



International Hydrological Programme

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REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT ON THE 33RD SESSION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE AND ON THE 170TH TO 174TH SESSIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNESCO, INCLUDING OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME AND BUDGET FOR 2006-2007 (33 C/5)

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

SUMMARY

This document summarizes the decisions on water related issues of the 33rd session of the UNESCO General Conference and of the 170th to the 174th sessions of the Executive Board as well as the water and IHP related components within the 33 C/5 Programme and Budget (2005-2006) of UNESCO.

Introduction

1. This document succinctly covers the water and IHP related issues addressed during the 33rd session of the UNESCO General Conference (October 2005) and the 170th-174th sessions of the Executive Board (held from September 2004-April 2006). In particular, this document addresses the adoption by the general Conference at its 33rd session of the 33 C/3 Programme and budget for the 2006-2007 biennium. It should be noted that Member states, both at the General Conference and at the Executive Board sessions overwhelmingly supported water as a principal priority for UNESCO.

33 C/5 Programme and Budget for the 2006-2007 biennium

2. The General Conference, at its 33rd session, adopted the 33C/5 Programme and budget for the 2006-2007 biennium with a total budget of \$610 million. All inflation and statutory increases, the Belmont plan loan repayment for upgrading of Headquarters buildings and increased security measures both at Headquarters and in the field are included within the \$610 million regular budget approved by the General Conference. This implies, in general, a considerable budgetary reduction for programme execution other than for principal priority areas.

3. *Water and associated ecosystems* continues to be the principal priority for Major Programme II (Natural Sciences) and represents approximately 42% of the overall Regular Programme amount of the resources allocated to the Major Programme II activities as compared to 34.7% in the 32 C/5 approved. Thus, the budget for Subprogramme II.1.1 remains at a much higher level than before 2002, time at which “water and associated ecosystems” became a principal priority within UNESCO.

4. The Sub-programme II.1.1 *Water interactions: systems at risk and social challenges* will have a regular biennial budget of \$ 8,800,200 (along with US\$3,975,000 of estimated extrabudgetary plus \$62,800,000 for UNESCO-IHE) for the 2006-2007 biennium. The relevant water-related features of the 33 C/5 can be found under Major Programme II Natural Sciences/ Programme II.1 *Science, environment and sustainable development/* Sub-programme II.1.1 *Water interactions: systems at risks and social challenges*. Selected sections from the 33 C/5 are available as a reference document, including the full text for Sub-programme II.1.1 *Water interactions: systems at risks and social challenges*.

5. The Sub-programme *Water interactions: systems at risk and social challenges* is broken down into four main lines of action (MLA) in the 33 C/5:

- MLA 1: Assessing and managing the impacts of global change on the water cycle
- MLA 2: Managing water as a scarce resource for human needs
- MLA 3: Mitigating water-related risks and facing social challenges
- MLA 4: Managing land-water habitat interactions through an ecosystem approach

6. As with the previous biennium, the corresponding IHP-VI theme and focal area structure is embedded in the Sub-programme *Water interactions: systems at risk and social challenges*, though there is not a direct one-to-one equivalence. Thus IHP-VI Theme 1 *Global Changes and Water Resources* and part of Theme 2 *Integrated Watershed and Aquifer Dynamics*, plus the cross-cutting themes HELP and FRIEND are addressed by MLA 1; Theme 3 *Land Habitat Hydrology* is located within MLA 2 and MLA 4; most of Theme 4

Water and Society and part of Theme 2 *Integrated Watershed and Aquifer Dynamics* are covered in MLA 3. UNESCO-IHE will carry out most of the activities of Theme 5 *Water Education and Training* with the remaining activities of Theme 5 under MLA 3. UNESCO-IHE is discussed in a special section within the Draft 33 C/5 at the end of the text on Major Programme II. In addition there are new initiatives such as the International Sediment Initiative (MLA 1), the International Flood Programme (MLA 3). The joint IHP/MAB MLA 4 focuses on joint efforts such as ecohydrology and water-related ecosystems. Further details are given below.

7. *MLA 1: Assessing and managing the impacts of global change on the water cycle* has a regular budget of \$1,726,000 in the Draft 33 C/5. The main focus of activities within MLA 1 is furthering the knowledge base of the hydrological cycle and the formulation of assessments to provide a sound basis for efforts to improve conditions in society at a global level. Included within MLA 1 is the global assessment of the world's water resources (including support for the World Water Assessment Programme – WWAP), as well as the crosscutting Hydrology for the Environment, Life and Policy (HELP) initiative, and the Flow Regimes from International Experimental and Network Data (FRIEND).

