



RESEAU INTERNATIONAL DES ORGANISMES DE BASSIN  
INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF BASIN ORGANIZATIONS  
RED INTERNACIONAL DE ORGANISMOS DE CUENCA



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GENERAL ASSEMBLIES  
OF THE AFRICAN NETWORK OF BASIN ORGANIZATIONS AND  
OF THE NETWORK OF TRANSBOUNDARY BASIN ORGANIZATIONS

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DAKAR (SENEGAL)  
3 to 6 NOVEMBER 2004

**FINAL FINAL**

**FINAL RESOLUTIONS**

**"Water has no boundary"**

**168 delegates** of governmental administrations, responsible for managing water resources, of basin organizations and international organizations coming from **34 countries** :

South Africa	Algeria	Belgium	Benin
Botswana	Burkina Faso	Finland	Canada
Cameroon	Ivory Coast	Guinea	France
United States	Ghana	Mauritania	Kenya
Hungary	Morocco	Senegal	Republic of Congo
Mali	Uganda	Tajikistan	Walloon Region
Niger	Romania	Tunisia	
United Kingdom	Switzerland	Ethiopia	
Sweden	Togo		
Chad	Zimbabwe		

and from the International Commissions or Transboundary Organizations for Congo-CICOS, Gambia, Liptako – Gourma, Niger, Orange, Senegal, Lake Chad, Volta, Zambezi and the International Joint Commission, met in Dakar (Senegal) from 2 to 6 November 2004, under the auspices of the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO) and at the invitation of the African Network of Basin Organizations (ANBO) and of the Organization for the Development of the Senegal River (OMVS), in the presence of bi and multilateral cooperation organizations, United Nations Agencies and large Non Governmental Organizations concerned and with the support of French Cooperation.

The meeting, held in the conference center at the Méridien Hotel in Dakar, was honored by the effective presence of several Ministers in charge of water in the sub-region, of the President of the Council of Ministers of OMVS, of the Prime Minister of Senegal and of **His Excellency Adboulaye WADE, President of the Republic of Senegal** and current President of the Conference of the Heads of State of OMVS, who came to officially open the meeting on 3 November in the morning and support the Network's initiatives.

## **PREAMBLE**

It was reminded that many represented organizations are already members or observers of the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO), currently present in 52 Countries and created in 1994 in Aix-les-Bains to enable the mobilization of the real and practical experience of decision-makers and professionals of the administrations and organizations concerned, directly responsible for the effective implementation of integrated water resource management at the level of river basins or wishing to implement it in their respective countries or regions.

**INBO is open to all relevant organizations that wish to become members. They are all welcomed:** International Commissions and organizations responsible for integrated management of river basins and aquifers, in particular the transboundary ones, governmental administrations in charge of water in the countries involved and interested in implementing basin management, bi or multilateral cooperation organizations and United Nations Agencies supporting activities to establish institutional structures at the level of large river basins or aquifers, especially transboundary ones.

Non Governmental Organizations or Research, Information and Training Centers may participate in the Network activities as Observers.

INBO now relies on Regional Networks in Africa, Latin America, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe and in the Mediterranean, on the Network of International Commissions and Transboundary Basin Organizations and on the « EURO-INBO » Group of European Basin Organizations for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive.

**INBO is especially mobilizing for better management of transboundary rivers, lakes and aquifers.**

**Indeed, there are 263 transboundary rivers or lakes and hundreds of aquifers over the world, the basins of which are shared by at least two or more (18) riparian countries.**

**Indeed, water has no boundary and appropriate integrated resource management of the basins of rivers, lakes or aquifers, shared by several riparian countries, is now of strategic significance.**

Cooperation agreements need to be initiated or signed between the riparian countries for these large transboundary river basins and aquifers, inland or international seas.

Such an integrated management obviously requires, in addition to specific agreements between the countries concerned, suitable methods for observation, management, protection and development.

Their specific situation should be better taken into account in the debates and multilateral agreements on a new governance of water resources.

Although many agreements were signed in the past centuries between riparian countries to ensure free navigation on transboundary rivers or sometimes to share river flows or prevent floods and, since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to build hydropower dams, **today, there are still too few agreements, conventions or treaties dealing with pollution control, aquifer management and a fortiori the integrated management of shared river basins.**

However, in cooperation with international organizations and programs, several countries have already established, for a long time for some of them, a real basin organization and a large number are considering doing so.

