



FES DECLARATION

We, Participants in the Third International Conference on Water and Climate, under the theme “Basin Management, Key for Adaptation and the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals”, co-organized by the Kingdom of Morocco, the International Network of Basin Organizations and the World Water Council, under the High Patronage of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, in Fez, July 6th and 7th, 2023.

Recalling that the challenges caused by climate change are multiple. Adaptation is necessary to deal with them. However, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a particularly important lever for adaptation.

These global challenges are growing and intensifying due to other factors such as population growth, increasing urbanization, and often unsustainable consumption and production patterns. This causes pressure on the energy and agricultural sectors and affects the management of water resources at the level of the rivers basins, lakes and aquifers by creating tensions between uses.

To meet these challenges, it is essential to identify and promote good practices for implementing integrated water resources management (IWRM) through experience sharing and concerted communication. IWRM at the basin scale remains little and imperfectly implemented, despite the sustainable development objective 6.5 dedicated to it. This target marked the institutional recognition, and at the global level, of the interest of this governance tool at the basin level to optimize and enhance the uses of water. It also provides multiple benefits for the development of human societies in a preserved environment. However, according to the latest report of the United Nations Environment Program based on data collected from 172 United Nations Member States, the degree of implementation of IWRM is 54% in 2023: the way is open, but there is still a long way to go and commitments to be made.

We salute the vision and commitment of His Majesty King Mohammed VI on the issue of water and for his high patronage of this structuring conference, which constitutes an important milestone between first the Paris agreement, the action plan of Dakar for the basins of lakes, rivers and aquifers, the United Nations action plan on water 2030, and in the perspective of the next COP28 as well as the World Water Forum which will take place in Bali in 2024 on the theme of water for shared prosperity.

We sincerely thank the government of the Kingdom of Morocco for organizing this conference, as well as its people and the great city of Fez for their kindness and warm welcome.

We declare the following:

We confirm our commitment (governments, basin organizations, donors, civil society and Research and Development actors) to strengthen the implementation of IWRM at basin level as a tool for adapting to climate change and achieving Sustainable Development Goals, and we call for:

1. Strengthen the sharing of good practices in the integrated management of water resources, particularly at the level of basins and territories;
2. Promote and include innovation and new technologies for better knowledge and use of water resources and also for better control of water mobilization costs;
3. Accelerate progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, with a view to ensuring water security;
4. Put the safeguarding of groundwater, as a common and strategic good, at the heart of the priorities of action plans at the basin level;
5. Improve intersectoral management in order to establish true coherence of sectoral policies, in particular between the water, energy and food sectors, and better governance of water-related projects;
6. Preserve and fight against pollution of water resources;
7. Strengthen communication and awareness around water issues;
8. Use renewable energy as green energy in the water production process, whether for drinking water supply or for irrigation.

We recommend that basin organizations commit to designing, financing and implementing ambitious IWRM projects at the level of their respective basins for sustainable development and adaptation to climate change.

Finally, we reaffirm:

1. Our attachment to the Dakar action plan for the basins of rivers, lakes and aquifers,
2. Our commitment to the Coalition for Cross-Border Water Cooperation,
3. Our desire to actively prepare the basin segment of the political process of the 10th World Water in Bali.