



ECA/RCID/001/99

**UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

---

**REPORT ON ACTIVITIES IN WATER SECTOR IN AFRICA**

**Presented at  
The Fifth Joint UNESCO/WMO International Conference  
on Hydrology and Water Resources  
Geneva, Switzerland  
8-12 February 1999**

**(Provisional Agenda Item No. 8)**

by

**Azm Fazlul Hoque  
Senior Economic Affairs Officer and  
Team Leader for Water Resources  
Regional Cooperation and Integration Division**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**



5381  
ECA/RCID/001/99

**UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

---

**REPORT ON ACTIVITIES IN WATER SECTOR IN AFRICA**

**Presented at  
The Fifth Joint UNESCO/WMO International Conference  
on Hydrology and Water Resources  
Geneva, Switzerland  
8-12 February 1999**

**(Provisional Agenda Item No. 8)**

by

**Azm Fazlul Hoque  
Senior Economic Affairs Officer and  
Team Leader for Water Resources  
Regional Cooperation and Integration Division**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	<u>Paragraphs</u>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Scope of Water Activities</b>	<b>2-3</b>
<b>Recent Activities:</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Promotion of Intercountry Cooperation:</b>	
- The Nile River Basin and the UNDUGU Group	4
- The Zambezi River Basin	5
- The Lake Chad and the Lake Victoria Basin	6
<b>Promotion of Interagency Cooperation</b>	<b>7-9</b>
<b>Transboundary Water Resources Development in Africa</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Implementation of Agenda 21</b>	<b>11-12</b>
<b>Other Water Resources Activities</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Future Planned Activities</b>	<b>14-20</b>
<b><u>Annex I</u></b>	
<b>Presentation notes (Copies of overhead slides)</b>	<b>Pages 7-25</b>

## REPORT ON ACTIVITIES IN WATER SECTOR IN AFRICA

Presented at  
**The Fifth Joint UNESCO/WMO International Conference  
 on Hydrology and Water Resources**  
**Geneva, Switzerland**  
**8-12 February 1999**

### Introduction

1. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is the United Nations' (UN) regional arm for Africa. One of five such global institutions known as the UN regional commissions. ECA was established in 1958 by the UN General Assembly which also approved ECA's mandates. ECA has a multi-disciplinary work programme approved by the UN General Assembly. ECA's work programme addresses a wide range of economic and social issues concerning Africa. These are, inter alia, economic and social development, women and development, development management and public administration, development information management, agriculture and food security, environment, human settlement, science and technology, trade and finance, regional cooperation and integration, transport and communication, mineral and energy resources, water resources etc. to name a few.

### Scope of ECA Water Activities

2. ECA has a broad and longstanding mandate both from the UN General Assembly and from its African member states (through its annual conferences of ministers) to promote water resources development and management in Africa; to promote interagency and intercountry cooperation; and to assist African member states in such activities. Within the framework of this mandate, ECA has been carrying out a wide range of activities including research and preparation of reports, studies, surveys, organizing expert group, ministerial and other meetings, seminars, workshops and study tours. ECA also provides advisory, technical and back stopping services to its member states and their intergovernmental organizations as and when requested by them. One of the major activities of ECA in water sector in Africa is the promotion of interagency/intercountry cooperation for development and management of transboundary water resources in Africa. ECA's contribution in this particular sector has been significant over the years. For example, ECA has been instrumental in establishing at least seven transboundary river/lake basin organizations in Africa and has been providing technical, advisory and backstopping services to

them as and when needed. ECA has also been providing forums (fora) to member states and other stakeholders for discussion and dialogue for establishing mechanisms for cooperation among riparian member states in the river/lake basins where such mechanisms presently do not exist. ECA promotes interagency cooperation among UN and other IGOs and NGOs and tries to coordinate their activities and where possible, implement inter-agency joint activities in water sector in Africa.

3. In the following pages, a brief account of ECA 's major activities in water sector in Africa in the recent past will be provided. Also, a cursory review of ECA's planned activities in this sector for the years from 1999 to 2001 will be made.

