



International Hydrological Programme

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COOPERATION WITH UN SYSTEM ON FRESHWATER ISSUES

Item 8.1 of the provisional agenda

SUMMARY

This note is a short report on the cooperation of IHP with the UN System, particularly through UN-Water and on a bilateral basis with a number of UN agencies, for the information of the Bureau members.

1. The High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP), at its meeting held on 18-19 September 2003, established “UN-Water as the inter-agency mechanism for follow-up of the WSSD water-related decisions and the MDGs concerning water”. Through improved coordination within the UN System, it will support Member States in their efforts to achieve water and sanitation goals and targets.

2. UN-Water functions as a coordination mechanism only and is made up of the UN agencies, programmes and funds that have a significant role in tackling global water concerns; currently it has 26 members. Additionally it also includes as partners major non-UN entities that cooperate with them in advancing progress towards the water-related goals of the International Decade for Action ‘Water for Life’ and the Millennium Declaration. UN-Water is a model for working in a collaborative fashion and achieving coherence within the United Nations. It has been reinforced with the setting up of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund and the newly established Programmes and Offices.

UNITED NATIONS WORLD WATER DAY

3. UN-Water is responsible for organizing the annual United Nations World Water Day (22 March) in cooperation with the designated leading agencies. UNESCO has been chosen, together with UNECE, to be the lead agency for the preparation and the celebration of the UN World Water Day in 2009, under the theme *Transboundary Waters*. Through its PCCP programme, IHP is cooperating substantially with the UN System on transboundary water issues. IHP serves indeed as co-chair of the UN Water Task Force on transboundary waters. It has therefore played a major role in the following activities of the Task Force:

- Production of a policy brief on transboundary waters, which was distributed at World Water Week in August 2008. This policy brief will be complemented with practical publications illustrating successful cases and good practices of transboundary water cooperation. A limited number of such fact sheets will be produced for World Water Week 2009.
- The organization of World Water Day (22 March) 2009 on the theme of transboundary water cooperation. UNESCO-IHP (PCCP), with the help of UNECE, the Office of the UN-Water chair (FAO) and the Task Force developed a web site and a promotional brochure as well as other campaign material to prepare and celebrate the Day. It has also organized, with the cooperation of the partners mentioned above, the central celebration on 22 March 2009 comprising a high-level session on the topic of transboundary water management at the fifth World Water Forum in Istanbul.
- The Task Force is preparing a mapping report and a website on the activities being carried out by UN-Water members and partners in the area of transboundary waters.
- The central topic of World Water Week 2009 (Stockholm, 16-22 August 2009) is “Accessing Water for the Common Good” with a special focus on transboundary waters. Consequently, the Task Force has been invited to act as co-convenor of workshop 1, “benefit sharing and transboundary waters” during the World Water Week. UNESCO-IHP (PCCP) is handling the coordination with the organizers on behalf of the Task Force.

UN-WATER TASK FORCES

4. UN-Water has set up a mechanism to conduct work on priority thematic issues identified as part of the UN-Water work programme. A number of task forces that gather members of the UN-Water having a particular interest and/or programme on a particular topic related to water were indeed already established. IHP contributes actively to the work of these Task Forces through its scientific research and its educational material. Much of UN-Water activities are carried out through timebound task forces established to focus on

priority areas or emerging issues. Over the course of 2008, there were seven operational task forces focusing on:

- indicators, monitoring and reporting,
- sanitation,
- transboundary waters,
- IWRM,
- climate change and water,
- country-level coordination and
- water and gender.

5. By mid 2008, two of the above task forces (IWRM and Monitoring and Reporting) were combined into the Task Force on Indicators, Monitoring and Reporting. The IWRM Task Force completed its work after having presented its report on the status of implementation of IWRM plans at CSD-16.

UN-WATER AND THE WORLD WATER ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME

6. The most important cooperation between IHP and UN-Water happens through UN-World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP). The Secretariat of the WWAP, structurally located within UNESCO's Division of Water Sciences, has moved to Perugia, Italy. It will functionally remain as part of the Division of Water Sciences.

7. IHP's scientific cooperation with WWAP materializes through a number of substantial contributions to the writing of the World Water Development Report (WWDR), as well as via a number of side publications to the WWDR, in preparation.

8. UNESCO-IHP was also extensively involved in the actual scientific work of WWAP. It has contributed to the 3rd edition of the WWDR. IHP coordinated the chapter on the "Status of the Resource". UNESCO staff, category 2 centres and IHP networks provided scientific contributions to the chapter. The chapter described what decision-makers need to know more about the planet's water resources and the possible impacts of climate change on the distribution of this resource, as well as the resources that are really 'available' for development. It also discussed the availability of data needed to determine these factors so that water managers and sector managers may carry out integrated water resources management.

