

Activities Taken to Implement the Water and Sanitation Road Map

The advances made in establishing policies for the management of water resources have been very irregular since the early 20th century, and there has been much debate among the different sectors that depend on water and which find themselves in competition for it. Some progress has been made in bringing positions closer together, oriented or brought into prominence by needs and priorities concerning the universal right to drinking water and sanitation (International Pact on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (PDESC), 2002), concerning the need for a minimum level of water flow to ensure ecologic balance, and concerning the need to establish a framework of general policies on water taking into account relevant sectors and policies, such as agriculture, gender, the environment, industry and commerce.

Access to water and adequate sanitation must be equitable, and be accompanied by the sustainable exploitation of water resources, this resource being a fundamental aspect in the fight against poverty. Although water is a scarce resource in some areas or at certain times, the problem is not so much one of scarcity as the economic and environmental unsustainability of particular patterns of consumption, as well as the lack of control in this respect.

The **goals of the Road Map** on water and sanitation are, first of all, to promote the optimal use of water by awareness and education programmes at all levels of society, institutions and business, to favour the creation of a culture for water, to respect, protect and efficiently manage water resources; to ensure the sustained use of water resources and the implementation of sanitation programmes and finally; to seek funding and co-funding mechanisms for follow-up activities so that goal 7 of the Millennium Development Goals could be met; to compile a document of good practices, promoted by the Friends of the Helsinki Process in their respective countries and in the partner countries concerning water and sanitation systems.

As stated within the Helsinki Process round tables and different meetings, we must work on the understanding that there is no unique, universal solution, and that it is necessary to take into consideration the historical, cultural, economic, social and geographic aspects of water use. Divergent views are also to be found among societies and international cooperation agencies on universal, free access to water supply and sanitation, and on the pressures from business and financial concerns to set a price to the marginal cost of water, on the pretext of trade liberalisation. Therefore, water requires a multisectoral approach to be adopted with respect to the multiple problems and conditioning factors related to this issue.

According to the goals mentioned above, different actions have been implemented by the Spanish government in order to achieve them.

In order to promote the optimal use of water by awareness and education programmes at all levels of society, institutions and business, to favour the creation of a culture for water, to respect, protect and efficiently manage water resources, Spain held The Second Preparatory Conference

for the 15th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum that was celebrated on 12-13 March 2007 in Zaragoza. The Conference was organised by the Spanish Chairmanship of the OSCE, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Miguel Angel Moratinos and the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA).

The main focus of the Conference was “Key challenges to ensure environmental security and sustainable development in the OSCE area: Water Management”. The Zaragoza Conference emphasized the importance water cooperation has for economic development and for security. Water cooperation is a highly political issue and for that reason it has a high profile on the OSCE agenda. In Zaragoza participants were updated on various OSCE activities and initiatives in this field and also heard about various other examples of co- operation in managing water resources.

EXPO ZARAGOZA 2008 (14th June- 14th September): Spain, Aragón and Zaragoza will serve as an international platform for the dissemination of information and perspectives regarding the relationship between man and water and sustainable development. **Expo- Zaragoza 2008** will be a reference point for urgent co-operative action in regions that need drinking water and in the eradication of diseases related to unsafe drinking water. The research, technology and economic dimension will also be covered here, since sustainable development and institutional complexity do not make sustainable management more expensive, but rather turn it into an engine driving value-added activities and savings in terms of corrective environmental measures cushioning the effects of climate change. Within this context we should be talking not about stand-alone remedies, but integrated solutions.

The **EXPO ZARAGOZA 2008** will focus on three major themes: the environment, international cooperation, and techno-economic issues and will also promote a forum for debate and discussion on different alternatives for achieving sustainable development as regards water. In both of these aspects, and given that Spain is the host country, Spanish development cooperation is expected to play an important role.

The Water Tribune, the intellectual vehicle for Expo Zaragoza 2008 will stimulate reflection, debate and a search for solutions in relation to water and sustainability and will compile and synthesize universal knowledge in order to contribute to the reorientation and improvement of the current models and systems in place regarding water and sustainable development for the 21st century, from the perspective of innovation.

