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**9th World Water Forum, "Dakar 2021"**

**"Water Security for Peace and Sustainable Development"**

**KICK-OFF MEETING**

**INTRODUCTORY NOTE OF THE "COOPERATION" THEME”**

***DIAMNIADIO 20 and 21 JUNE 2019***

1. **Background**

The purpose of the "Cooperation" theme of the 9th World Water Forum is to seek a better understanding and measure the impacts of interactions between different actors, either with different interests or with common objectives. In addition to conflict prevention, the theme includes the promotion of positive cooperation. It should also confirm the potential of past cooperative work to address various local and global water-related challenges.

Indeed, transboundary river basins represent specific cases of prevention as well as resolution of potential water-related conflicts.

Worldwide, 310 transboundary river basins are shared between at least two countries. River basins cover 2/3 of the surface of the continents, are home to nearly 40% of the world's population, and 15% of the countries on the water resources of another neighboring country for more than 50% of their needs.

Over the two past decades, basin management has developed rapidly in many countries and regions: in some cases, it has served as a basis for regional or national legislation on water; in other cases, it has served as a basis for successful experiments in national or transboundary pilot basins.

The theme of river basin management and transboundary cooperation on water resources is increasingly recognized not only by the scientific and technological communities, but also in many ministerial declarations and by many other communities: sociologists, economists, NGOs and government agencies.

Evidence is provided in the evaluation reports of the previous World Water Fora of Kyoto (2003) and Mexico (2006). The theme became central at the Istanbul Forum (2009) and has since become part of the agendas of all the following meetings. Since 2015, transboundary cooperation is required in the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular through target 6.5.

The first official report on transboundary cooperation based on indicator 6.5.2 of the SDGs shows that progress have been made, however this is not sufficient, as the majority of basins in the world are not yet covered by basin agreements and organizations. In addition, policies are not yet sufficiently transformed into actions on the ground. It is true that many successes have been achieved at local and regional level, but their duplication must be accelerated in order to catch up with and even exceed the rate at which climate change is occurring, including increasing climate variability.

To conclude, basin management is not only recognized but gives convincing results. Indeed, where basin management actually exists, progress in management is evident and even imperfect solutions are found in extreme situations (flood or drought). In transboundary basins, when a basin organization exists and functions in a concrete way, progress in resource sharing and joint management is real; conversely, examples of transboundary basins without any organization show the shortcomings in water management.

The two United Nations global water conventions, the 1992 Water Convention and the 1997 Watercourses Convention, play a key role in the development of basin agreements and the institutional set-up of basin organizations. The growing interest in the Conventions, including the accession of Senegal and Chad in 2018 and more than 20 countries in the accession process, is an encouraging sign; additional accessions should be encouraged.

The basin approach is by nature a multi-stakeholder interaction, and therefore provides examples of complex cooperation between different types of water users.

It is indeed also important in the priority “cooperation” to consider the significance of inter-sectoral and inter-actors impact as essential factors in promoting cooperation, as it has been demonstrated in the past cooperative actions for sustainable development or the achievement of SDGs.

In addition to sectoral cooperation, it is widely recognized that all actions undertaken, combining technical or technological solutions with political decisions, are the best solutions to water-related problems. Thus, providing potential for cooperation through platforms to discuss or exchange on both technologies and policies is one of the most important ways to make implementation more sustainable.

Cooperation between actors is well presented by the actions carried out by multiple stakeholders including government, academia, corporations, NGOs, and civilians like we have experienced it to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the process of building a governance on conflict issues like RBOs for the transboundary issues.

To this end, understanding that cooperation is not merely the opposite of conflict, but the beginning of the development of effective policy, meaningful collaboration to achieve equitable outcomes. It also requires an interdisciplinary approach, combining bio-physical and geo-political aspects with engineering and decision-making as well as other relevant disciplines. It also requires working at different scales, with international or local actors.

Finally, the process of promoting “cooperation” of the 9th World Water Forum will be expected to have meaningful and influential outcomes to deliver both to water and non-water actors.