## **Recent Activities**

### **Promotion of Intercountry Cooperation:**

#### **The Nile River Basin and the UNDUGU Group**

4. Since early 1980s, ECA has been acting as the secretariat of the UNDUGU Group - an informal grouping of the Nile riparian countries for promotion of intercountry cooperation for integrated development of the Nile river basin. As secretariat of the Group, ECA organised a number of expert group and ministerial meetings; organized, coordinated and participated in interagency joint fact-finding missions; prepared reports, studies and framework for a masterplan for natural resources development in the Nile basin. In 1993, ECA assisted the Nile basin countries to agree on and sign (at the technical expert level) a memorandum of understanding for cooperation for integrated development of the basin. In 1995, ECA prepared a comprehensive study on "problems and prospects for intercountry cooperation for integrated water resources development in the Nile river basin." This study was widely disseminated among the Nile basin countries and other stakeholders who appreciated the study and commended ECA for its preparation. In 1997, ECA assisted the Government of Ethiopia in organizing the 5<sup>th</sup> of the Nile 2002 series of meetings in Addis Ababa. An ECA representative served as a member of the External Advisory Board to the organizing committee for this meeting. ECA also helped mobilize resources for this meeting, provided logistics, helped service the meeting and provided substantive inputs.

### The Zambezi River Basin

5. In 1997, ECA coordinated, organized and participated in a joint interagency fact-finding mission to selected Zambezi river basin countries. Based on information and data collected during the mission, ECA prepared a comprehensive study on "intercountry cooperation for integrated development of water resources of the Zambezi river basin." This was ECA's contribution to the implementation of the provisions of the UN System-wide Special Initiative on Africa (UNSI) and was in compliance with the decisions of the Water Working Group of UNSIA, and the Interagency Group for Water in Africa (IGWA).

### Lake Chad and Lake Victoria Basin

6. In recent years, ECA has been providing technical assistance to the Lake Chad Basin Commission for integrated development of natural resources in the basin particularly in restoring the diminishing water surface and water volume of the Lake. ECA is currently assisting the countries in the Lake Victoria basin in their attempt to establish a cooperation mechanism for addressing the various natural and man-made problems facing these countries and for developing natural resources, fisheries and navigation in the lake and its catchment areas.

### Interagency Cooperation:

7. In the area of interagency cooperation, ECA has been collaborating with such concerned UN agencies as UNDP, WMO, WHO, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNEP, FAO, IAEA, UNCHS The World Bank and others. ECA actively participates in the works of the UN-ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources; the Steering Committee on Water Supply and Sanitation; the Collaborative Council on Water Supply and Sanitation, and others. ECA serves as the co-chairman, with UNDP, of the UN System-wide Special Initiative on Africa and as a member of the Water Working Group of the Special Initiative.

8. In the area of interagency joint activities, ECA collaborated with the UNDP in Organizing joint fact finding missions in the Nile basin; coorganized with WMO in 1995, a regional conference on Water Resources Policy and Assessment in Africa; collaborated with the IAEA in groundwater assessment in Africa, and in 1997 organized, coordinated and participated in a joint (ECA-UNEP) fact-finding mission to selected Zambezi river basin countries.

9. In early 1990s, ECA took initiative and played a lead role, at the request of the UNACC Subcommittee on Water Resources, to convene an organizational meeting of all concerned UN agencies, for establishing an African counterpart of the Subcommittee. This meeting held in July 1992 at the ECA headquarters, established an Interagency Group for Water in Africa (IGWA). ECA was designated and has been acting as the secretariat of IGWA since then. In addition to providing secretariat services to the Group, ECA prepares technical papers on topical subjects for presentation to the Group and convenes, organizes and services the Group's annual meetings and carries out necessary follow-up activities.

**Transboundary Water Development in Africa:**

10. In 1996, ECA prepared a study on "Integrated management of transboundary freshwater resources in Africa: problems and prospects" which was presented at the fifth annual meeting of IGWA (Alexandria/Egypt). In 1997, the ECA-Sub-Regional Development Centre - East Africa prepared a survey on development of river and lake transport in the East African Subregion - (a step forward towards - establishment of the Victoria Lake Authority)". In 1998, ECA prepared a report on "Existing transboundary river/lake basin organizations in Africa - a background overview and assessment". ECA is currently assisting the Zambezi river and the Lake Chad basin countries in developing the water resources of these two basins.

