

DECLARATION OF MORELIA

Eighty representatives of governmental administrations in charge of water management in their country and of basin organizations that are established or are being set up, in 40 countries, together with interested bi- and multi-lateral cooperation agencies, gathered in Morelia (Mexico) from March 27 to 29, within the framework of the (INBO) **International Network of Basin Organizations'** first General Assembly, in order to reflect upon the most adapted means for attaining a rational, balanced and overall management of inland freshwater resources to ensure the quality of life on our planet and the sustainable socio-economic development of our societies. The delegates emphasized that the questions brought to light are complex and that the answers must at one and the same time make it possible :

- to control natural catastrophes and the risk of erosion, floods or drought by taking into account the management of water and space,
- to meet the needs of urban and rural populations for water of good quality; in order to improve hygiene, health and to prevent important outbreaks of disease,
- to ensure sufficient food by improving drainage of agricultural lands and irrigation,
- to harmoniously develop industry, energy production, recreational activities and in certain sectors, tourism and waterway transport,
- to prevent and control pollution of all kinds and origins in order to preserve the aquatic ecosystems, especially with view to protecting fauna and optimizing fish breeding for human consumption, to meet all the requirements of different uses and more generally, to preserve the biodiversity of aquatic media.

It is obvious that these problems can no longer be tackled on a sectoral or local basis, or indeed separately, in fact the search for solutions must transit by an integrated approach, respectful of the natural medium and aiming at a sustainable water resources utilization.

In accordance with the Recommendations of the United Nations Conference for the Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992 and those of the Dublin International Conference on Water and the Environment, January 1992, also the Final Resolutions of the constitutive meeting of INBO, the International Network of Basin Organizations, May 1994 in Aix-les-Bains (France), the delegates declared that in order to reach these ambitious objectives, to be implemented all over the World, the procedures that they are already applying or are willing to apply in due time, with regard to the management of inland freshwater resources, are as follows :

- organization of an integrated water resources management at river basin level aimed at preventing dangerous, natural risks and catastrophes, at rationally and equitably meeting the different uses for a sustainable economic development, and at protecting and restoring the aquatic media;
- establishment of financial systems based on the «Polluter-User-Pays» principle and on the basin common cause concept for financing long-term development, equipment and protection programmes;
- establishment of partnership procedures, associating National Authorities and possibly, competent international institutions with local Authorities, water users and representative non-governmental organizations to the planning and management of basin organizations;
- building information capacity of those partners' representatives in order for them to fully assume their responsibilities and missions within the framework of the basin policy.

Moreover, they recommended that agreements and strategies, programmes, financial support and monitoring be designed at river basin level and that cooperation agreements be signed between the riparian countries of large transboundary rivers, lakes or seas.

The delegates agreed that they would promote the above-mentioned principles in their own country and to international institutions in which they participate, such as international commissions for the management of transboundary rivers, the Collaborative Council for drinking water and sanitation or the World Water Council, and to bi- and multi-lateral cooperation agencies and generally speaking, to all interested parties.

During the General Assembly's deliberations, particular attention was drawn to the following items :

* The necessity to found the overall management of water resources on data systems that are complete, reliable, representative and easily accessible, and organized in basin observatories and standardized to allow for syntheses and comparisons to be made both at national level in each country and at international level.

* The interest of an organized exchange of all useful information to facilitate the creation or the development of basin organizations, with regard to institutional documentation (AQUADOC-INTER network), educational and sensibilizing tools, the agenda for interesting events or the list of competent experts to be called upon, in particular.

* The importance of training executives of administrations, basin organizations, of institutions in charge of water management and development and also, under appropriate forms, basin committee members, local elected officials, representatives of users' associations or interested non-governmental organizations.

The delegates requested the INBO's President and the Permanent Technical Secretariat to ensure the widest possible circulation of the present «Declaration of Morelia».