

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WATER AND CLIMATE
RABAT 11-12 JULY 2016
“WATER SECURITY FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE”**

**WORK SUMMARY
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The International Conference on Water and Climate on the theme of "Water Security for Climate Justice", held in Rabat on 11-12 July 2016, gathered 650 participants from 40 countries.

The opening speeches of the Deputy Minister for Water Resources, the Ambassador of France in charge of the Environment, the Honorary President of the World Water Council and of the Head of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco emphasized the importance of the Paris Agreement and Agenda for Action approved during the COP21 but also the urgent need to take into account the adaptation of water resource to climate change in this new intergovernmental framework.

This natural resource, essential for the economic and social development of all countries of the world, for the hygiene and health of people and the environment, is now threatened by both poorly controlled human activities and the effects of global warming.

A radical change in water consumption will probably be necessary to deal with the new global challenges.

It is of course difficult to summarize and synthesize, in only a few minutes, the presentations and rich discussions that took place, but it seems possible to remember the following:

Firstly, a unanimous agreement of the representatives, from both water and climate circles, on the now inevitable impact of climate change on water resources, which is already evident in many parts of world.

"Water will be one of the first victims of climate change", with increased frequency and intensity of floods and droughts, an evapotranspiration rise accentuating their effects and an acceleration of soil erosion.

The reduction of snow cover and the accelerated melting of mountain glaciers will also significantly alter the regime of the rivers they feed.

There is an urgent need to respond to the climate effects on water, given the major impact of these phenomena on the people, especially the most vulnerable, but also on the economies, lands, energy and agricultural production, fishing and fish farming, inland waterway transport and tourism, in particular.

It is essential to implement, without any delay and on a large scale, the necessary adaptation measures, especially in the context of the new UN Sustainable Development Goals, to avoid human, economic and environmental disasters, before it's too late.

In particular, the IPCC must continue to work on better hydrometeorological forecasts on a finer scale to establish scenarios on the evolution of resources and risks, thus facilitating the development of relevant adaptation plans, including on the appropriate scale of the basins of rivers, lakes and aquifers, either national or transboundary.

This work needs to be based on reliable data that are still too widely lacking.

In many countries, the data essential for good water management are still lacking or incomplete, of poor quality, heterogeneous and dispersed between many stakeholders, poorly maintained and badly exploited, including to serve as a basis to objective decision making and to provide sufficient information to the various partners and the people.

Beyond the quantitative issues, an integrated water resources management policy implies to know about the different water uses, withdrawals, discharges, the quality of surface water and groundwater, as well as about the status of aquatic ecosystems, of land use in each basin and on the appropriate decision scales.

This information is essential to enable the authorities and representatives of water-affected economic sectors, as well as the civil society, to establish a common vision and consider the action to be taken in multiyear plans and programs, including for risk prevention, water demand management, pollution control, recycling and groundwater recharge or use of non-conventional resources.

Therefore real Integrated Water Information Systems should be reinforced or established when still lacking, and this requires the strategic mobilization of suitable human and financial resources, as it is a fact that we cannot manage what we cannot measure

The participants also highlighted the incredible opportunity presented by the sequence in which we have entered since the COP21.

The result of the Paris Agreement and Agenda for Action is that new dynamics have been created and are beginning to operate:

- **The countries committed themselves, including water in their INDCs for most of them,**
- **Donors have made financial commitments on climate and adaptation and are looking for good projects to finance,**
- **The stakeholders are in marching order, either basin organizations, local authorities, businesses, or the civil society, all have concrete proposals and projects they are ready to implement,**
- **The implementation of the Paris agreement will give visibility: commitments cycles are provided, there is a financial roadmap to move towards a 100 Billion Green Fund ...**

There will also be some taken dates: the successive COP will have to report the progress of the Agenda for Action and review the achievement of projected ambitions.

In all sectors, communities of stakeholders are beginning to internalize adaptation or resilience actions, strengthen governance, establish action plans, to build coalitions, to mobilize funds around large thematic or geographic transformation dynamics. We are on the right track!

In the Agenda for Action, three major initiatives were presented:

The Paris Pact on water and adaptation to climate change in the basins of rivers, lakes and aquifers, including more than 348 signatories who commit themselves to undertake adaptation actions by improving integrated water resources management;

- **The "Business Alliance for Water and Climate", by which companies commit themselves to measuring and reducing their water footprint;**
- **The Alliance of Megacities for Water and Climate, which commit themselves to take measures to adapt their cities to climate change.**

Several international organizations, representing thousands of stakeholders, have also committed themselves together to generalize the recognition of water at the political level during the COP21 and in future meetings, communicating with one voice, #ClimateWater and aiming to a convergence of Water and Climate.

