

INBO INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP:
" USERS' PARTICIPATION IN THE MANAGEMENT
AND FUNDING OF BASIN ORGANIZATIONS "

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKSHOP

The International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO) aims at promoting systems for the global and sustainable management of water resources on the scale of large river basins. It regroups 102 organizations in 42 countries.

In many countries, the seriousness of the situation requires the implementation of a global, integrated and consistent management of water resources, including links between water and soil conservation, as well as ecosystems.

This management should be organized:

- 1) on the relevant scale of large river basins and aquifers,
- 2) with the participation in decision-making of the local Authorities concerned, the different categories of users and associations for environmental protection beside the appropriate Governmental Administrations
- 3) based on master plans that define the long-term objectives to be achieved as regards water resources management in time of scarcity or flooding and that enable the management of uses integrated into land use planning and preserve the quality of ecosystems;
- 4) within priority investment programmes that result from these master plans;
- 5) the mobilization of appropriate financial resources, based on the " polluter-pays " principle and " user-pays " systems.

*** INBO recommends the establishment of a legal framework that takes into account these five objectives regarding river basin management.**

*USERS' PARTICIPATION MUST BE ORGANIZED WITHIN BODIES FOR
DIALOGUE AND THE MOBILIZATION OF PARTNERS*

*** INBO recommends that this participation be organized in river basin committees or councils.**

These river basin committees should be associated to the elaboration and implementation of the water policy in the basin, **using procedures that clearly define their role** in preparing the decisions to be made by the responsible public authorities.

In particular, in order to promote the multisectoral and holistic approach, they should be associated **to the formulation of long-term objectives** and to the preparation of **master plans**, to the selection of development and equipment priorities and to the implementation of multiannual priority investment programmes, as well as to the pricing principles and defining of water charges that concern them.

Their role should be facilitated by the setting-up of integrated information systems that would enable them to follow up the state of resources and ecosystems, in terms of quantity and quality, to monitor the different withdrawals and their effectiveness, to identify the polluting discharges and, in general, to evaluate the changes and efficiency of the measures taken.

This information should include objective elements enabling dialogue and negotiation.

Finally, significant means should be devoted to raise awareness among the public and water users, notably women and youth.

FUNDING BY THE USERS IS THE BASIS OF THEIR PARTICIPATION

The investments necessary for the sustainable management, conservation and control of water resources and ecosystems, and to ensure their exploitation, maintenance and rehabilitation will require huge financial resources.

All analyses converge to show that traditional public subsidies have reached their limit to meet the requirements of the water sector. Therefore, it is necessary to set up everywhere **funding systems that are based on the participation and solidarity of the users.**

Therefore, specific complementary means must be envisaged that combine administrative taxes, the pricing of community services and water charges. They should also create an incentive to limit wastage and decontaminate discharges.

*** INBO recommends the application of basin water charges, which has shown its high efficiency everywhere it has been applied.**

Such water charges enable the successful mobilization of funds to finance the sector, while ensuring a solidarity between the upstream and downstream parts of basins and between the categories of users with an effect on consumption reduction and pollution control.

*** INBO recommends that water charges be progressive in order to adapt these modern systems to the proper situation of each country**

It is recommended that these water charges be estimated by consensus in river basin committees and be managed at the level of the basin by a specialized organization with the approval of the public authorities, when appropriate.

*** INBO recommends that official bi- and multilateral development aid be especially mobilized to support such projects for creating basin organizations.**

WATER HAS NO BOUNDARY

There are 215 transboundary rivers over the world, the basins of which cover an area of about 50 % of the emerged lands.

Water has no national or administrative boundary. Managing resources shared between several neighbouring States, as well as the basins that have common aspects, should take into account the whole catchment area concerned.

*** INBO recommends that international conventions for transboundary river management integrate these principles of the users' participation while respecting national sovereignty .**

The creation of international commissions that would frequently and regularly meet and would associate all the administrations concerned, local communities and users of the riparian countries to global and sustainable management, should enable a better dialogue, the exchange of useful information and the strengthening of transboundary cooperation.

It is recommended that official international assistance reserves sufficient means to permit a dialogue between the people in charge in the countries concerned with a basin, and finances preliminary surveys for the elaboration of such international conventions and the institutional instruments necessary for their application.

*** INBO applauds the initiative of the President of the French Republic for creating an International Water Academy.**