

## **DRAFT DUSHANBE DECLARATION ON WATER**

ADOPTED BY THE HIGH LEVEL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE MIDTERM COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR ACTION "WATER FOR LIFE" 2005-2015 (HLIC)

DUSHANBE, TAJIKISTAN, 8-10 JUNE 2010

Upon the invitation of the Government of Tajikistan and as welcomed by the UN General Assembly in its resolution 64/198, Heads of States and Governments, Ministers, Government delegations, Heads of UN entities, Representatives of International and Regional Financial Institutions, civil society and the business community from ..... Countries met in the HLIC convened in Dushanbe from 8 to 10 June 2010.

The High Level International Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life 2005-2015" (HLIC) focused its in-depth deliberations on six themes: (i) Accelerating progress towards water-related IADG, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and ensuring involvement of women; (ii) Transboundary water cooperation; (iii) Water quality; (iv) Water resources and adaptation to climate change, disaster risks reduction; (v) Sustainable financing; and (vi) Integrated Water Resource Management, energy, agriculture and food security. It also built on the outcomes of the high-level interactive dialogue of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly in New York on 22 March 2010, World Water Day.

The outcome of the HLIC consists in a number of important conclusions and recommendations contained in the present Dushanbe Declaration.

The Government of Tajikistan will submit the Dushanbe Declaration to the UN General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session for appropriate consideration.

The HLIC commended the support and assistance provided by the UN system organizations headquarters and country team, including UN-Water, as well as other multilateral and bilateral institutions in ensuring the success of the Conference.

The HLIC noted many important achievements during the first five years of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life" 2005-2015 on the implementation of water-related programmes and projects. These achievements were made possible by various efforts by developing countries, the donor communities and various United Nations and international organizations and civil society organizations. The HLIC also noted many major obstacles resulted from the persisting challenges and newly emerging issues resulting from the recent global crises, including the energy, food and financial crises coupled with the increasing impacts of climate change. In this context, the HLIC highlighted the following:

Sustainable management of surface and ground water resources is vital for achieving progress in all fronts of economic and human development as well as safeguarding water quality and ecosystems, and the life-supporting goods and services they provide to humanity.

Water resources management issues need to be addressed at local, national, regional and international levels. All stakeholders including in governments, international organizations, private sector, civil society and academia should be engaged while particularly striving to ensure the participation and involvement of women in water-related development efforts, to work together towards achieving the goals of the International Decade for Action “Water for Life” 2005-2015 as decided by the General Assembly in its resolution 58/217.

In this context, it is primarily the responsibility of national governments to define appropriate policies and sufficient budgetary allocations to water sector.

Water is central to achieving each and every one of the MDGs. Access to water for drinking and productive activities, proper management of its extremes, as well as provision of sanitation services are a prerequisite for lifting people out of poverty, for ensuring food security, promoting a healthy society and contributing to economic development. Raising awareness of the central role of water calls for continued advocacy campaigns. The HLIC recommends to set up an international award.

Progress in achieving goals to halve the number of people without access to safe drinking water, and even more so, to adequate sanitation is slow and uneven. We renew our commitment to make all efforts within our reach to attain these goals. We support the “Sustainable Sanitation – 5 year Drive to 2015” initiative endorsed by other countries during the Tokyo International Year of Sanitation conference, January 2010.

The HLIC calls on Member States to consider setting up national committees or designating focal points in their respective countries to facilitate and promote activities related to the International Decade for Action “Water for Life”, 2005-2015 during its second half

The lack of goals on the productive uses of water as well as its management makes it harder for the international community to track progress, further complicated by inadequate and deteriorating networks of data collection and challenges in sharing the data.

Political will and financial commitments both from national governments and development partners must be further strengthened and be granted highest priority in order to ensure the attainment of water-related internationally development targets during the remainder of the International Decade for Action “Water for Life” 2005-2015 especially for developing countries despite the persistence of the current global economic and financial crisis. In this regard, member states should prioritize water and sanitation issues during the upcoming, MDG High-Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly in New York, September 2010.

The United Nations system has an important role to support member states achieve the goals of the International Decade for Action “Water for Life” 2005-2015 by promoting cooperation and building capacity in water resources management and in the provisioning of drinking water supply and 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

International and regional financial institutions are important actors in mobilizing and facilitating financial flows towards the water sector and should develop further adequate mechanisms to respond to the increasing demand for financial resources and for technical and institutional capacities.