1. **Scope of the theme**

Following the various consultations and preparation workshops, it was agreed to retain the following five (5) sub-themes:

* Shared vision on resource planning;
* Legal and institutional instruments;
* Technical and scientific tools for sustainable cooperation;
* Involvement of the people and civil society;
* Partnership and Funding of Joint Projects and Programs.

1. ***Joint vision on planning:***

For this joint vision, the main issues identified are:

* Consistency of planning at the transboundary basin scale,
* More or less comprehensive assessment of water resources and needs,
* Consensus on the creation of common structures to face, among other things, the effects of climate change,
* Establishment of appropriate mechanisms and governance for the harmonious and common management of these structures,
* Highlighting the impacts (advantages and benefits) on the development and stability of States.

1. ***Legal and institutional instruments:***

The strength of the grounding of these instruments is extremely important for the sustainability of the agreements. This involves building the capacity of actors in international water law as well as on the techniques for negotiating agreements... For this reason, the following issues have been identified:

* Accession to the Global Water Conventions (1992, 1997),
* The establishment of negotiated basin agreements which are fair, robust and comprehensive,
* The creation of a River Basin Organization (RBO) (with delegation of sovereignty over the management of resources) for a solidary management adapted to the geopolitical context,
* The adoption of a special status of shared resources and common structures defined and accepted by all,
* The development and validation of a dispute settlement mechanism (role of RBOs and alternative mechanisms),
* Strengthening and better coherence of tools and funding mechanisms for multi-actor cooperation, including international cooperation (e.g. for climate issues)

1. ***Technical and scientific tools for sustainable cooperation***

The different experiences around the world have demonstrated the importance of technical and scientific tools and how it is supported by and communicated with decision makers in establishing a climate of trust between riparian states. Thus, the following points have been proposed:

* Development of appropriate models and tools for resource assessment,
* Development of models or keys for distributing the potentials generated by the structures,
* Adoption of appropriate tools for decision-making support in the management of joint structures,
* Establishment of water information systems for the monitoring basins and resources,
* Making regular assessments of environmental and social impacts
* Establishment of performance indicators, especially to assess the quality of governance on the issues need to be dealt within cooperation,
* Strengthening platforms for the exchange of information and technologies in cooperation projects
* Strengthening the research-technology-public policy interface

1. ***Involvement of the populations and civil society:***

In the context of water management, the structuring and strengthening of concerted management implying, iteratively, all the stakeholders are a real guarantee of its legitimacy. This is all the more evident as the inclusive and participatory approach is needed to build a sustainable cooperation agenda. For this purpose, the following actions are needed and constitute real issues:

* Establishment of dialogue frameworks involving different scales (regional, national, local and international),
* The institutionalization of platforms for exchange of experience and good practices,
* The generalization of grassroots consultation for Major Joint Projects,
* The systematic involvement of civil society organizations and the economic sector, which constitute real relays for users and some international organizations.

1. ***Funding of Common Projects and Programs and Partnerships:***

Countries that have established a framework for cooperation, or intend to do so, face a common challenge: financing and coordinated implementation of water management.

For example, the basin organizations and other joint bodies established to manage water resources (transboundary or national) require sufficient and reliable financial resources to operate effectively, and all measures that have been identified together require funding, regardless of which entity will implement them. To ensure sustainable financing, it is necessary to demonstrate and communicate the benefits of cooperation in order to mobilize political will.

The core budget should, if possible, come from the national budgets of member countries (using equitable sharing formulas or distribution keys). The programme budget can be generated by basin organizations (through levies and service charges, such as those imposed on the licensing or operation of infrastructure, for navigational uses, or fishing operations), and from external parties on an interim basis (through multilateral development banks, for example for major infrastructure, official development assistance, climate and other vertical funds, private sector commitments, or grants). It is essential that appropriate sustainable financing models, detailing the role of each of these sources of financing, be defined for each basin. Ultimately, it is up to States to define such models of sustainable financing.

In a global context where it is increasingly difficult to mobilize significant financing, the following issues have been identified.

* How to ensure sustainable financing of basin organizations: lessons learned, good practices, etc.
* Growing need for financial resources, particularly for the construction of structural infrastructure (dams, hydropower plants, dikes, etc.);
* Development of project implementation capacities in a complex environment (different administration and legislations);
* Advocacy with major funding institutions for setting up direct financing mechanisms for cooperative groups such as RBOs;
* Awareness raising of technical and financial partners with regard to the pace of funding which is often very slow resulting in delays in the development to the chagrin of the populations.

