



**Organization of American States
Department of Sustainable Development**

**First Inter-American Meeting
of Ministers and High-Level Authorities on
Sustainable Development**

**Preparatory Workshop No.3
Integrated Water Resources Management
(PRELIMINARY PROGRAM)**

June 19-21, 2006

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1. Background

The First Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High-Level Authorities on Sustainable Development will take place October 5-6 in Bolivia. The Ministerial Meeting will try to identify and propose concrete partnerships at the regional and hemispheric levels to integrate environmental management within the development, economic, and social policies of the countries of the region. The Meeting in Bolivia will take into account the progress made in the implementation of the sustainable development agenda, from the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the 1996 Summit on Sustainable Development in Santa Cruz, the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg 2002, the 2005 Health and Environment Ministers of the Americas Meeting in Mar del Plata, and the World Water Forum, among others.

The Ministers and High-Level Authorities that will participate in the Meeting will discuss experiences and lessons learned from policies, programs and projects based on the three pillars of sustainable development: economic development, social issues, and environmental protection, taking as a basis for discussion three specific areas:

- Integrated Water Resources Management;
- Natural Disasters;
- Sustainable Agriculture, Forestry and Tourism.

The Workshop on Integrated Water Resources Management is the third of a series of workshops organized by the Department of Sustainable Development of the Organization of American States, as part of the preparatory process for the Ministerial Meeting in Bolivia. The objective of these technical preparatory workshops is to define policy guidelines and recommendations on priority actions in each of the identified themes, in order to provide a technical basis for the agenda of the Meeting of Ministers and High-Level Authorities on Sustainable Development, to be held in Bolivia. The results of the workshops will be analyzed and discussed within the framework of CIDI's Working Group on Sustainable Development, from which a document will be prepared and consolidated with agreed upon proposals and recommendations.

This document presents the objectives and methodology proposed for the Technical Workshop on Integrated Water Resources Management, organized by the Department of Sustainable Development of the Organization of American States in cooperation with the Authorities of Ecuador, as host country for the workshop.

2. General and Specific Objectives

The general objective of the Workshop is to define policy guidelines, strategies, and priority actions in the area of Integrated Management of Water Resources, in order to contribute to the identification of the main problems related to water resources affecting the region, seeking to identify strategies for their solution. Specifically, the Workshop will aim at:

- (i) Identify the main challenges facing the region in the area of water

resources, particularly in:

- a. Achieving the millennium development goals on water supply and sanitation, treatment of wastewater, and links to environmental health.
 - b. Governance in the management of water resources, decentralization, meaningful public participation, institutional transparency, and codify access to environmental and related information.
 - c. Climate change scenarios and their potential effects on water resources: identification of adaptation priorities.
- (ii) Generate a basis for a regional commitment that will facilitate the establishment of partnerships and strategies to provide joint solutions to common problems.
 - (iii) Promote the adoption and coordination of follow-up actions to the efforts established at the IV World Water Forum, 2006.
 - (iv) Elaborate a Plan of Action that includes technical, political and financial issues aimed at dealing with the main challenges identified in the management of water resources.

3. Date and Venue of the Workshop

The Workshop on Integrated Management of Water Resources will be held in Quito, Ecuador, June 19– 21, 2006.

4. Proposed Themes

The proposed themes for the Workshop are:



4.1 Governance in the Management of Water Resources

The Workshop will analyze the main challenges related to the governance of water resources, including the capacity to establish solid and effective governance systems; the need of integrated planning for the use and management of the resource; the dispersion and lack of coordination among agencies and institutions in charge of water management, and between these and non-governmental organizations, civil society, etc; the integration of legal structures, the decentralization in the management of services, the needs for institutional strengthening, transparency in conflict resolution; and public participation in decision-making, among others.

It is expected that the recommendation of the group will aim at:

- (I) Promote policies and strategies to strengthen the role of the public, private, and non-governmental sectors in the management of water resources.
- (II) Provide guidelines for the promotion and implementation of meaningful public participation policies in the management of water resources, including access to information, capacity building, and social empowerment.
- (III) Improve inter-sectoral coordination for the management of water resources.
- (IV) Support the exchange of institutional and technological experiences to strengthen existing institutional gaps.
- (V) Promote the definition and implementation of adequate instruments for water management and regulation.