**Implementation of Agenda 21**

11. As a follow-up to the 1992 Rio Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the ECA Conference of African Ministers for Planning, Economic and Social Development adopted in 1993, resolution 744(XXVIII) outlining strategies for implementation of Agenda 21 in African countries. These strategies identified seven priority areas including one on ensuring efficient use and equitable sharing of water resources. Since then, the African countries have carried out implementation of these strategies in accordance with their respective national priorities.

12. In order to monitor the progress of implementation of Agenda 21 by the African countries, ECA in 1998 circulated a survey questionnaire and prepared a report based on responses from twenty (20) African countries. Of these 20 countries, seventeen (17) accorded highest degree of importance and priority to the issues of freshwater scarcity and water pollution, including marine and coastal area degradation. Most countries reported lack of resources and technical capacities and capabilities as major constraints in implementing the provisions of Agenda 21.

**Other water resources activities:**

13. In late 1980s and early 1990s, ECA prepared and published a number of technical studies on such topical subjects as: Large-scale water transfer in Africa - selected case studies; Economic aspects of rural water and sanitation development in Africa; Problems and Prospects of Large Scale Irrigation in Africa; Problems and prospects of Small-scale Irrigation in Africa; Directory of water resources specialists in Africa; In 1996, ECA organized an expert group meeting on the role of private sector in development and management of natural resources including water resources in Africa. In 1998, ECA prepared studies on "Experiences in Integrated Water Resources Management: Issues and Options - The cases of Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Tchad and Lesotho. Also in 1998, ECA coorganized a workshop on wetland management. From 1988 to 1996 ECA prepared and published an annual bulletin on water resources activities in Africa. In addition to these activities, ECA routinely provided technical, advisory and backstopping services to the African member states and their IGOs, RECs and RBOs as and when requested to do so.

**Future Planned Activities:**

14. In 1999 and beyond, ECA will concentrate on implementing the recommendations and the follow-up activities of some of its recent reports and studies. To this effect, ECA plans to organize in May 1999, a meeting of senior water resources officials from the Zambezi river basin countries to be held at the ECA headquarters at Addis Ababa. All concerned UN agencies and the intergovernmental organizations and other stakeholders will be invited to actively participate at the meeting. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss ways and means for enhancing intercountry/interagency cooperation for accelerating the process of integrated water resources development in the Zambezi river basin. The meeting will make a comprehensive review of recent and on-going water development efforts in the basin within the context of the Zambezi Action Plan (ZACPLAN), which is currently being implemented by the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). The meeting is expected to come up with concrete measures for accelerating the water development process in the Zambezi river basin.

15. Also in May 1999, ECA plans to convene and organize a meeting of Chief Executives of existing river/lake basin organizations in Africa. The objective of the meeting will be to revitalize and strengthen these organizations to enable them to carry out their mandates. Again, all concerned UN agencies, IGOs and other stakeholders will be invited to this meeting as well.



16. Sometime in the later part of 1999, the ECA-Subregional Development Centre for East Africa plans to organize a seminar on water hyacinth problem in the Victoria Lake basin. Since the water hyacinth problem prevails in many parts of Africa, indeed in many parts of the world, and the problem has devastating effects on environment, fisheries and other aquatic life, navigation and other socio-economic aspects of life for the people living in the effected areas, the seminar and its proceedings will be useful to the people of the subregion as well as to the international community at large. All interested parties are therefore welcome to participate at this seminar.

17. The ECA Subregional Development Center for North Africa is planning to organize a subregional seminar on irrigation to be hosted by Egypt. The Government of Egypt kindly offered to absorb all local expenses while ECA is trying to mobilize resources to cover international expenses. The seminar will cover policy analysis, strategies, practices and technologies being utilized to promote appropriate irrigation practices in the North African subregion.