South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation for water management should be fostered also by promoting exchange of experiences, best practices and lessons learnt as well as sharing appropriate, environmentally sound technologies and know-how.

A gradual and sustained implementation of principles of integrated water resources management at the level of river basins and groundwater systems, where appropriate, is central to meeting economic, social and environmental needs in an equitable manner through adequate supply and demand management.

Climate change affects people's livelihoods and well-being mainly through water. It is vital to build resilience and reduce vulnerabilities to extreme events, namely floods, droughts and other hydro-climatic hazards. Managing increased variability in hydrological conditions by structural and non-structural measures is essential. It is important to build long-term resilience through strong institutions and water infrastructure, including well-functioning ecosystems. It is more effective to proceed from reactive and ad-hoc crisis management to proactive disaster preparedness and risk management based on adequate monitoring, all of which require scientific information and new tools for decision making.

The world's existing network of rainfall, snow-pack, glaciers and stream-flow observation and monitoring systems have seriously eroded. In many cases, the density is far below international standards for meaningful prediction or interpretation of data. The shrinking information base reduces the ability to monitor water quantity and quality, predict droughts, forecast floods, understand climate change implications as well as make appropriate water management plans. Enhancing hydrologic, hydrogeologic and meteorological data collection, assessment and dissemination capabilities are crucial and should be strengthened as part of the implementation of the Global Framework for Climate Services.

Adapting production and support systems to global environmental change through development and implementation of water-saving methodologies and technologies in all sectors in need of water is of fundamental importance to ensure sustainable and efficient water resources management.

Innovative and modernized irrigation and drainage schemes and management approaches, that are technologically feasible and available for adoption, are often required to improve productivity and efficiency of water use in agriculture in order to ensure food security, eradicate poverty and hunger, and protect the environment.

Water as one of the sources of renewable energy is needed to generate power and power is needed to deliver water as well as many other basic services to populations. Hydro-energy generation may contribute to important progress in poverty reduction, mitigating climate change, and achieving sustainable development, particularly in developing countries.

Protecting water quality enhances the availability of safe water. Pollution of surface and groundwater ought to be prevented at source, by further developing and implementing innovative strategies on waste-water management, including decentralization of waste-water collection and treatment, applying appropriate regulation and by increasing public awareness and outreach activities directed to this goal.

Desalination and waste-water treatment for reuse can be strategic options in many water short areas and it is essential to make them sustainable, cost-effective and affordable.

Water resources cannot be managed without appropriate planning and governance systems to ensure that infrastructural and non-infrastructural measures are effective in ensuring sustainable water use and management. Investment in these areas should be given highest priority.

Mobilizing financial resources from all sources for the wide range of water issues and promoting public as well as private investments are of fundamental importance. Targeting financing to areas in greatest need is important. Sustainable and accessible financing strategies including diversified credit and appropriate financial management mechanisms ought to be promoted and implemented by international financial institutions and development partners, with due attention given to the recipient needs and capabilities.

The international donor community can further incorporate water into the broader frameworks of development cooperation and focus assistance on areas and countries that are off-track to achieve the MDGs, focusing on the embedded and often neglected water-related components of all MDGs.

It is essential to improve national level water governance through strengthened laws and regulatory frameworks, political and administrative accountability as well as public participation and transparency, while responding also to public and ethical expectations and concerns.

Women and children are the most adversely affected by the lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Women also are rarely sufficiently involved in the decision making processes, hence gender initiatives should be boosted in water resources management.

Access to safe drinking water and sanitation, which is recognized by some Member States as a human right, is a basic right for everyone and inextricably linked to the enjoyment of many human rights including the right to life, health, development, food, housing, education, physical security and freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment. The international community should promote the realization of this right through national and international efforts.

History shows that cooperation and dialogue, not conflict, is the most common response to the management of transboundary water resources. It is possible for parties with divergent interests to benefit from those resources with specific arrangements tailored to a given basin's characteristics and reflecting a range of political, hydrologic, environmental, economic, social and cultural circumstances. Concrete and tangible steps can be taken for the beneficial use and protection of transboundary water resources through coordinated action by riparian states in conformity with existing agreements and other relevant arrangements as well as sharing benefits and costs. In this regard the HLIC calls to strengthen cooperation through water diplomacy.

Acknowledging that water is a cross-cutting issue, the above-mentioned messages should be communicated also to the decision makers and stakeholders outside the water domain to achieve 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 need to incorporate water as an integral component, including responses to climate change, food and energy challenges and disaster management. Synergies should not be lost due to narrow sectoral approaches.