

Recommendations
of the Dushanbe Preparatory Conference

Towards the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20): Water Cooperation Issues, held in Dushanbe, on 19-20 October, 2011

1. The Preparatory conference was organized by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan in cooperation with UN-Water, the UNDP and OSCE Offices in Dushanbe.

About 140 participants from the different regions of the world, countries that play an active role in promoting and addressing water issues in the UN agenda, UN-Water and UN institutions, international organizations representing different major groups of agenda 21 and the intergovernmental organization of transboundary river basins, took part in the Dushanbe Preparatory Conference.

The objective of the Dushanbe Preparatory Conference was to discuss current issues and challenges in water cooperation, resulting in following recommendations for the Rio+20 (zero-) documents. They will also be included in the concept note and the programme of the thematic session on water cooperation within the framework of the Rio+20 Conference.

2. The Conference focused on in-depth deliberations on the following three goals:

- To discuss different aspects of strengthening cooperation and dialogue to resolve current water issues, towards achieving the MDGs and IADGs,
- To demonstrate best practices in different regions of the world in water cooperation among water users at local, national and regional levels, in improving access to safe drinking water and sanitation, and in promoting efficient use of water resources for development and environmental protection;
- To prepare specific recommendations on effective implementations approaches and mechanisms towards joint use of water resources in transboundary basins of rivers, aquifers and lakes.

3. The participants once again noted the main decisions made by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/154, which declared 2013 as the International Year of Water Cooperation, to take appropriate steps to organize the activities of the Year and to develop necessary proposals on activities at all levels to support the Member States in the implementation of the Year; to take advantage of the Year to promote actions at all levels, including through international cooperation, as appropriate, aimed at the achievement of the internationally agreed water-related goals contained in Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 of the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation; as well as to increase awareness of their importance.

4. The Preparatory Conference recognized the significant role of the Implementation of the International Year on Water Cooperation, 2013 for strengthening future efforts of the UN

member states and international and regional institutions at the implementation of the IADGs on water and sanitation issues. It was reaffirmed that the Thematic session on water cooperation within Rio+20 Conference would serve as a linkage between the Rio+20 Conference and the International Year of Water Cooperation, 2013. The accepted recommendations and outcome documents in the Thematic Session on water cooperation highlighted the effective ways of water cooperation in 2013 and beyond.

5. The Preparatory Conference reaffirmed the critical importance of water resources for development, maintenance of peace and stability, and environmental sustainability, including poverty and hunger eradication, public health, food security, hydropower, and agricultural and rural development. All the above underscores the necessity of cooperation, and effective resources management and their use, especially in transboundary river basins.

6. Water is central to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Raising awareness of the central role of water cooperation in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals calls for continued communication and outreach campaigns.

7. A gradual and sustained implementation of integrated water resources management at the level of river basins and groundwater systems is central to meeting social, environmental and economic needs in an equitable manner.

8. Challenges related to transboundary waters are expected to increase as a result of numerous pressures, such as climate change and population growth. Competition over water is even more acute in the zones of water stress, leading sometimes to serious tensions between different groups of users. Riparian countries should strengthen dialogue and cooperation and take measures for the mutually beneficial and rational use of transboundary water resources on the basis of norms, principles and legislation recognized by them. Specific and tangible steps could be taken by riparian countries, including through cooperation, in accordance with existing and future agreements. It is possible for parties with divergent interests to benefit from such resources by means of specific arrangements tailored to a given basin's characteristics.

9. The participants of the Preparatory Conference recommended following actions for implementation:

- To improve water governance at national level through improvement of laws and regulatory frameworks, political and administrative accountability, and public participation and transparency.
- To foster transboundary water cooperation by joining and implementing regional, international agreements, and bilateral and multilateral frameworks as well as existing mechanisms and modalities of water diplomacy. To address water cooperation issues at the local, national and, as appropriate, regional and international levels.
- To foster public participation by fully engaging and supporting all stakeholders, including those in governments, international organizations, private sector, civil society and academia at appropriate level.

