

**Chair's Summary
of the
High Level International Conference on Water Cooperation**

*Dushanbe, Tajikistan
20-21 August 2013*

Introductory remarks

<i>to be completed by the Editorial Group of the ISC</i>
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The High Level International Conference on Water Cooperation (HLICWC) met in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on 20-21 August 2013, in accordance with the UNGA Resolution A/67/204 "Implementation of the International Year of Water Cooperation, 2013," to promote dialogue and mutual understanding and to strengthen partnership and cooperation on water issues among all stakeholders at all levels.

High level delegations and representatives from ... states, international organizations, international financial institutions, local governments, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and the private sector took part in this gathering.

Sincere appreciation was expressed to the Government of Tajikistan for hosting this Conference and for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to all participants, as well as for the assistance and support provided by the United Nations and other international and regional organizations.

Conclusions of the First and Second High Level Plenary Sessions

<i>to be completed by the ISC</i>

Participants recalled the International Year of Fresh Water, 2003, the International Decade for Action "Water for Life," 2005-2015, the International Year of Water Cooperation, 2013, as well as the Sanitation Drive to 2015.

They noted that 862 days remain until the completion of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life," 2005-2015.

It was highlighted that the conference is part of a series of events held during the International Year of Cooperation, beginning with the 2012 UN Water Annual Conference in Zaragoza, followed by the Launch Ceremony of the International Year at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, and continuing with the World Water Week in Stockholm on 1-6 September 2013 and the Budapest Water Summit on 8-11 October 2013.

The conference also fed into the political process related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), providing substantive inputs related to water and sustainable development.

The Conference built on the outcomes of the high-level interactive dialogue of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly, held on World Water Day, 22 March 2013 in New York, and the official World Water Day event, held in The Hague, which were dedicated to water cooperation, the theme of the International Year.

The Conference focused on four main themes:

1. Water Cooperation for Human Development;
2. Water Cooperation for Economic Benefits;
3. Water Cooperation for Ecosystems;
4. Water Cooperation across Boundaries.

The Conference also focused on the following four cross-cutting issues:

- A. Water Cooperation and Gender;
- B. Water Cooperation and Capacity Building;
- C. Water Cooperation and Sectoral Synergies;
- D. Triggers and Catalysts for Water Cooperation.

A discussion on different aspects of water cooperation was also organized within the Gender Forum "Women for Water Cooperation," as well as a number of special focus events and the thematic exhibition "Water Unites Us."

Principles

Participants reaffirmed that water sits at the core of sustainable development and its three dimensions and is closely linked to a number of key global challenges, as is stated in the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).

They also reaffirmed the critical importance of water cooperation for the maintenance of peace and stability and for sustainable development, including poverty and hunger eradication, public health, food security, energy security and environmental protection.

Means of Implementation

The existence of different tools of water cooperation, such as legal frameworks, institutional arrangements, information-sharing mechanisms, joint assessments and research, incentives

for cooperation, mediation and dispute resolution mechanisms, cost and benefit sharing and financing, was recognized by several participants.

The importance of human resource development, including [education and training](#), exchange of experiences and expertise, scientific development, knowledge transfer and technical assistance for water cooperation, involving also strengthening institutional capacity, including planning, water management and monitoring of water resources, was reiterated in many occasions.

The importance of cooperation to improve access to and transfer of appropriate technologies was generally stressed, especially but not exclusively for water-use efficiency, as well as for water treatment, recycling and re-use.

The provisioning of adequate support and investment by local and regional stakeholders, national governments, international partners and the private sector was broadly recognized as critical to achieving the objectives of the International Year of Water Cooperation, 2013.

Role of Stakeholders

It was acknowledged that governments play a key role in securing water for competing demands. However, the quest for a water-secure world is a common responsibility and can only be achieved through water cooperation at the local, national, regional and global levels and through partnerships with a multitude of stakeholders ranging from citizens to policy-makers and the private sector.

The role and responsibilities of different actors, including governments, regional and local authorities, international organizations, civil society, academic institutions, the private sector, local communities, indigenous peoples, women, elders, youth, families and individuals to ensure sustainable management of water resources, was fully recognized.

Participants noted the important role of water cooperation among all stakeholders, particularly local community organizations, for achieving access to safe drinking water and sanitation for all, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized groups.

Participants also expressed concern regarding the mounting pressures on water resources, [the regional shifts in precipitation due to climate change](#), and the retreat and disappearance of glaciers, which is projected to accelerate through the 21st century, altering the seasonality of water flows and threatening to reduce water availability and [irrigation and hydropower generation potential](#).

The importance of the timely achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and of other internationally agreed development goals, as well as of establishing ambitious and achievable targets and indicators for a Sustainable Development Goal on water as part of the post-2015 Development Agenda was highlighted. The following water related goals were proposed:

1. Universal access to safe and sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene services;
2. Appropriate levels of treatment for used water and wastewater before it is returned to nature or reused in agriculture or other productive activities;
3. A significant improvement in the productivity and efficiency of water-use in agriculture, industry, and at household level, and a significant reduction of water losses, including at water basin level.

Conclusions of High Level Panel 1	<i>to be completed by the rapporteur</i>
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Wording suggested by some members of the International Steering Committee:

It was reaffirmed that cooperative management and development of shared waters can lay a basis for broad-based human development. Managing water resources and the uncertainties of its destructive as well as constructive powers is a fundamental means to creating platforms for socioeconomic growth and ecological resilience. Allocating and reallocating water is a continual process to meet changing social needs as societies grow and prosper and to recognize that cooperation is the best means to manage these changing allocations peacefully.

Conclusions of High Level Panel 2	<i>to be completed by the rapporteur</i>
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Conclusions of High Level Panel 3	<i>to be completed by the rapporteur</i>
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Wording suggested by some members of the International Steering Committee:

Participants recognized the need to incorporate the socio-economic value of natural systems and ecological flow needs to water management, as well as the need to use new calculus of natural capital in cost-benefits assessments.

Conclusions of High Level Panel 4	<i>to be completed by the rapporteur</i>
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Conclusions of High Level Panel 5 and of the Gender Forum	<i>to be completed by the rapporteur</i>
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Wording suggested by some members of the International Steering Committee:

The fundamental role of women and children in water management was considered, given their role in their families and communities and the importance of strengthening women's leadership in water policy and decision-making to achieve more effective implementation of water cooperation;

Conclusions of High Level Panel 6	<i>to be completed by the rapporteur</i>
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Conclusions of High Level Panel 7	<i>to be completed by the rapporteur</i>
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Conclusions of High Level Panel 8	<i>to be completed by the rapporteur</i>
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Conclusions of Special Focus Events	<i>to be completed by the secretariat</i>
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Twenty Special Focus Events were held on the side of the main segments of the conference. They were organized by global, regional and national actors. Participants often included high level personalities present at the Conference. Reports synthesizing their outcomes are annexed to this summary.