These initiatives are going on, including a new call for action launched by the Paris Pact to foster actions for the COP22, with a particular focus on Water Information Systems (WIS) and by the continued mobilization of enterprises.

However population growth, rising living standards, the production of food and energy and the ever increasing industrialization, mean that the pressure on water resources is increasing. Pollution and contamination of freshwater resources have resulted in a continued decline in available quality reserves.

This pressure, exacerbated by the negative effects of climate change, calls into question the progress made in development in all areas.

Alleviate this pressure, feed people, give access to energy, preserve health and provide decent living while ensuring sustainable water management is a complicated equation to be solved by the international community.

This requires an exemplary behavior of all citizens and stakeholders. Education comes in at this stage to inform, educate and raise individual and collective awareness of the need to preserve natural resources.

The civil society plays a particularly important role in this water-health-education nexus.

Water is essential to all sectors of human activity, to the development of our societies and environmental conservation: It should no longer be managed by sector, but in an integrated manner involving all stakeholders and all sectors in the decision making that affects them.

It is compulsory to get out of the "Water box" and work transversely by taking into account all the complex aspects of this integrated management. From this point of view, the establishment of basin and sub-basin councils or committees, gathering representatives of all stakeholders, provides substantial progress whenever this approach is used with a willingness to share information and involve the members in the decision making that affects them. This approach should be further developed. ...

As regards funding:

Funds to support the fight against climate change in developing countries are awarded by a panel of diverse stakeholders (financing mechanisms of the UNFCCC, multilateral and bilateral institutions, private funds, etc.) blurring the readability of the financial circuits for the various involved parties.

The Convention on Climate Change provides for financial assistance of the Parties with priority access to resources for countries with low capacity and more vulnerable to climate change.

For such a purpose, the parties decided to designate the Green Climate Fund (GCF) as an operating entity of the financial mechanism under the Convention, in accordance with Article 11 of the Convention.

To cope with the problem of climate change, the needs for global investments in developing countries are very important and it is essential that the funds dedicated to climate change be added to the official development assistance credits without any substitution.

Adaptation projects are today mostly financed through bilateral institutions.

In spite of the availability of funds and institutions financing the fight against climate change, some countries have difficulties accessing these financial flows. This is especially true when it comes to funding adaptation projects.

Most funds have a limited access due to complex procedures and some cannot be directly mobilized by the countries themselves, which must then turn to international financial institutions or regional banks.

Usually, the stakeholders in water and climate have to present good adaptation documents to specialized "counters", but it appears that, in addition to investment, there is great need for funds to improve governance, knowledge, data acquisition, vocational training and education of the people, all strategic sectors for which today we should rethink the circuits for access to appropriate funds.

Credits from donors, Green Funds will be insufficient to cope with the scale of the problem if we do not also work on sector performance and water efficiency: reducing leaks and withdrawals, minimizing investment needs, rethinking how to design and operate infrastructure, building on the complementarity of policies in urban planning, energy, ecosystems, tourism, etc ... to ensure the full mobilization of available resources.

But, in addition to bi and multilateral funding, we should also consider financial mechanisms ensuring the sustainability of infrastructure and also the management of community utilities and water resources ... This can be achieved, alongside traditional budget funding, by introducing progressive mechanisms based on the "user-pays" and "polluter pays" principles, which have also proved their worth when applied through dialogue with all stakeholders involved.

The bottleneck to catalyze the necessary funding is ... bad governance: Inadequate planning, complex procedures, low capacity, lack of information, inadequate legal frameworks, lack of national strategies, inadequate training of administrators and operators, etc.

The challenge to meet is also to make the right investment in actions and appropriate and sustainable infrastructure, sometimes innovative, but in all cases, taking into account past errors and experience! This implies of course to also ensure that all related costs and ongoing operation costs are taken into account when designing new projects.

Madam Minister, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Here are, in a few sentences, the strengths and weaknesses highlighted by our work during these two days of intense thinking and fruitful exchange of experience in Rabat.

We wish that the Moroccan and French authorities in charge of the Presidency of COP21 and COP22, can be our spokesmen to the international community and all parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, for water to be taken into account in their work and decisions, at the strategic place that it should have, to make the necessary adaptation in the very short time we have left.

Thank you for your attention.