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Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



International
Hydrological
Programme

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42nd session of the IHP Bureau
Paris, 12 June 2008

FINAL REPORT

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OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The 42nd session of the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Council of the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) was held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on 12 June 2008, starting at 6:00 pm. Mr Abdin Mohd Ali Salih (representing electoral region Vb – Arab States), Chairperson, and the following Vice-Chairpersons attended the meeting: Mr Johannes Cullmann (region I – Western Europe and North America), Mr Pavol Miklanek (region II – Eastern and Central Europe), and Mr Kaoru Takara (region IV – Asia and the Pacific). Mr Julio Thadeu Silva Kettelhut attended on behalf of Mr Benedito Braga (region III – Latin America and the Caribbean) and Mr Leonard Khoza attended on behalf of Mr Mbangiseni P. Nephumbada (region Va – Africa). The newly-elected Chairperson of the IHP Finance Committee, Mr Trevor Daniell, also attended the session. The list of participants is attached as Annex II.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

2. The Bureau adopted the agenda (Annex I).

EVALUATION OF THE 18TH SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL OF THE IHP

3. The Bureau expressed satisfaction with the 18th session of the IHP Council held from 9 to 13 June 2009, which concluded after endorsing a strong Council resolution addressing an appeal to the Executive Board of UNESCO to improve the budgetary situation of IHP when designing the 35 C/5.

4. The Bureau also highlighted the election of officers to serve in the Governing Board of the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education and in the Advisory Board of the International Centre for Water Hazard and Risk Management (ICHARM). The outgoing Bureau urged the Secretariat to collect, in the future, nominations subject to the deadline of two weeks prior to the Council session. These nominations are to be presented to the Bureau for its consideration. Based on this, the Bureau would recommend a group of candidates to be considered by the Council. The Secretariat was requested to provide the Bureau members with more complete and timely information on the nominees in order that they may be able to study and give due consideration to the proposals.

5. While appreciating the great amount of work undertaken by the Secretariat to ensure the best outcome of the meeting, the Bureau indicated that, for future Council sessions, it would be preferable to follow the agenda in a sequential order, instead of debating items only partially and resuming their discussion further on. The Secretariat clarified that some of the inconveniences were the result of the need to accommodate the presentation of the contributions of other UN agencies and partner institutions, whose availability at the Council may be limited.

6. The Bureau congratulated the Chair for the excellent handling of the Council. It also commended the Secretariat for the efficient preparation and organization of the Council session that resulted in a more enthusiastic participation by the representatives of the Member States.

7. The Bureau stressed the importance of following clear procedures with a view to streamlining the submission of draft resolutions by the delegations. It also expressed appreciation for the work done by all the Council Committees.

8. The Secretariat considered as one of the most positive developments the high level participation in this Council session, appreciating the presence of a vast number of Member States as observers beyond the formal members of the Council.

9. While recognizing the tremendous work done in putting together all the Council documentation, some members underlined the importance of having the documents available online, on the IHP website well in advance of the Council session. It was also observed that not enough information was provided with regard to side events organized in the framework of the Council session. These events were often inadequately publicized during the Council, resulting in a scarce participation by delegates.

10. Mr J. Cullmann reported some concerns from electoral group I that more time should have been devoted to the scientific debate rather than to the procedural aspects of the Council. It was suggested that a different Council format should be favoured in the future, with more stress given to debates around scientific matters.

11. The Bureau praised the Council organization that had foreseen several opportunities devoted to informal discussions and recommended that this element be reinforced to accommodate unofficial meetings. It was suggested to offer the participants particular IHP topics for discussion in specific sessions, with a view to reinforcing networking around broad scientific issues of common interest.

12. This aspect was also considered as a means of taking more scientists on board, in particular, drawing the younger generation into the IHP process and raising their participation in Council meetings. It was recognized that one of the main challenges that lay ahead was the need for more involvement by younger scientists in IHP activities.

13. Referring to the positive outcome of the 9th Kovacs Colloquium on *River Basins – from Hydrological Science to Water Management*, jointly organized by IHP and IAHS and held from 6 to 7 June 2008 prior to the 18th IHP Council, the Secretariat invited the Bureau to consider adopting a new format for future Council sessions. An opportunity that could be explored is that of the Colloquium being incorporated into the Council structure, seeking to provide a scientific segment distinct from sessions devoted to more procedural issues. The Council session would thus be composed of a segment devoted to a specific scientific theme, or a major issue of interest related to IHP-VII, followed by the more administrative segments of the Council.

14. The Chair noted the fact that too few representatives from Africa were able to attend the Council and called for a way to involve them more in the Council process. The Bureau echoed his concern, stressing the importance of finding appropriate tools to facilitate stronger involvement by the African countries in IHP activities. The need to reinforce and strengthen IHP National Committees was stressed as a way of fostering connections between these countries and bringing them into the process. The Secretariat stressed the importance of regional meetings and called for multiplying meetings and opportunities for African professionals. Enthusiasm and passion were seen as the key elements that could enkindle the necessary reaction to achieve a higher participation in the IHP Council. Under these circumstances, the presence of all six African Member States that are members of the Council (in addition to one observer Member State) acquires an even greater significance and needs to be put in the proper perspective, in recognition of its importance.

15. The Secretary informed the Bureau members that, while the working documents of the Council are made available in all the six working languages, the information documents are issued in English only. In order to avoid criticism by some Member States, the Secretariat is willing to explore fundraising opportunities to cover the translation of these

documents to French and circulate these along with the English version during the Council session.

16. The Bureau noted the excellent feedback received with regard to the many IHP publications, stressing the fact that these resources serve as way of involving more beneficiaries into the single programmes. It also stressed the importance of the dissemination of IHP publications as well as access to these on the IHP website.

17. Within the framework of ongoing developments on the IHP communication strategy, it was recalled that the outgoing Bureau endorsed the new IHP corporate image and encouraged that it be used, with appropriate modifications as necessary, for all IHP publications, including those produced by the regional and field offices. The Bureau welcomed this initiative and further endorsed the establishment of a "Publications Committee" as a subsidiary committee of the Council, with a view to examining the implementation of a coherent IHP publication strategy in the framework of the overall UNESCO publication and distribution policy, and to prepare appropriate recommendations to the Council. The Chair welcomed the establishment of this Committee and instructed the Secretariat to draft the Committee's Terms of Reference.

IMMEDIATE FOLLOW-UP ACTION AFTER THE 18TH SESSION OF THE INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL OF THE IHP

18. An action plan will be developed by the Secretariat for the follow up of the resolutions and other recommendations adopted by the Council. The final report of the 18th session of the IHP Intergovernmental Council would be distributed upon completion.

OTHER MATTERS

19. Mr Cullmann expressed the urgency of setting in place a bottom-up approach for the evaluation of IHP-VI. He invited the Bureau members to consider the importance of giving the beneficiaries themselves the opportunity to assess the Programme in order that its validity and effectiveness may be appraised.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

20. The Chair thanked the Bureau members for their cooperation and constructive efforts, especially with regard to debates on the new guidelines and procedure for the submission of draft resolutions. He also thanked the Secretariat for its excellent work. He further invited the Bureau members to maintain networking among themselves as well as with their respective regions. The Chairperson closed the session at 7:10 pm.

ANNEX I

AGENDA

1. OPENING OF THE SESSION
2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA
3. EVALUATION OF THE 18TH SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL OF THE IHP
4. OTHER MATTERS
5. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

ANNEX II

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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