



Muscat Declaration on Water
adopted by the First Ministerial Forum on Water of the Group of 77
Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 23-25 February 2009

We, the Ministers in charge of water resources of the Member States of the Group of 77, met on the occasion of the first G77 Ministerial Forum on Water held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman from 23 to 25 February 2009 and agreed on the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. The vital importance of water to sustain habitat and species' survival and human existence was recognized. The key importance of water resources and sanitation in achieving progress in all fronts of development in the South was reiterated as well as the fact that improving and promoting easy access to water and sanitation production, irrigation and hydro-energy production will lead to tremendous progress in the eradication of poverty and food insecurity, in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM).
2. Despite the great number of the institutions addressing the issues of water management and projects for access to water, progress in reaching the goals to halve the number of people without access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation is slow and uneven.
3. The main challenges namely the lack of capacity, finance and political will to implement the decisions and other actions recommended by numerous conferences and meetings were stressed. We reiterate that knowledge skills and technologies exist for managing water resources and providing water services for all in support of development.
4. Stress the importance of strengthening the networking of research and development institutions on water as well as data information, equipped by new technology in national and regional information centres on water resources which received unanimous support.
5. There is a need for countries of the South to explore new ways and means among themselves in order to tackle basic needs in terms of water resources. There is also a vital need to be active both in management and development of water resources and infrastructures in order to increase access to and effective use of safe drinking water and food security to developing countries' populations.
6. Encourage developing countries to work together to strengthen strategic partnerships so as to contribute to the sharing of knowledge, innovation and transfer of technology for better access to improved water resources and sanitation. Special efforts must be made to build and sustain scientific capacity

both at the individual and institutional levels; additional resources and partnerships are necessary to bring science based solutions to critical water challenges and social and economic needs and to secure water for developing countries. As part of the follow-up action, a number of steps should be pursued in terms of exchange of scientific and technological know-how among developing countries that could facilitate the sharing of information on science and technology in promoting water resources data, including:

- Knowledge of managing shared water resources;
 - Enhancing capacities of Member States in negotiation skills and providing technical advisory services in the field;
 - Promoting exchange of experiences, best practice and lessons learnt in implementing projects dealing with water resources, sanitation and environment management;
 - Aligning research programme with regional and national priorities and emerging issues;
 - Enhancing hydrologic and meteorological data collection capabilities and developing new data to improve assessments;
 - Supporting research that improves fundamental scientific understanding of water resources management and sanitation;
 - Identifying new sources of funding with capacities to scale up available resources and exchange of expertise;
 - Identifying new approaches for additional funding for capacity-building and infrastructures for water resources, irrigation and sanitation;
 - Providing a searchable interactive database of scientists, centres and services to facilitate and encourage information sharing and cooperation among partners;
 - Promoting innovative technologies to address the negative impacts of water related disasters such as floods, droughts, cyclones, desertification, deterioration of river watersheds and the intrusion of sea water into the non-saline groundwater in coastal areas resulting from the rise of the sea surface caused by climate change and global warming;
7. Stress the need to take necessary actions, using science based programmes to provide clean water and improved sanitation to communities and households, including:

- Improvements in water treatment, reticulation, use and re-use, taking into account, where applicable, traditional methods and knowledge;
 - Integrated water resources management approaches for sustainable use, including protection of groundwater resources, in addition to minimizing impact of pesticides and fertilizer use and industrial pollution;
 - Innovative methods of harvesting, storing and recycling, including innovation to reduce costs of desalination, treatment and recycling of agricultural, industrial and waste water, as well as technologies for new and renewable sources of energy, hydro, solar, and wind were widely welcomed;
 - Effective sanitation processes and effective use of primary, secondary and tertiary education on water and sanitation received overwhelming support.
8. Recognize the importance and tremendous potential that biotechnology and related irrigation hydropower industries offer for poverty eradication, technological progress, industrial development and health improvement.
 9. Stress the importance to respond to public and ethical concerns in the application of some aspects of biotechnology and therefore, public awareness, regulations and legislation on biosafety are of great importance.
 10. Agree to identify a networking of institutions and individuals who have made significant progress in the field of biotechnology, particularly in medical, agricultural, forestry, animal, fisheries, marine and environmental biotechnology.
 11. Stress the importance to create a comprehensive water data and information centre among developing countries.
 12. Encourage the adoption of international conventions to deal with cooperation on transboundary water sharing and conflict resolutions.
 13. Call on the United Nations system to play an important role in the exchange of scientific and technological research in the field of water resources.
 14. Acknowledge the tremendous progress and breakthrough made by some developing countries in vital areas of water management, water supply and sanitation as well as in dams, irrigation, hydro-energy and measures to alleviate the risks of climate change. We emphasize the need to learn from one another and share best practices and experiences among countries of the South.
 15. Welcome the successful experiences registered through South-South cooperation mechanisms in some countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America and the

Caribbean and stressed the need to replicate these performances and achievements in other developing countries.

