considering a comprehensive strategy.

8. A strategic plan for Phase VII of the IHP is now being developed. This document will need to reflect any strategy that might be developed for the water-related centers. And the strategy for the centers would also need to take into account what is foreseen for IHP-VII.

#### **Developing a strategy and creating a network among the centers and with the IHP**

9. At its 39<sup>th</sup> session, the Bureau was of the opinion that a strategy and plan for reinforcing the network of category I and category II centers was needed. The Bureau indicated that in order to achieve this, the following measures would be appropriate:

- Develop a data base on the centers based on information to be solicited according to a common format,
- Define guiding principles to bear in mind in developing the strategy,
- Convene a meeting of directors of the centers to be held in late 2006 to approve a strategy
- Form a small task force to prepare a draft strategy for consideration by this meeting,
- Recommend to the 17<sup>th</sup> session of the Council that it consider a resolution outlining the above.

10. The Bureau asked the Secretariat to prepare documentation and a draft resolution to this effect. Annex II provides a draft outline of the objectives, guiding principles and process to develop a strategy. Annex III provides a draft resolution for consideration by the Council.

11. The Council may wish to consider the draft resolution contained in Annex III.

ANNEX I

**UNESCO's Water-Related Centers (April 2006)**

Category I	UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education	2003
Category II	International Research and Training Center on Erosion and Sedimentation (IRTCES) Beijing, China	1984
	International Research and Training Center on Urban Drainage (IRTCUD) Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro	1987
	Water Center for the Humid Tropics of Latin America and the Caribbean (CATHALAC)	1992
	Regional Humid tropics Hydrology and Water Resources Center for Southeast Asia and the Pacific (HTC) Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	1999
	Regional Center for Training Water Studies of Arid and Semi-Arid Zones (RCTWS) Cairo, Egypt	2002
	Regional Center on Urban Water Management (RCUWM) Tehran, Iran	2002
	International Center on Qanats and Historic Hydraulic Structures (ICQHHS), Yazd, Iran	2003
	IHP-HELP Center for Water Law, Policy and Science, Dundee, UK	2005
	Regional Center for Arid and Semi-Arid Zones of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAZALAC), La Serena, Chile	2006
	International Center for Water Hazard and Risk Management (ICHARM) Tsukuba, Japan	2006
	European Regional Center for Ecohydrology, Lodz, Poland	2006
	Regional Center on Urban Water Management, Cali, Colombia	(approved by Executive Board 2006, agreement not yet signed)

## Annex II

### **Draft outline of elements to facilitate the development of a strategy for UNESCO's water centers**

#### **Overall goal**

Integrate the ensemble of UNESCO's water centers into an effective and harmonious means of furthering the objectives and water programmes of UNESCO, aiming at a network that works together and avoids overlap, promotes cooperation and provides coherence vis-à-vis Member States.

#### **Objectives**

- Strengthen the operational links between IHP and UNESCO's water centers, (category II)
- Create links among the centers (category II) themselves
- Create and strengthen links between the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education (category I) and the category II centers
- Ensure that UNESCO's water centers are adequately reflected in UNESCO's Medium-Term Plan (2008-2013) and in the Strategic Plan for IHP-VII
- Ensure that UNESCO's water centers implement relevant IHP projects

#### **Guiding principles for developing a strategy**

- cooperation between and among the centers through joint undertakings
- exchange of experience
- acting as an additional operational arm for implementing IHP activities
- develop close working relations with the IHP National Committees
- emphasis to education and capacity-building, drawing on the expertise of UNESCO-IHE
- assisting Member States to achieve the Millennium Development Goals
- including as appropriate relevant parts of the UNESCO water family, such as IHP National Committees, UNESCO Chairs, UNESCO regional hydrologists, PoWER partners<sup>3</sup> and other networks/partnerships of UNESCO-IHE, networks/partnerships of the category II centers

#### **Process for developing a strategy**

- Develop a data base on the centers based on a report which each center would be asked to present to the Council, according to a template to be drawn up by the Secretariat. This data base would serve as a tool to:

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<sup>3</sup> The Partnership for Water Education and Research (PoWER) of UNESCO-IHE is a network of 17 educational institutions in the field of water, aiming to build capacity in developing countries by delivering qualified professionals in the fields of integrated water resources management.

- provide more information about the activities of the centers,
  - highlight areas of convergence and possible collaboration,
  - provide input into the review that will take place during the preparation of UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013.
- Form a task force to prepare a draft strategy for consideration by all center directors. The task force would consist of the Director of UNESCO-IHE, the directors of two or three of the category II centers, and the Secretary to the IHP Council.
- Organize a meeting of the directors of the category I and II centers in late 2006, which would approve a strategy for UNESCO's water-related centers. This strategy would then feed into the UNESCO wide draft Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013 (C/4) and the UNESCO Programme and Budget for 2008-2009 (C/5), as well as the Strategic Plan for Phase VII of the IHP.

Annex III

**Draft resolution concerning the development  
of a strategy for UNESCO's water-related institutes**

The Intergovernmental Council of the International Hydrological Programme of UNESCO

- Noting** with great satisfaction the entry into UNESCO in 2003 of the UNESCO-IHE Institute of Water Education, and cognizant of the opportunities thus afforded to the International Hydrological Programme,
- Noting** the rapid expansion in the number of water centers operating under the auspices of UNESCO. as well as the range of themes and geographical regions among these centers,
- Taking into account** the approval of the 33<sup>rd</sup> session of the UNESCO General Conference of "Principles and guidelines regarding the establishment and operation of UNESCO institutes and centers (category I) and institutes and centers operating under the auspices of UNESCO (category II), and drawing particular attention to the "sunset clause" stipulating that the Director-General must review the designation of such centers every 6 years as part of the preparation of the Organization's Medium Term Strategy,
- Aware** of concern expressed within the Executive Board of UNESCO about how these centers are operating with respect to UNESCO's programmes, and how they work together as a network which avoids overlap, promotes cooperation, and provides coherence vis-à-vis Member States,
- Emphasizes** the critical importance for the future of the IHP that both the category I and II centers be strongly linked among them and to the IHP at all levels,
- Decides** to formulate a strategy for UNESCO's water centers,
- Decides** to create a task force to prepare a draft strategy, consisting of the Director of UNESCO-IHE, the directors of three of the category II centers, and the Secretary of the IHP;
- Asks** the Secretariat to organize a meeting of the directors of all UNESCO's water centers in late 2006, in order to finalize the strategy prepared by the task force,
- Authorizes** the Bureau to formally approve the strategy at its first session in 2007, or sooner if feasible, and to ensure that it is adequately reflected in the Strategic Plan for IHP VII,
- Invites** the Director-General to reflect the strategy for UNESCO's water centers in the Draft Medium Term Plan for 2008-2013 and the Draft Programme and Budget for 2008-2009.