- To foster cooperation through a broader approach including, South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation initiatives for water resources management in particular through Capacity Development including exchange of experiences, best practices and lessons learned, as well as sharing appropriate environmentally sound technologies and know-how.
- To encourage partners in development cooperation to focus their assistance on the areas and countries that are off-track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, with special attention to water-related components of all Goals and other internationally agreed development goals, in accordance with national priorities and development plans.
- To enhance capabilities for collection, assessment, dissemination and monitoring of water related data including hydrological, hydrobiological, hydrogeological and meteorological data, thus, contributing to the implementation of the Global Framework for Climate Services.
- To strengthen scientific understanding of the water cycle through cooperation in joint observation and research, knowledge-sharing, capacity-building and transfer of technology, particularly to developing countries and countries with economies in transition.
- To encourage Governments sharing transboundary river basins and aquifers to take appropriate measures for joint water resources monitoring and information networks among all river basins and aquifers and to exchange information.
- To encourage provisions for information exchange and public participation, as well as mutual assistance in case of extreme events including water related disaster.

10. The Prepcom Conference recognized the importance of the multilateral frameworks established with the support of the United Nations to address water and sanitation issues, to promote cooperation among riparian States through both bilateral and multilateral arrangements, and to ensure an appropriate follow-up of those issues, in line with the commitments made in this regard, as reflected, inter alia, in Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

11. The Preparatory Conference recognized the important role of the United Nations system in supporting countries to achieve the goals of the Johannesburg Plan of Action, the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015, and to meet emerging challenges by promoting cooperation at all levels and building capacity in water resources management and drinking water supply and provision of sanitation services. UN-Water will continue to facilitate the coordinated system-wide response necessary for the implementation of activities in support of the "Water for Life" Decade and the International Year of Water Cooperation, 2013.

12. The Preparatory Conference acknowledged that water is a cross-cutting issue, and that synergies should not be lost due to narrow sectoral approaches. In this regard, the above-mentioned conclusions and recommendations should be communicated to the decision makers and stakeholders outside the water domain, with a view to achieving broad endorsement and consensus on a common aim that requires an integrated and well-coordinated approach. Decisions in other sectors and those related to development, growth, security and livelihoods, including responses to climate change, food and energy challenges and disaster management, need to incorporate water as an integral component.

13. The Preparatory Conference fully supported the organization of the thematic session on water cooperation within the framework of the UN Conference on sustainable development Rio+20 and developed a Draft Concept Note of this thematic session.

14. The Preparatory Conference endorsed the concept note for the Thematic Session on Water Cooperation and recommended the following themes for the thematic session on water cooperation within the Rio+20 Conference:

1. Water cooperation for equitable access to water;
2. Water cooperation for peace and security;
3. Water cooperation, sustainable development and environmental sustainability;
4. Capacity building and science development for water cooperation.

15. The Preparatory Conference invited the United Nations system, Governments and all stakeholders to actively participate in the preparation and activities of the International Year of Water Cooperation, 2013.

16. The Preparatory Conference recommended to organize a special session high level meeting and a special session on the theme "Towards the International Year of Water Cooperation, 2013" in the framework of the 6th World Water Forum in Marseille.

17. The Government of Tajikistan will submit the present recommendations and the Concept Note for the thematic session on water cooperation within the framework of the Rio+20 Conference to the Secretariat of the Rio+20 Conference by November 1, 2011.

18. The Dushanbe Preparatory Conference invited the Government of Tajikistan in cooperation with UN-Water, to organize consultative meetings at the UN headquarters on the programme of the thematic session and to establish a group of partners from the UN Member States.

19. The Preparatory Conference expressed their sincere appreciation to the Government of Tajikistan for hosting the Conference and for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to all.

20. The Preparatory Conference expressed its appreciation for the assistance and support provided by the organizations of the United Nations system and headquarters and country teams, including UN-Water, as well as other regional and international institutions, in its preparation.