



# ***Water Governance in the Mediterranean***

Presentation of the draft Theme Paper  
prepared for the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Water

**by Greece, Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority  
with the contribution of the MED EUWI Secretariat**

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# Why a Theme Paper on Water Governance for the Ministerial ?



## ***Because, Water Crisis is primarily a Crisis of Governance***

With water crises recognized worldwide and in the Mediterranean primarily as a crisis of governance, effective water governance in an IWRM context, is a critically important prerequisite for meeting current and future water challenges at regional, national and local levels

## **The Theme Paper on Water Governance aims**

- to give an overview of main issues, challenges & current approaches
- to provide a basis for discussion
- to fuel reflection on the way forward
- to be a contribution on the subject for a future Strategy on Water in the Mediterranean



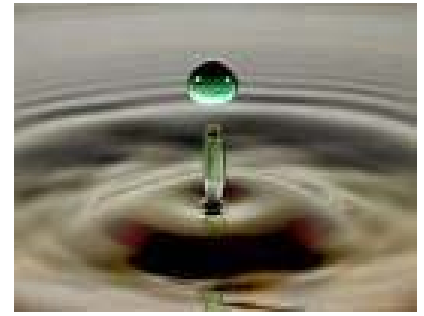
## The Mediterranean : a water snapshot



- Water Supply Unequally Distributed in Space and Time
  - 7% = 28 mil persons below 500 m<sup>3</sup>/year/capita
  - 29% = 115 mil persons below 1000 m<sup>3</sup>/year/capita
- 90% of the total region's GNP is from 5 countries in the North
- The population has doubled in 40 years (440 mil today)
- Exploitation indexes have reached in several areas over 100%
  - Agriculture consumes 70-80 %
  - Serious water pollution of surface and groundwater
- A region with great water challenges, established national water agendas, North-South regional initiatives and a diversity of water partners



## Several achievements but still many challenges ahead



### Achievements on and action for

- providing water & sanitation,
- enhancing irrigation, water efficiency,
- controlling conveyance losses,
- promoting participatory water management,
- protecting & improving water quality
- promoting drought management and climate variability strategies,
- groundwater management policies,
- wastewater reuse plans, *etc...*

### Challenges, in many countries, include:

- lack of effective operational strategies,
- fragmentation of responsibilities between authorities,
- weak policy implementation and law enforcement,
- weak monitoring and assessment at the national and local level;
- limited technical, management and implementation capabilities to address water challenges,
- financial constraints to implement policies

**Improving water governance  
is a defined priority in all countries !**

## Defining Water Governance



**Water Governance refers to** the range of political, social, economic, and administrative systems that are in place to develop and manage water resources and the delivery of water services at different levels of society. It comprises the mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which all involved stakeholders, including citizens and interest groups, articulate their priorities, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences.

### **Water governance has four main inter-related and poverty-centred dimensions**

The ***social dimension*** points to equitable use of water resources.

The ***environmental sustainability dimension*** shows that improved governance allows for enhanced sustainable use of water resources & ecosystem integrity.

The ***economic dimension*** draws attention to the efficient use of water resources & the role of water in overall economic growth.

The ***political empowerment dimension*** points at granting water stakeholders and citizens equal democratic opportunities to influence and monitor political processes and outcomes.



## **Water governance in the Mediterranean: one region, different regimes, same challenges**



# Water governance in the Mediterranean: one region, different regimes, same challenges

## Despite country variations, most water reforms include:

- promoting IWRM principles including watershed management approaches,
- clarifying institutional roles and responsibilities,
- decentralizing water decision making,
- increasing stakeholder participation,
- promoting financing innovations

## The draft Theme Paper provides a brief overview on:

- national institutional settings ,
- legislation and regulation,
- management approaches,
- progress in IWRM planning,
- stakeholder participation,
- public private partnerships,
- special conditions

**In the IWRM context,  
there is no 'one-solution-for all',  
but a lot to learn from each other !**





# Main issue with respect to water governance in the Mediterranean

## ***1. Policies are developed, but they face considerable obstacles in their implementation while monitoring tools are missing***

- More is needed on social equity and poverty alleviation
- IWRM Planning is progressing
- Concepts change too fast
- Implementation is slow
- Financing is not enough
- Monitoring is poor