8. *MLA 2: Managing water as a scarce resource for human needs* has a regular budget of \$2,584,900. The main focus of activities within MLA 2 is expanding the knowledge base and building capacity for integrated water resources management, particularly in arid and semi-arid regions, in urban and rural areas, and at the river basin scale. Groundwater management is also included within MLA2, as well as institutional capacity building and interagency and partnership coordination and development of joint activities.

9. *MLA 3: Mitigating water-related risks and facing social challenges* has a regular budget of \$2,583,700. The growing importance throughout the world of managing water-related disasters has given rise to this new MLA. The main focus of MLA 3 is on mitigating water-related risks, in particular by improving integrated approaches to flood management on all levels (notably through the International Flood Initiative), promoting the rational use of groundwater in emergency situations, contributing to water conflict resolution through the PC-CP project and promoting the awareness of ethical, historical, cultural and social dimensions of water.

10. *MLA 4: Managing land-water habitat interactions through an ecosystem approach* has a regular budget of \$1,905,400. In line with the principal priority of “water and associated ecosystems”, the main focus of MLA 4 is the development of water, land and biodiversity management strategies for ecological, social and economic sustainability through the joint actions of IHP and the Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB). Included within MLA 4 are the development of the ecohydrological approach, the study of ecology and the impacts of erosion and sedimentation processes, (including the development of the International Sedimentation Initiative) and the development, along with MAB, of collaborative research on water-sensitive ecosystems subject to degradation and global change, including mountains, coastal zones and small islands.

11. UNESCO-IHE, an integral part of UNESCO as a category I institute, with \$62,880,000 in extrabudgetary resources, will carry out the majority of water education and training activities of IHP. As expressed in the 33 C/5, UNESCO-IHE has an overall mandate to strengthen and mobilize the global education and knowledge base for integrated water

resources management and to contribute to meeting the water-related capacity-building needs of the developing countries and countries in transition.

Other decisions adopted by the General Conference at its 33rd session

12. At its 33rd session, the General Conference approved the establishment of four category II centres under the auspices of UNESCO:

- The Regional Centre for Arid and semi-Arid Regions of Latin America and the Caribbean (La Serena, Chile) under the auspices of UNESCO
- The Regional Centre for Ecohydrology in Warsaw (Poland) under the auspices of UNESCO
- The International Centre for Water hazard and Risk management (ICHARM) in Tsukuba, Japan under the auspices of UNESCO (Resolution XVI-4)
- The International IHP-HELP Centre for Water Law, Policy and Science in Dundee, UK, under the auspices of UNESCO (Resolution XVI-5).

These four centres were first reviewed by the Executive Board at its 171st and 172nd sessions.

13. The General Conference also reviewed the proposal by the Government of Colombia to establish an urban water centre in Cali, Colombia and gave the Executive Board the authority to give final approve to the centre.

14. It should be noted that although Member States supported the establishment of the five new water-related category II centres, they also asked that a strategy be elaborated to deal with the growing network of water-related centres. In this regard, it should also be noted that the General Conference approved the new principles and guidelines for establishing and operating category I and II centres in document 33 C/19. This document contains a “model agreement” for establishing category II centres.

15. The General Conference also decided, at the request of various Member States, to pursue a review of the Natural Sciences and Social Sciences sectors of UNESCO. This review process is now under way and the Chairperson of the IHP Intergovernmental Council has participated in a review panel that brought together all chairs of scientific intergovernmental programmes held in April 2006.

Executive Board decisions (170th to 174th sessions)

16. The 171st session of the Executive Board (April 2005) adopted document 171 EX/18 which contains the new principles guidelines for establishing and operating category I and II centres. The guidelines would latter be reviewed and approved by the General Conference at its 33rd session (document 33 C/19). The 171st session also welcomed the establishment of the International Centre for Water hazard and Risk management (ICHARM) in Tsukuba, Japan under the auspices of UNESCO, and recommended to the General Conference that it approve the establishment of the centre at its 33rd session.

17. The 172nd session of the Executive Board (September 2005) welcomed the proposals to establish the Regional Centre for Arid and semi-Arid Regions of Latin America and the Caribbean (La Serena, Chile), the Regional Centre for Ecohydrology in Warsaw

(Poland) and the International IHP-HELP Centre for Water Law, Policy and Science in Dundee, UK, under the auspices of UNESCO and recommended to the General Conference that it approve the establishment of the centres at its 33rd session.

18. The 174th session of the Executive Board (April 2006) approved the establishment of the Regional Centre on Urban Water Management in Colombia under the auspices of UNESCO, which had been reviewed by the 33rd session of the General Conference.

19. The 174th session of the Executive Board asked the Natural Sciences sector to work with the Education sector on joint water education activities (mostly within the UN decade of education for sustainable development). Further, the Executive Board appealed to UNESCO for technical Assistance for the Djibouti Drought and asked Member States for monetary assistance to the region.