16. Encourage member countries to work together to strengthen strategic partnerships between countries of the South so as to contribute to the sharing of knowledge, innovation and transfer of technology for better access to safe water and sanitation.
17. Emphasize the importance and the supportive role of the United Nations system, particularly UNDP, FAO, UNESCO, UNIDO, WMO, WHO, UNEP, other United Nations Institutions, the regional Commissions and financial institutions in promoting cooperation in the exchange of scientific and technological know-how in sourcing, efficient management, preservation and sustainable use of water in developing countries. We express our appreciation to the role of other cooperating partners and stress the need to increase the capacity of these institutions to enhance their role in improving access to safe water for basic needs in developing countries.
18. Stress the fact that water is vital to sustain habitat and species' survival and human existence depends on safe and reliable water supply. In this context, we emphasize the key importance of water resources and sanitation in achieving progress in all fronts of development in the South and reiterate the fact that improving and promoting easy access to water and sanitation will lead to tremendous progress in the eradication of poverty and strengthen efficient management, preservation and sustainable use of water in developing countries including the achievement of the following:
 - Adoption of a policy of self-reliance for financing water projects and exert efforts to obtain financing for water projects from lending agencies, capital markets and grants;
 - Construction of dams in developing countries proved its efficiency in alleviating drought and floods impacts. Therefore, capacity-building and financial support are strongly recommended for that purpose;
 - Development and strengthening of human and institutional capacities for effective water management and service delivery and provide technical assistance through expertise to the member countries that need it;
 - Development of irrigation and transfer of low-cost technologies for safe water supply and treatment, in accordance with countries' needs;
 - Acceleration of the provision of technical and financial assistance to member countries in preparing nationally owned integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans according to their needs;

- Enhancement of cooperation among riparian states taking into account their respective interest, through bilateral and multilateral arrangements;
 - Support of more effective water demand and water resource management across all sectors, especially in the agricultural sector for food security and rural development, livelihood, security and poverty eradication;
 - Exchange of experience on the application of good governance, water resources legislations, institutional reforms, transparency, and water ethics;
 - Establishment of, within the Trust Fund for Science and Technology, a mechanism for South-South cooperation in the field of water;
 - Establishment of a G-77 achievement award in the field of water;
 - Sharing of South-South experiences on gender initiatives in water management;
 - Sharing of South-South experiences and knowledge on institutional and legal reforms, harmonization of policy and regulatory frameworks, decentralization and water rights;
 - Promotion of sub-regional, regional and international South-South partnerships including civil society, community groups, the private sector and academia;
 - Enhancement of the dialogue mechanisms on water and sanitation under the UN framework, to encourage developed countries to address the concern of developing countries in meeting the requirements of the MDGs such as transfer of technology and other related issues;
 - Promotion of groundwater sustainability in the developing world regions by using new technologies for artificial recharge;
 - Desalinization is a strategic option for many developing countries and focusing on research in this field is essential to reduce its cost and to enable member countries to expand the use of this technology;
 - Call for enforcing international laws so that water facilities and infrastructures are not targeted during wars and conflicts;
19. Stress the importance of food security, as well as the area under irrigation in developing countries which should be increased, including acceleration and modernization of existing irrigation by South-South sharing of experiences and

knowledge on the basis of low cost, water saving, crop yield increasing and knowledge relating to intensification and diversification and conjunctive use of surface and groundwater.

20. Agree to meet on an annual basis, as deemed necessary, in order to exchange views on strengthening South-South initiatives to improve their endeavors in water in relation to environment, livelihoods and poverty eradication. In this context, we welcome the generous offer by the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the next Ministerial Forum on Water. We convey the outcome of this Forum to the 5th World Water Forum to be held from 15 to 22 March 2009 in Istanbul, Turkey and to call on participants to take into account the conclusions and recommendations of this G-77 Ministerial Forum.
21. Express our sincere appreciation to the Sultanate of Oman for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to all participants. We express also our appreciation for the achievements made by the Sultanate of Oman in the field of water resources development and management.

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