Although the European Water Framework Directive proposes to the Member and Candidate States of the European Union to delimit « International Districts », in which « good ecological status » should be achieved before 2015, and leads to the harmonization of management practices and to the development of better tools between riparian Countries, including those not, or not yet, members of the EU, the United Nations Convention on uses other than navigation in international river basins has not yet been ratified.

This is the reason why the numerous participants in the international Conference, held in Thonon-les-Bains (France) on 25 and 26 November 2002, under the aegis of INBO and at the invitation of the International Commission for the Protection of the Lemman and of the Rhone-Mediterranean and Corsica Water Agency, then decided to constitute **« an informal Network of International Commissions and Transboundary Basin Organizations ».**

It aims at allowing the executives and technicians concerned to better know each other throughout the world, and to exchange their real field experiences, to compare their approaches and methods and thus to facilitate the creation and the strengthening of the best suited organizations for a new integrated water resource management of transboundary basins.

Several international organizations have fortunately launched, during the last years and more recently on the occasion of the World Summit on Sustainable Development of Johannesburg, initiatives for promoting and facilitating the creation or strengthening of international basin commissions and, thus, generate significant scientific, technical, economic or institutional cooperation with such a purpose.

In Evian in 2003, INBO, jointly with several large NGOs concerned, especially drew the attention of the G8 Heads of State and Government on the stakes of a better governance of transboundary basins. They retained this issue among their priorities for future actions in the water sector.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE NETWORK**

Based on a voluntary and free participation of its members and observers, it aims at facilitating the creation and strengthening of basin organizations over the world.

## **PRIORITIES FOR ACTION**

In addition to the presentation of the strategies of bi and multilateral cooperation institutions involved and to the study of several real cases of organization on the scale of transboundary basins, **the Dakar Assembly widely dealt, in 4 workshops, with 4 central topics for the implementation of IWRM:**

- 1) statutes and responsibilities of transboundary basin organizations.
- 2) preparation of basin management plans and action programs.
- 3) financing basin organizations and their programs.
- 4) monitoring and information systems in the management of transboundary basins.

**69 papers were presented during the Dakar meeting.**

## **ISSUES DEALT WITH:**

The main issues dealt with in these workshops and the participants' recommendations on each of these four selected topics are given in annex N° 1 of these final resolutions.

## GENERAL RESOLUTIONS :

The participants noted with appreciation the progress made allowing a better management of transboundary basins on the one hand, and, on the other, the significant progress already made in the implementation of policies and real actions at this level.

The Dakar participants expressed their wish to continue exchanging their experiences through four complementary activities:

- Organizing regular meetings, either plenary sessions on a yearly basis or topical workshops whenever necessary. Apart from an exchange of experiences, these meetings will result in the identification of the main concerns of basin organizations involved in the field.
- Developing a website on the basis of methodologies, techniques and contents already elaborated within « AQUADOC-INTER » in Central Europe and « EMWIS » in the Mediterranean region. This common website should include case studies and documents produced by basin organizations (abstract in English and French, links with the sites of the basin organizations). This site would also include current information, a forum for discussions and frequently asked questions, links towards new documents and information produced at the international level.
- Promoting training programs for executives and staffs of Basins Organizations, especially through the GEF-supported « IW-LEARN » project.
- Establishing twinning arrangements between basin organizations of different countries facing common problems, notably within the « TWINBASIN » project or already existing agreements.

The organizations represented in Dakar expressed their support to Pilot River Basins exercises, such as those developed in the European Union for WFD implementation or within the framework of the European Water Initiative for Africa for instance, within that of GEF and in several and in more and more countries. They recommended to propose additional pilot basins for widening the exercise to adapt it to the context of each region of the world.

The Delegates also wished to enlarge the direct dissemination of Pilot River Basin results to all other basin organizations. Generally speaking, in spite of the web facilities, access to information remains complex.

□ As regards transboundary basins, it seems necessary to support the creation of International Commissions or similar organizations and to provide better means to those already existing, and to reinforce cooperation between the neighboring countries of each of these basins.

The role, responsibilities and the means available to the international commissions, authorities or transboundary basin organizations already existing were broadly discussed, as well as their working methods, which are often similar, their decisions obtained by consensus, appropriation, dialogue and understanding among partners, their possible role for preventing and regulating conflicts.