The Legacy of Zaragoza appears on the horizon of Expo 2008 as something tangible to be brought to the future. The range of solutions to the most compelling issues of water and sustainable development will ensue from an intense process of debate, conciliation, summary, organisation, edition, publication and diffusion which will be presented to society in the form of a document of synthesis: the Zaragoza Charter.

The Zaragoza Charter, the backbone of this legacy, will summarise the conclusions reached by over 2000 experts from all fields of knowledge, who will give more than 200 lectures. To this must be added the public and private contributions made by individuals and groups coming from a rich and plural

collection of ideas and solutions which will be studied and evaluated by a Scientific Committee composed of the most important international experts on the subject of water resources.

This document will open up a door into the future from the present and will contribute to determining the parameters of a new state of the issues regarding water and sustainable development. The Zaragoza Charter breaks away from a vision from the past which is only based on diagnosis and aims to be a guiding light for contemporary and future initiatives regarding water and sustainability.

With regard to the second goal: ***“to ensure the sustained use of water resources and the implementation of sanitation programmes”*** the Spanish Cooperation has developed a programme so called **“ Araucaria XXI”** to ensure environmental sustainability in Latin America, which includes two lines of action regarding water: Integrated management of the water cycle and the Access to safe drinking water and sanitation, within the Brown Area. The goal of the actions proposed along these lines is to improve the coverage of sustainable access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation in rural and urban areas of Latin America.

Following the same line and in order to coordinate all Spanish development cooperation actors working on sustainable development, environmental protection, and conservation of natural resources in the Mediterranean **WATER AND THE AZAHAR PROGRAMME** which promotes actions in the support for the application of water-saving systems and/or those which make it possible to best take advantage of existing resources—including the use of desalination techniques, high-yield irrigation technologies, and the reuse of purified residual and industrial water, the Promotion of improvements for implementation and management systems involving the production, supply, and distribution of drinking water, and the development of sanitation networks; support for improvement in the quality of water destined for consumption and the Promotion and implementation of techniques that foment re-supplying aquifers.

As stated in **goal 3, in order to seek funding and co-funding mechanisms for follow-up activities so that goal 7 of the Millennium Development Goals could be met**, many efforts have been made by the Spanish Government.

At the 17th Latin- American-American Summit, held in November 2007 in Montevideo, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, the President of the Spanish Government, announced the creation of the International Fund for Water and Sanitation. Over the next four years, Spain will contribute 1.5 billion dollars to the Cooperation Fund for Water and Sanitation, which is intended to promote and reinforce actions taken in managing the water sector, with an all-inclusive outlook on water as a resource, and participative public-sector management, guaranteeing access to water as a fundamental human right. The basic principles of the Fund mainly involve issues of social cohesion and the sustainability of ecosystems.

To date, initiatives for using programmed aid in the subsector of water supply for rural areas came out of the European Commission, until now the only donor

that has used this new type of aid in this country. Taking into account the good results obtained hitherto through this European Commission aid, Spanish Cooperation has decided to commit to supporting the Government of Namibia through an operation of budgetary support in this subsector.

The UNDP-Spain MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F) Thematic Window for Environment and Climate Change seeks to reduce poverty and vulnerability in eligible countries by supporting interventions that improve environmental management and service delivery at the national and local level, increase access to new financing mechanisms and enhance capacity to adapt to climate change.

To conclude, the Directorate-General Planning and Evaluation of Development Policy has published the **sectoral Strategy on Environment**, in which water and sanitation is a sectoral priority within the basic social needs according to the Master Plan of the Spanish Cooperation 2005-2008. Access to water is a human right as recognized by the UN as one of the economic, social and cultural rights. Water and sanitation are strategic lines and their goal is to guarantee the sustainable use of water resources and the implementation of the sanitation actions with an equitable and suitable distribution of the water among the different users by means of an intersectoral coordination and the basic social needs of the population.