18. In the area of promoting interagency cooperation, ECA will continue to provide secretariat services to the Interagency Group for Water in Africa (IGWA) and will convene, organize and service its annual meetings in the years to come. It is expected that the seventh annual meeting of the Group will be held sometime towards the end of 1999 to be hosted either by WMO in Geneva or by FAO in Accra, Ghana. All IGWA member agencies including the concerned UN agencies are expected to attend the meeting.

19. Additionally, ECA will participate in all relevant activities by other international development agencies to the extent permissible by the resources available to the secretariat. ECA will continue to provide advisory, technical and backstopping services to its African member states and their IGOs as and when requested to do so.

20. For the biennium 2000 and 2001, ECA will carry out follow-up activities of the meetings it plans to organize in 1999 and carry out other routine activities as noted above. Additionally, ECA plans to concentrate on the Lake Chad basin to assist in the restoration of the diminishing water surface and water volume of the basin. ECA will also concentrate on assisting the Nile basin, the Zambezi river basin and the Victoria lake basin countries in establishing mechanisms for intercountry cooperation for integrated water resources development in these basins.

**ANNEX I****PRESENTATION NOTES****Slide 1**

**Fifth UNESCO/WMO Joint International Conference  
on Hydrology and Water Resources  
Geneva, Switzerland, 8-12 February 1999**

**Water Sector Activities of the  
Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)**

**Presented by**

**AZM FAZLUL HOQUE**

**Senior Economic Affairs Officer and  
Team Leader for Water Resources**

**ECA**

- United Nations Regional Commission for Africa
- One of five such global institutions in different regions of the world
- ECA was established by the UN General Assembly in 1958 - celebrated its 40th anniversary last year
- Mandates given by the General Assembly
- Medium-term plans and biennial programme of work also approved by the GA

## **Slide 2**

### **ECA Mandates and Programme of Work**

- Multidisciplinary including, inter alia
- Agriculture and Food Security
- Industry
- Human Settlement
- Economic and Social Affairs
- Gender Issues and Women Affairs
- Development Management
- Information Management
- Science and Technology
- Environment
- Regional Cooperation and Integration
- Transport and Communication
- Natural Resources Development including  
Water, Mineral and Energy Resources

## **Slide 3**

### **Scope of ECA activities in Water Sector**

- Promotion of intercountry cooperation at the subregional and regional levels
- Promotion of interagency cooperation in Africa
- Assisting African member States in:
  - capacity building
  - institutional development
  - integrated development of transboundary river and lake basins
  - sustainable development aspects of water resources

## **Slide 4**

- Providing technical assistance and advisory services
- Carrying out research, survey, data collection
- Prepare reports, studies
- Disseminate information
- Organize meetings to provide fora for dialogue, negotiation, consultation and conflict resolution

## **Slide 5**

### **Recent ECA Activities in Water Sector:**

#### **● Intercountry Cooperation**

- ECA was instrumental and provided support in establishing seven transboundary river/lake basin organizations in Africa
- Currently promoting negotiations for establishing cooperation mechanisms in a number of basins such as the Zambezi River, the Nile River and the Lake Victoria Basins

## Slide 6

### - The Nile Basin

- . For over 10 years, ECA has been providing secretariat services to the **UNDUGU Group** - an informal grouping of the Nile basin countries
- . Organized a number of technical and ministerial meetings
- . Prepared framework for a master plan for natural resources development in the basin
- . Prepared a MOU which was approved by technical experts from the Nile countries

## **Slide 7**

**Also:**

**Carried out fact finding missions with UNDP**

**In 1995 prepared a study on problems and prospects for intercountry cooperation in the Nile basin**

**Assisted in organizing the 5th of the Nile 2002 series of meetings in 1997 in Addis Ababa**



## **Slide 8**

### **- The Zambezi River Basin**

- Organized, coordinated and participated in joint interagency (ECA/UNEP) fact-finding missions to selected Zambezi Basin countries (1997)
- Prepared a study on intercountry cooperation for integrated development of water resources in the basin

### **- Lake Chad Basin**

- Technical assistance and advisory services to LCBC  
(ECA regional advisor on water resources will be visiting LCBC next week)

## **Slide 9**

### **- Lake Victoria Basin**

- Technical assistance and institutional and other substantive support to Community of East Africa Cooperation