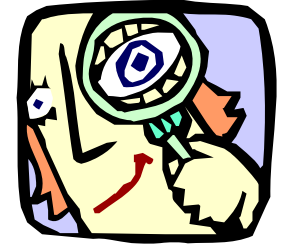
## ***2. Overlapping and multiplicity of water institutions continue***

- Responsibilities on water planning and legislation have been consolidating
- Responsibilities of the wider water sector still overlap





# Main issue with respect to water governance in the Mediterranean



## ***3. Legislation and regulation have to be strengthened and enforced***

- More is needed on environmental standards, polluter pays principle, pollution fines, incentives for good practices
- More is needed on water rights regulation on water allocation, permits
- Lack of inspection mechanisms
- Poor state monitoring capabilities
- Limited enforcement capacity

## ***4. Water demand management needs even more effort***

- Considerable shift in policies towards WDM, including non-conventional water resources
- Still a lot to do to achieve water efficiency

## ***5. Establishing and maintaining good water governance is expensive and, at the same time, cheap***

- Investment on governance pays back !
- Domestic and international funding is necessary
- Socially sensible economic instruments are important tools but more political will is needed
- Involvement of the private sector remains limited and without adequate incentives

## ***6. Corruption remains one of the least addressed challenges in relation to water***

# Main issue with respect to water governance in the Mediterranean



## **7. Capacity building, training and development of skills needs to meet current and prepare for coping with future challenges**

- More, better targeted and structured CB is needed
- Focus more on institutions responsible for IWRM plans, laws and monitoring
- More professions need to be involved
- Limited CB at local level

## **8. More and reliable data and exchange of information**

- Lack of data coordination and integration
- Need for harmonization and continuity
- More access to existing data and info

## **9. Operational linkages between research & management remains poor**

### **10. Awareness**

#### **and then more awareness !**

- NGOs and media are important actors
- Low in rural areas
- A more strategic approach is needed

### **11. Stakeholder participation is a prerequisite**

- Lack of institutional format, continuity and replicability
- Low at local level
- Not all governmental authorities
- Parliamentarians are a 'new' actor

# Main issue with respect to water governance in the Mediterranean

## **12. Education is about investing to our future**

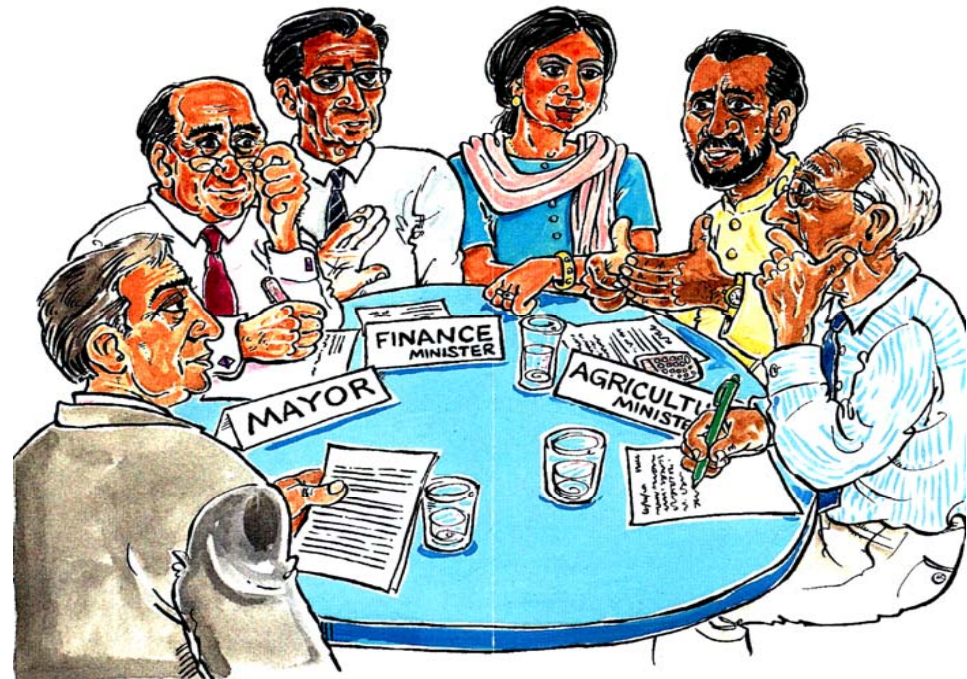
- More formal and informal education
- Need for political commitment to this long-term objective
- Need for appropriate education material and organised networks of educators