4.2 Millennium Development Goals related to Water, Sanitation, and Environmental Health

In Latin America and the Caribbean 77 million people do not have access to drinking water, of these, 66.23% live in rural areas. The majority of those without access to drinking water are poor. Lack of drinking water and sanitation increases the risk of transmission of waterborne diseases. Despite the progress made in the region regarding the coverage of drinking water and the efforts made in the area of sanitation, it is necessary to develop a coordinated vision at the hemispheric level in order to identify how to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through health and environmental integrated policies. Recommendations on this matter will be aimed at:

- (i) Strengthen cooperation mechanisms aimed at increasing drinking water and sanitation coverage, and reducing the risk of waterborne diseases;
- (ii) Identify political, operative and financial processes for the implementation of wastewater treatment systems, reuse and distribution of water that satisfy users demand;
- (iii) Promote the improvement of drinking water and sanitation services in Latin America and the Caribbean through strategies and partnerships aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Objectives and solving main hemispheric problems;
- (iv) Identify opportunities of collaboration that will allow the facilitation and harmonization of national efforts to increase sanitation and water treatment services to promote rural development and job creation.

4.3 Water Resources Management and Climate Change

Empirical observations during recent years seem to confirm what climate models have predicted for years, indicating that greenhouse gases and global warming would cause a gradual loss of Arctic Ice and other glaciers, causing a variation of global climatic patterns, raising ocean levels, and affecting freshwater cycles, through altered precipitation patterns, rates of evaporation, humidity levels, recharge of aquifers, and runoff levels of the main basins. A stronger effort to improve forecast capacity is needed, establishing the links between climate change and the potential impacts in the management of water resources, and identifying priorities for adaptation. The workshop will try to identify the main challenges in the region to improve the capacity to respond to the potential effects of climate change. Workshop discussion will aim at:

- (I) Identify institutional needs to improve the level of knowledge, and technical and operational capacities to forecast the effects of hydrologic changes and climate variability.
- (II) Promote research programs on climate trends and the potential effects in the main basins of the hemisphere (Plata, Amazon, Caribbean).
- (III) Identify strategies to integrate climate effects in national policies on water resources, based on IWRM.
- (IV) Articulate regional programs and strategies to reduce the impacts of climate variability and change, particularly those related to extreme natural events, and in the identification of priority areas and actions for adaptation programs in the region, including effective monitoring mechanisms.

4.4 Coordination of Efforts for the Integrated Management of Water Resources in the Region

This component will promote the integration of efforts of member countries to improve the sustainable use and integrated management of water resources, strengthening cooperation mechanisms, the exchange of information and experiences, and establishing political and institutional processes that will allow and facilitate a coordinated and joint action for water management in the region. Recommendations on this matter will be aimed at:

- (I) Develop efforts aimed at the harmonization of existing legal frameworks for the management of water resources, through sub-regional platforms and horizontal cooperation activities.
- (II) Facilitate the establishment of common planning principles for the management of water resources in transboundary basins, including basin classification criteria, use of water bodies, quality and monitoring standards, among others.
- (III) Establish a permanent process of discussion, support and follow-up for the implementation of regional agreements and commitments related to water.
- (IV) Define mechanisms for the transfer of experiences, and technical and financial cooperation for the preparation of national water resources management plans, according to the goals and objectives stated in Johannesburg.

- (V) Promote educational actions at the regional level aimed at social participation in water management.

5. Expected Results

- A document with the results of the Workshop, including an analysis of the selected priority themes, general recommendations on policy guidelines for the management of water resources in each of the themes, and a proposal for the plan of action.

6. Methodology

The Integrated Water Resources Management Workshop will include **plenary sessions and working groups**. The Workshop will last 2.5 days, during which, presentations will be given on each of the selected themes, to be supported by technical documents previously prepared, if applicable. The plenary sessions will have one moderator, and one (or two) rapporteur(s).

Following the plenary sessions, four technical groups will be formed based on the selected themes. Each group will be formed trying to balance the background, experience and the region of origin of the participating experts, and it will be lead by the presenter of the theme during the plenary session. The presenter will guide the discussion based on the technical document previously prepared and on the preliminary conclusions and recommendations, and on the general discussion of the document during the plenary session, seeking input and consensus on the contributions added. In order to complement verbal inputs during the question and answer session, and the written answers, the rapporteur will compile the interventions, questions and answers, in order to facilitate the preparation of the final report to be presented by the group.

After the group discussions, a plenary session will take place, where the rapporteur from each group will present the conclusions and recommendation from the group to the rest of the participants. After a period of discussion, a final report will be prepared with the results from the Workshop, including recommendations and general and specific proposals for each of the selected themes.

7. Participating Organizations and Authorities

Besides the Department of Sustainable Development of the Organization of American States, other international organizations that will be invited to participate include: the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNESCO, among others. The participation of civil society representatives, and of academia, scientific and private sectors is also expected.