1. **Roadmap to the preparatory process**

In line with previous priorities, the Dakar Forum could aim at three types of concrete results:

1/ Tools for promoting and disseminating good practices

2/ A shared policy document with recommendations

3/ Reinforced support mechanisms for the emergence of projects

***Outcome 1: Tools for promoting and disseminating good practice***

The situations of the water resource and its uses are very diverse on a global scale. However, a number of cooperation experiences and practices are now available for replication and adaptation in other contexts. It is also necessary to invest in tools for disseminating existing information, for example:

* Shared "handbooks" of good management, on clearly identified topics, such as dialogue between cities and basins, water police, financing of the groups of cooperative works. These different handbooks will be an opportunity for cooperation between different types of stakeholders and networks (e. g. INBO and IWA on city-basin dialogues, UNECE and development banks on cooperation financing, etc., UNECE and INBO on agreement development).
* Innovative tools or training devices: online information platforms, digital distance learning technologies, enriched books, digital vade-mecum for basin management, webinars, etc.
* Create a pledge or declaration for disseminating the key messages based on common experiences and aims to achieve. Delivery of the pledge or declaration to the international community on related sectors or trans-sector society would promote following actions pledged in the respective action

***Outcome 2: A shared and operational document of recommendations on public policies for water resources management***

It would be a summary document, with a list of operational recommendations useful for decision-makers in developing or modifying national or regional water management policies.

This document should be developed by a wide circle of water stakeholders and users, in order to strengthen its legitimacy. The document would ultimately be for policy makers, but should not be a political document whose development would be too complex, and could lead to a too bland result. It would be based on experience and practices of all the basins, and therefore more broadly on the diversity of water users. Before and during the Forum, it could be the subject, of a collection of adhesions of all types of stakeholders, also in a logic of mediatization of this priority (and of the Forum).

***Outcome 3: Enhanced support mechanisms for the emergence of projects***

The challenge of the emergence of projects remains a priority.

In order to encourage the development of quality projects, it is necessary to strengthen existing schemes or to create new ones.

For example, it is proposed to study two types of devices:

1 / The incubation of projects, with the idea of early support to the transformation of local issues into proposals for bankable projects to submit to public or private, national or international donors.

2 / Peer-to-peer inter-basin twinning schemes allowing experts or stakeholders in these basins to share their practices, and thus accelerate the dissemination of good recipes, adapted to each context

1. **Milestones of the preparatory process**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Event** | **Organize(s)** | **Date/place** | **Proposed activity** | **Expected results** |
| KOM FME9 | Senegal/CME | 20-21/06/2019 Dakar | Discussion about the framing note | Shared and validated framing note |
| ANBO GA | ANBO | 2-5 July 2019 Tunis | Announcement of the work program | Enrichment by ANBO members |
| KIWW 2019 | MoE/ K-water/ KWF | September, Daegu | Preparatory Meeting/ Regional workshop | Multi-stakeholders involvement, sharing local, regional outcomes |
| INBO GA | Morocco/INBO | 30/09-03/10/2019 Marrakech | Workshops of regional networks of basin organizations (30/09 – 14h30-16h30) | Proposals of actions from basin organizations and related stakeholders |
| Cairo Summit | Egypt | 20-24, October, Cairo |  |  |
| Water Convention Working group on IWRM | UNECE | 22-24 2019 October, and 15-17 June 2020 Geneva | Discussion with government representatives from the world | Preparatory meetings |
| Global Workshop on Developing agreements | UNECE, UNBO and partners | 1-2 April 2020 Geneva | Discussion with government representatives from the world | First version of the guide on the development of agreements |
| World Water Congress | IWRA | May 2020/Daegu | To be defined |  |
|  |  | Latin America, Autumn 2020 | To be defined |  |
| Global workshop on financing transboundary water cooperation | UNECE, World Bank, AFDB, INBO and partners | 16-18 December 2020 | Discussion with government representatives from the world | First version of the publication on financing |