## **13. More attention to gender issues**

- Limited involvement of women
- Better definition and objectives needed

## **14. Water governance has to effectively tackle 'new' challenges**

- Management of shared water resources
- Climate change adaptation



## Some further considerations for achieving good water governance



- Water is not an isolated sector but a part of a wider economic system. Changes in the wider system have great impact on the water sector. Non-water decision makers and experts have to be involved.
  - Gradual change generates more sustainable results.
- Starting from specific water problems have more chances for success.
  - Political and technical champions should introduce and drive the new water paradigm.
- Compromises that take into account realities and tradeoffs including second best solutions, have been the norm rather than the exception.
  - Improving accountability of governments and water services should be among key objectives of water governance reform.
- Multilateral and bilateral donors as well as regional organisations assist countries' efforts – there is need for more coordination, complementarity and replicability.



## Conclusion – a recommendation to the Ministerial

Countries in the region **gradually respond** to MDGs and WSSD targets.

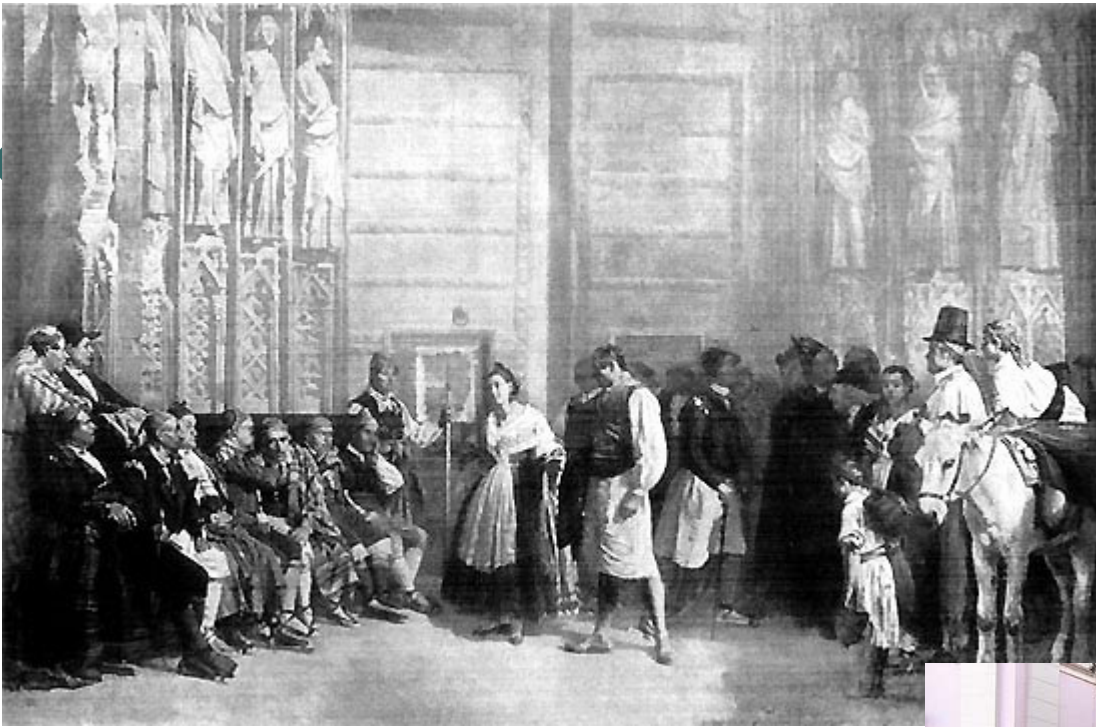
The **national water strategies and IWRM plans** must describe the updated national framework of improved water governance.

**To be implemented**, the plans have to be supported by :

- competent and capacitated institutions,
- legal and regulatory tools,
- monitoring and evaluation systems,
- sustainable financing strategies
- adequate funding.

**Actions** should respond to **real needs** and be more **coordinated**, **coherent** and **output oriented**. Plans have to be developed or finalized in all countries through **participatory processes**. **Local / watershed plans** have to gradually be elaborated in a similar manner.





*The Valencia Water Tribunal:  
then and today*

*Please provide your  
written comments  
to the draft Theme Paper  
on Water Governance to:*

*MED EUWI Secretariat  
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