COOPERATION WITH IAEA

9. The cooperation between UNESCO-IHP and the IAEA's Water Resources Programme is undertaken mainly through the implementation of the Joint Isotope in Hydrology Project (JIHP). The cooperation encompassed a wide range of fields geared towards incorporating the isotopes techniques applications in water resources management, with emphasis on groundwater resources and drylands. Within the framework of the JIHP project, UNESCO- IHP and IAEA co-organized two international conferences in 2008: the International Conference on 'Groundwater and Climate in Africa', held in Kampala, Uganda (24-28 June 2008) and the International Conference on 'Water Scarcity, Global Changes and Groundwater Management Responses' in Irvine, USA (1-6 December 2008). IAEA and IHP are also partners in the implementation of the GEF-UNDP project on the Nubian Sandstone Aquifer System.

COOPERATION WITH UNECE

10. The cooperation between UNECE and IHP is undertaken through the implementation of the joint activities mainly in the framework of the UNESCO's ISARM and PCCP projects.

Specific attention has been given to the inventory and assessment of transboundary aquifer systems as well as groundwater resources protection in general. In this context, IHP and UNECE have produced joint publications. Cooperation will continue in the 2009-2010 biennium.

COOPERATION WITH UNDP, UNEP, UNICEF AND OTHER AGENCIES

11. Cooperation between the IHP and UNDP and UNEP has recently focused on groundwater resources mainly in the framework of GEF funded projects in the MENA region and in Africa.

12. UNESCO, the National Committee of Kazakhstan for the International Hydrological Programme and UNDP organized a round table in Almaty, Kazakhstan on 26 March 2009 with Kazakhstani experts and representatives of international organizations to raise awareness about the challenges posed by the management of transboundary waters, the theme of World Water Day 2009. The major findings of the third UN World Water Development Report were also highlighted at the event.

13. IHP is contributing to implement UNESCO's component in the joint UN Climate Change Partnership Framework (CCPF) programme in China, Egypt and Jordan.

14. IHP negotiated with the UN team in India, Nepal and Sri Lanka to align all activities corresponding to water sciences with agreed UNDAF implementation framework. All activities being carried out in the current biennium and the next biennium are part of UNDAF CPAP.

15. IHP provided input on "capacity building" component to formulate urban sanitation policy for Uttar Pradesh in India, which is a project initiated by UNICEF.

16. IHP contributed to the preparation of the India Water Development Report, agreed as a UNCT activity. The framework to work toward a common methodology for Indicator Development for Water Resource Development in India has also been agreed. The real activity will commence in 2009 with UNICEF funding.

17. IHP provided supervisory and printing support to the Sri Lanka Water Development Report and the Walawe Basin Report. The Walawe Basin report was showcased in the third edition of WWDR. For the second edition of the Sri Lanka Water Development Report, the UNESCO New Delhi Office is working closely with UNDP and UNICEF. The publication will also be UNESCO's contribution to the UNDAF process in Sri Lanka.

18. IHP worked with the UN system-wide Solution Exchange to prioritize research and capacity building needs in the area of "Climate Change and Water Resources Management". A synopsis of the exercise will be discussed and presented during a regional conference on "Climate Change and Water Resource Management in South Asia" in August 2009.

19. On 4 April 2009, Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, and Mr Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), signed a broadly scoped Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to provide a framework of cooperation and facilitate collaboration between UNESCO and UNEP. With respect to freshwater, in the MoU both organizations agreed:

- Joint collaboration in the context of the UN-Water mechanism;
- Joint support and contribution to the World Water Assessment Programme and the preparation of the World Water Report;

- Maximizing complementarities and synergies in national water resource management plans and policies as well as capacity-building, especially through cooperation with and participation in UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme (IHP), focusing also on ecohydrology approaches in watershed management, integrated water resources management (IWRM) at the river basin level, and water resources adaptation strategies;
- Cooperation on water resources adaptation strategies and policies to mitigate the impact of global changes on the hydrological cycle and on water resources in transboundary and other river basins and aquifers;

20. The MoU as signed did not necessarily reflect the full scope of suggestions and comments made by the IHP Secretariat.

COOPERATION WITH WMO

21. UNESCO and WMO are the two leading organizations dealing with various aspects of freshwater both related to operational and science issues. Within the framework of the International Flood Initiative, which was established by both organizations and later joined by other UN organizations and sciences bodies such as UNU and IAHS, the focus is on a holistic approach to flood management. UNESCO and WMO have produced a series of joint publications, e.g., Water Resources Assessment Handbook for Review of National Capabilities; Manual on the Estimation and Prediction of Low Flows; and the International Glossary of Hydrology. Furthermore, UNESCO and WMO jointly organized the International Conference on 'Groundwater and Climate Change in Africa' (Kampala, 24-28 June 2008). There is also close cooperation within the International Decade for Education and Sustainable Development (2005-2015).

UN-WATER DECADE PROGRAMME ON CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

22. IHP co-organized, in collaboration with the UN-Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development and the German Government, a workshop on 'Education for Water Sustainability, where Decades meet' at the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (Bonn, Germany, 31 March – 2 April 2009), attended by over 50 ministers and vice-ministers of education. The workshop made a series recommendations and influenced the final Bonn Declaration.