

## **THE MEDITERRANEAN MESSAGE TO THE 5<sup>TH</sup> WORLD WATER FORUM**

### **THE TUNIS INPUT**

*This message is the Mediterranean input to the 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum. It was elaborated through a multi-stakeholder consultation in the region.*

*The present version presents the outcomes of the Regional Conference on the Mediterranean Session of the 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum held in Tunis, 15 January 2009. The event included 194 participants from different sectors of water management in the region and it is among the key meetings contributing to the regional preparatory process for the Istanbul Forum. This message will be further elaborated in forthcoming regional events, including the 2<sup>nd</sup> Beirut Water Week (4-8 February 2009, Lebanon).*

*The Mediterranean Message, in addition of being an input to the strategic axes of the Ministerial Declaration of the 5th World Water Forum, addresses also the governments and stakeholders of the countries of the Union for the Mediterranean as a contribution for building a shared vision on the future of water in the region.*

The Mediterranean approaches the Forum with renewed political commitment for sustainable water management through the recently adopted Ministerial Declaration at the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Water, 22 December 2008, at the Dead Sea, Jordan. The Ministerial Conference decided to elaborate a new Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean and to implement concrete projects in line with the demand of the populations. It is hoped that the Strategy will enhance cooperation and coordination on water among countries and between stakeholders, enact needed reforms and promote tangible measures.

The following recommendations were produced during interactive sessions involving all the participants. These recommendations would constitute strong basis for the preparation of the Strategy and the identification of concrete projects :

- Prerequisite to sustainable management and allocation of water is peace, international security and justice, respect of human rights safeguarding of public health, eradication of the root causes of conflicts, poverty and social exclusion. Water and the solution of problems related to it should be viewed as an agent and means to enhance cooperation between countries and key stakeholders in approaching sustainable development.
- Improvement of water governance should include appropriate legal and regulatory tools; efficient and capacitated institutional management and enforcement bodies; balance between central and decentralized planning and operational management; development of IWRM in the framework of watershed; meaningful and consensus oriented stakeholder involvement, including Parliamentarians, and reaching also to "out-of-the-box" partners as well as the general public, family and women as end-users. Integration of water policies with other sectoral policies, continuity, coherence, transparency and accountability are cardinal qualities of good water governance. Water governance should be closely linked and supported by relevant projects.
- Increasing litoralization and tourism exacerbate pressures on water resources and infrastructures of coastal areas. The problem should be addressed by further enhancing synergies between IWRM policies with those of ICZM, including the new Mediterranean ICZM Protocol.
- Climate change presents an additional major pressure in the region, which surpasses and aggravates the serious drought problems of the region, requests further elaboration and urgent implementation of mitigation and adaptation measures applying also the prevention and precautionary principles in order to address increasing uncertainties. Adaptation should be central

to all levels and functions of governance, address the water-energy nexus and other complex cross-cutting aspects including the virtual water. Particular emphasis should be given to water efficiency, the use of non conventional water resources and appropriate reservoirs and other necessary multi-annual regulatory infrastructures in order to address the needs of human societies and ecosystems.

- Water demand management is a valid and needed approach for the Mediterranean region. "No regret" solutions should be based on water efficiency measures. In agriculture in particular, industry and the domestic sector, there is room for substantial improvements in water efficiency, which should be encouraged using appropriate tools. The latter should include an efficiency regional target based on sound economic and social analysis. For reallocations between the uses, an integrated approach to demand management is needed tackling the challenges of consumerism and explosive increase of population in parts of the region. In the agricultural sector, the recourse to non conventional water resources in particular properly treated wastewater, should be developed.

- The investment needs of the water sector in the Mediterranean are significant. National resources as well as bilateral and multilateral funding are needed, demonstrating also North-South solidarity in the region. Financing of the sector will require the right mix of resources from all three main sources (taxes, tariffs and transfers) and a persistent effort for sustainable financing strategies. Realistic cost recovery is an indispensable tool for financing water services, in particular water supply and sanitation. Water is a public good and access to minimum quantity of safe water as a human right closely linked to human dignity. Therefore, tariffs should be differentiated reflecting local conditions and affordability considerations, particularly for the less privileged part of the society. Economic, fiscal as well as legal issues related to non-conventional water resources should be addressed in a systematic and forward looking way.

- Safeguarding functioning of natural ecosystems is a key condition for good quality water and the necessary ecological services, ensuring thriving biodiversity. A qualitative regional target should be defined.

- Water is a key component of formal, non-formal and informal Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which should be promoted within and outside the schooling system addressing all ages and groups of end-users, as a tool for setting solid foundations for the needed new *culture of water*. Media need to play a more systematic and constructive role in communication, raising public awareness on water issues.

- Reliable and comparable data and monitoring (also employing appropriate indicators) as well as free flow of information and sharing of data are important for the support of sound policies and solutions of water problems that frequently go beyond the means of one country. There is a need to support sharing of good practices through regional initiatives involving authorities and stakeholders.

- Research in all aspects of water should be supported as a means to achieve the necessary development and address the climate change and other emerging pressures. Cleaner production by making investments in applied research, technological development, full use and rehabilitation of traditional knowledge and techniques, appropriate training, capacity building and transfer of appropriate technology should be enhanced.

- International agreements for management of transboundary water bodies including aquifers should be promoted and relevant international Conventions (e.g. UN Watercourses Convention) and other treaties should be ratified since they provide a useful framework for "hydro-diplomacy".