The participants recommended to make use and strengthen the existing international structures or to create new ones where they do not yet exist, because:

- good results have already been obtained by member countries with such an approach,
- good experience has been gained in collecting, exchanging and using coordinated data for the assessment of resources, pressures and impacts,
- the international benefit of a common assessment of measures adopted in each basin has been proven,
- they bring politically, socially, environmentally, technically and economically added-value compared to independently taken measures.

The case of rivers of large federal countries may, for some aspects, be compared to the one of transboundary basins.

□ As regards the specific aspects of the prevention and control of floods and droughts, which heavily affect many countries, the delegates confirmed that there is a need to better exchange information and know-how and that it is essential to harmonize the control plans between the countries of transboundary basins. They support the proposal to initiate exchanges between operational Centers for flood control and prevention.

In particular, they recommended to build reliable and effective systems for quick warning against floods and droughts and to create mechanisms for prevention and action to face the natural disasters caused by water and to protect human lives and properties.

□ Consistency of the water monitoring and information systems, harmonization of data and Geographic Information Systems and the use of common models are essential for sharing information and following up actions in transboundary basins.

□ A joint thinking on the methods and means for consulting and mobilizing the populations is urgent. It would also be very useful to jointly formalize strong and easily appropriable arguments likely to justify a real interest and an effective participation of the populations, whose approval is essential for the successful implementation of the projects related to water policy in the basins that are still expecting tangible results.

□ The participants also drew the attention of the proper Authorities on taking adequate measures to prevent the introduction and the dissemination of invasive aquatic species which cause considerable ecological and economic damage and of which new specimens are continuously discovered.

□ They wished a better participation of the transboundary basins supported by GEF in the Network activities and they asked the INBO member organizations to get actively involved in the activities initiated during the operational phase of "IW-LEARN" Project with GEF support.

### **REGARDING THE AFRICAN CONTINENT IN PARTICULAR**

➔ ANBO proposes to all interested organizations of the water sector, of Southern, Central, North, East or West Africa, to governmental administrations, basin organizations, either existing or being created, bi and multilateral cooperation organizations, to become a member to jointly develop a true common African expertise on the management of the sixty, or about, transboundary basins of Africa. The statutes could be adapted according to the needs, especially to strengthen the links with NEPAD, ANCOW and the regional economic cooperation institutions,

➔ ANBO proposes to the European Union, to the bilateral and multilateral cooperation agencies involved and to the countries concerned, to assist in the implementation of its multi-year action plan. It proposes, in particular, to create and facilitate a « Permanent Technical Committee » of the African Basin Organizations, especially the pilot basins selected for the first phases of the European Water Initiative and GEF-supported projects, in order to allow the managers of these basins to regularly exchange their experience, to evaluate their projects, identify the best practices adapted to the African contexts, to define the encountered problems and to make the syntheses necessary for disseminating the lessons learned on the whole African continent.

➔ ANBO also proposes to organize training courses on « the six pillars of IWRM » open to the African executives and technicians concerned.

➔ ANBO wishes that a project for an African Water Information and Documentation System (AWIS) be very quickly launched to federate the information centers, either existing or to be created in the interested basins or countries, to share their references, useful documents and African studies, to store them and make them easily available to everyone.

The methods successfully tested within the Euro-Mediterranean Water Information System (EMWIS), which relies on an international technical unit and National Focal Points in the 27 countries concerned, including the North African ones, could usefully be adapted in Africa, especially the linguistic interfaces in English, Arabic, French and Portuguese, within the framework of a permanent cooperation with this organization.

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The participants thanked the European Commission's representatives for having invited INBO to be a partner of the working groups of the European Water Initiative, and wished that the International Network and its Regional Networks can even be more involved in the follow-up, facilitation and implementation of the components on Integrated Water Resource Management and Transboundary Basins of the initiatives for Africa, Eastern Europe and Caucasus, Latin America and the Mediterranean.

The delegates thanked the African Network of Basin Organizations (ANBO), the Organization for the Development of the Senegal River (OMVS), the Senegalese Authorities and French Cooperation for having initiated this first and very fruitful meeting and for their perfect organization of this meeting and their warm welcome in Dakar.

Mr. OULD MERZOUG, OMVS High Commissioner, will chair the Network of International Commissions and Transboundary Basin Organizations up to its next plenary assembly.

The Niger Basin Authority also accepted to fulfill ANBO Presidency up to the next general Assembly.

The delegates retained with thanks the proposal from Morocco and the Niger Basin Authority (NBA) to organize the next meetings of the Bureau and General Assembly respectively.

**UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED IN DAKAR ON 5 NOVEMBER 2004.**