

**HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON
WATER FOR AGRICULTURE AND ENERGY IN AFRICA:
THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE**

Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
15-17 December 2008

3rd Technical Committee Meeting
Wednesday 16 July 2008 – 15:30-16:45 hrs
Room B-503

Draft Meeting Report

List of Participants

Parviz Koohafkan	NRL
Stefano Burchi	LEGN
Keith Wiebe	ESAC
Thomas Muenzel	TCIW
Walter Klemm	TCIE
Moujahed Achouri	FOMC
Olivier Dubois	NRCB
Hubert George	NRLA
Pasquale Steduto	NRLW
Karen Frenken	NRLW
Nicoletta Forlano	NRLW
Jean-Marc Faurès	NRLW
Carlos Garces	IPTRID, NRLW
Dominique Durlin	IPTRID, NRLW
Hervé Levite	IPTRID, NRLW
Maher Salman	IPTRID, NRLW
Claudia Casarotto	NRLW
Sourakata Bangoura	FAOSFC
Ines Beernaerts	FAORAF
Catherine Gaury	NRLW

The Meeting

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), as a chair of the inter-agency mechanism (UN-Water), and in close collaboration with the African Union (AU), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), is organizing an International Conference on "Water for Agriculture and Energy in Africa: the Challenges of Climate Change". The Conference will be held in Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya from 15 to 17 December 2008.

The principal aim of the conference will be to examine the issues of water resources in Africa in the context of higher demand from the agriculture and energy sectors and the challenges of climate change. In particular, the objective of the conference will be to bring water and energy together and analyze how African Countries can benefit from the synergies among the two sectors in terms of investments.

Preliminary meetings have been held in Ethiopia, in order to meet representatives of the African Union and the Economic Commission for Africa, to the African Development Bank and to Libya, once to meet the ministers, the other to visit the conference facilities in Sirte.

The Steering Committee has been established and had its first meeting in Rome on the 5th of June, in occasion of the High Level Conference on World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy. An executive secretariat and a technical committee have also been established and meet regularly on the preparation of the Conference. A Concept Note is available and can be circulated, and the web-site is almost finalized.

The Conference, at the moment, is at ministerial level, and the letter to the ministries of energy, water and agriculture have already been sent. The president of Libya will then invite the Heads of State of African Countries, subject to their view. The focus of the Conference will be on Africa, but there will be the participation of non-African institutions such as the Commission of the European Union.

Concerning the source of financing, the Libyan government committed 1 million dollars and the approval of a TCP for 445,000 dollars has almost been achieved.

Concerning the structure of the Conference, it was clarified that:

- The National Reports at the moment are to be produced by African Countries only, but in case of experiences achieved in other countries but applicable to Africa, the presence of an external National Report could be justified.
- The preparation of the Water Technology Fair should continue.
- The structure based on the five themes agreed upon and presented in the Concept Note is valid.
- The Conference will see the participation of representatives of NGOs and the civil society. Since the participation at the conference can not be massive, pre-conference meetings with the civil society will be organized.

The Conference will be held in a context of a food crisis driven by soaring food prices and will be an opportunity to discuss water control projects within the framework of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). The NEPAD-CAADP initiative was presented at the Sirte Conference in 2004, and with the final declaration the African Countries committed to implement the water related programmes.

The Conference will look at three levels of action:

1. Village level, particularly concentrating on water harvesting, micro-scale irrigation, etc;
2. Rehabilitation of existing irrigation systems and dams;
3. Water transfers at national, regional, and international level. The case of Lake Chad and the water transfers from the Congo River to replenish the basin has been put on the agenda by Libya and the Director General. Feasibility studies have already been undertaken, and one of the aims of the Conference will be to take them into consideration.

The International Conference will work on two levels:

- Discussion level, promoting discussion among the participants and gather their understanding of the situation.
- Resource mobilization level, stressing the need to achieve international commitments for the investments in water for agriculture and energy.

The Director General specifically wants more emphasis to be put on the second aspect of the Conference. And the Commitment made during the June Conference at FAO could be an occasion to divert some of the committed funds towards agricultural projects in Africa. The Director General believes in presenting a portfolio of projects and programmes to redirect the donors' resources. This could be set in line with the plan for the initiative on soaring food prices, which consists of several stages:

1. Immediate action for the next planting season: provide fertilizers and seeds to the farmers who lost their resources.
2. Medium-term action plans concentrating on the construction and rehabilitation of water infrastructures.
4. Storage for the grains in order to conserve production.
5. Possibilities for the agro-industry.