## **Slide 10**

### ● **Interagency Cooperation**

- Collaborated with UNDP, WB, WMO, WHO, UNEP, UNICEF, IAEA
- Participated in the activities of UNACC Subcommittee on Water Resources; Steering Committee on Water and Sanitation, Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council; UN Special Initiative on Africa and its Working Group on Water and with other IGOs and NGOs
- Co-organized with WMO in 1995 an International Conference on Water Resources Assessment and Policies in Africa

## Slide 11

- Fact-finding missions with UNDP to selected Nile basin countries and with UNEP to Zambezi basin countries
- Collaborated with IAEA in groundwater assessment in selected countries in Africa
- Initiated (1992) establishment of an Interagency Group for Water in Africa (IGWA) and has been providing secretariat services to the Group since then
- Prepared reports and studies for the Group
- Convened, organized and serviced the annual meetings of IGWA

## Slide 12

### ● Transboundary Water Resources Development

- Prepared study on integrated management of transboundary freshwater resources in Africa (1996)
- Prepared a survey on river/lake transport in the East African Region - a step forward to establishing Lake Victoria Authority (1997)
- Prepared report on existing river/lake basin organizations in Africa - an overview and assessment (1998)

## Slide 13

### ● Implementation of Agenda 21

- ECA Conference of Ministers adopted in 1993 a resolution outlining strategies for implementing Agenda 21
- Identified seven priority areas including one on ensuring efficient use and equitable sharing of water resources
- ECA prepared in 1998 a survey report on progress by African countries in the implementation of Agenda 21. Seventeen out of 20 countries responding to ECA survey accorded high priority to water issues in their national effort to implement Agenda 21.

## **Slide 14**

Most countries reported in adequate technical manpower and financial resources as some of the major constraints in the implementation of Agenda 21

### ● **Other Past Activities in Water Sector by ECA**

- Prepared technical reports/studies on such topics as:
  - Large-scale water transfer in Africa
  - Economic aspects of rural water supply and sanitation in Africa
  - Large scale irrigation in Africa
  - Small scale irrigation in Africa

## **Slide 15**

- Directory of water resources specialists in Africa
- Expert meeting on role of private sectors in developing natural resources including water resources in Africa (1996)
- Prepared studies on experiences in integrated water resources development and management: issues and options: The cases of Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Lesotho and Tchad (1998)



**Slide 16**

21.01.99

- Co-organized with the Wetland International (NGO) a workshop on integrated development of water resources in 1998 in Dakar
- Published an annual information bulletin on water resources activities
- Provided technical assistance and advisory services to member states and their IGOs and RBOs

## Slide 17

### ● Future Planned Activities

- ECA will concentrate on the follow-up of various studies prepared, and meetings organized by the Secretariat in 1998 and earlier

In 1999, Specifically:

- ECA will organize a meeting of Chief Executives of Existing Transboundary River/Lake Basin Organizations in Africa (May 1999)
- Also in May, ECA will organize a meeting of Senior Water Resources Officials from the Zambezi river basin countries

## Slide 18

- Later in 1999, ECA-SRDC/EA will organize a regional seminar on water hyacinth problem in Lake Victoria and in the riparian countries
- Also later in 1999, ECA-SRDC-NA will organize a subregional seminar on irrigation practices in the subregion. Egypt agreed to host the seminar
- ECA will continue to provide secretariat services to IGWA and will organize its 7th annual meeting in October/November 1999 to be hosted either by WMO in Geneva or by FAO in Accra/Ghana

## **Slide 19**

- - Will continue to provide technical assistance and advisory services to the African member States and their IGOs as and when requested
- - Will assist LCBC in addressing the problem of the Lake Chad water surface and water volume shrinkage
- - Will assist the Nile, the Zambezi and the Lake Victoria basin countries in establishing intercountry cooperation mechanisms
- 
-

1917

1918

1919

1920

1921

1922

1923

1924

1925

1926

1927

1928

1929

1930

1931

1932

1933

1934

1935

1936

1937

1938

1939

1940

1941

1942

1943

1944

1945

1946

1947

1948

1949

1950

1951

1952