From the Senior Management Meetings held during the last weeks a clear indication was given: seen the short time available for the organization of the Conference, it will be of utmost importance to liaise with TCI, TCA, and ES, particularly concerning the investment plans already in place or proposed by FAO. Specifically, the contribution of ES will be fundamental in virtue of work done for the calculation of the investments needs in agriculture.

The materials for the elaboration of the projects and programmes have already been produced, namely the Bankable Investment Projects Profiles (BIPPs), National Medium-Term Investment Programmes (NMTIPs), National Programmes for Food Security, and other sources. But studies for the compilation, updating and re-packaging of information available at FAO, World Bank, and the specialized international water institutions will be undertaken. Also concerning energy, the resources available at FAO are not satisfactory enough and the strong involvement of the World Bank and the UNDP will be needed.

The task in view of the Conference is to review the BIPPs (amongst other projects) and inputs on how to operationalize this task together with information concerning the BIPPs should be provided by TCI. The suggestion of TCI is to mobilize regional and sub-regional offices in order to collect a sizeable number of projects so to organize national or regional workshops. A list of BIPPs by sector already exists and most of the countries have at least one project that focuses on water resources. Most of the projects have been implemented and some of them are having a follow-up; but in order to achieve better and deeper information concerning the implementation, it would be more useful to contact the National Governments and the FAO representatives who regularly prepare a report aimed at the identification of the priority areas and the resources needed.

It would be possible, thus, to undertake different exercises:

- contact the National Governments in order to achieve information on their pipeline projects and national priority programmes, preparing a format for the project proposal;
- contact the FAO representatives to achieve information on the priority projects under the CAADP;
- contact the Institutions that promote and designed the various projects.

In particular, additional sources of information can be found through NEPAD (regional focal points), the African Union, UN-Water, and the Economic Commission for Africa.

Moreover, there is a need to contact the Islamic Development Bank, the Government of Spain, the African Development Bank and the European Union that are the major donors in the field of water control and may have useful information concerning the on-going projects. A consultant will be hired in order to conduct the stocktaking of the projects undertaken in various African Countries.

The water transfers to Lake Chad will be one of the foci of the conference, object of a round-table and, possibly, of a Case Study – but also other basins such as the Nile River, Okavango, etc., may be of interest for case studies and the proposals should be discussed. Though this can be considered as a

divisive topic, the production of the related documents will be the responsibility of the Lake Chad Basin Commission that already launched a feasibility study on the water transfer project to Lake Chad. Moreover, it would be interesting to look at access to water and at the energy transfers as an alternative to the controversial water transfers.

The issue of energy generation and use will be analyzed under various aspects:

- How to synergize the uses of water for agriculture and power generation? One possible approach would be to identify the existing dams and tackle the areas where there may be the possibility for the implementation of new dams.
- Which kind of energy is needed to develop the agricultural sector (the issue of water lifting)?
- Competition between water and energy particularly regarding the biofuel production. Some work has already been done in occasion of the June High Level Conference. It was also suggested to consider the issue of new land concessions for biofuel production, though the major problem to be faced is the lack of data available.

A specific focus will be, thus, put on hydropower generation and, particularly, on the small hydropower projects, on dam construction and on the conflict between agriculture and hydropower production.

Also the Forestry Department will give a contribution to the Conference, possibly with a Case Study on upstream-downstream use and quality of water. Also a study on the forest hydrology could be of interest for the Conference.

The case of West Africa gives important insights concerning possible Case Studies. The focus is generally posed on surface water, but in the region there is an evident lack of knowledge on groundwater and, particularly in the context of climate change, a plan for the exploitation of the groundwater resources has to be formulated. It is positive to have investment projects, but also a strategy is needed.

One of the first steps to be moved is to look at the proceeding of three Regional Conferences recently held or to be held on the agricultural sector:

1. ICID - Second African Regional Conference on the Contribution of rainfed and irrigated agriculture to poverty alleviation through increased productivity in Africa (6 - 9 November 2007, Glenburn Lodge, Johannesburg, South Africa);
2. FAO - 25th Regional Conference for Africa (Nairobi, Kenya, 16 - 20 June 2008).
3. UNECA- The 3rd Regional Conference on Agricultural Water Management in Eastern & Southern Africa (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia - 5-19th September 2008) with the theme: Investment in Agricultural Water Management Pays.