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DEVELOPMENT OF RIVER BASINS IN AFRICA

Secretariat Briefing Note

1. Introduction

1. There exist in Africa 57 international waterways covering 60 per cent of the continent. This means that major river systems in Africa drain at least two countries.

2. The rational exploitation of that water could help African States not only solve their food self-sufficiency problems but also accelerate their socio-economic development.

3. African States are fully aware of that and that is why for decades they have commendably endeavoured to develop and manage river basins which exist in their territory.

4. Indeed, African States have always been persuaded of the necessity of cooperation and collaboration between them for the better exploitation of a river when the latter drains more than one country.

5. However, one can say also that, whenever a river is subjected to several national sovereignties, this introduces a complexity factor if not an obstacle to a search for an efficient management of the water resources, for often national initiatives overrule bilateral or multilateral agreements between the countries.

6. The aim of this report is not to raise and analyze the various constraints facing the development of river and lake basins but merely to assess the programme of our organizations set up over decades. Indeed, time available for drafting this report and the data available to us did not allow to scrutinize certain issues relating to the development of river and lake basins.

7. This report made use of data contained in another report prepared in 1989 and supplemented by other data gathered in the process of drafting this report. Consequently, it is a mere briefing document on the current status of the programmes.

8. This report takes stock on the one hand of the stage reached by the programmes of existing organizations and on the other hand activities carried out recently in connection with other river and lake basins where there exist no genuine cooperative mechanisms.

II. Progress report on the programmes of existing organizations

A. Organization for the Development of Gambia River (OMVG)

(a) **Background**

9. The Organization for the Development of Gambia River was established in 1978. This decision was the outcome of the assistance provided by FAO for the creation of a joint Gambia/Senegal Commission for the rational exploitation of the resources of the basin.

10. In 1981 Guinea joined the organization whose Guinea Bissau became a member two years later. Two more basins were to be taken care of by the organization following the occasion of Guinea Bissau:

- (i) the Kayanga Basin shared by Guinea, Guinea Bissau and Senegal;
- (ii) the Kaliba Corubal Basin which concerns only the Republics of Guinea and Guinea Bissau.

11. The development of water resources of the Gambia basin was mainly based on three structures:

- (i) the reach dam at Konya in Guinea;
- (ii) the reservoir dam at Kekreti in Senegal;
- (iii) the anti-salt dam at Balingho in the Gambia

(b) **Present status**

12. On the basis of the above-mentioned data the Authority of the Heads of State adopted in 1986 the following programme of action:

- (i) the construction of the Kekreti, Balingho and Konya dams;
- (ii) the launching of a "post-dam" programme to disseminate irrigation;
- (iii) the inclusion of environmental and socio-economic studies in the programme of action with a view to reducing the adverse effects of the development of the Gambia river;
- (iv) the study on the development of Koliba-Corubal and Kayanga-Geba basins in Guinea Bissau;
- (v) the completion of the studies relating to the Saltingo dam situated also in Guinea Bissau.

13. This programme required a funding amounting to 280 million U.S. dollars and additional pre-feasibility studies costing 6 million U.S. dollars.

14. It is worth noting that the organization conducted studies on small projects in the fields of agriculture, water resources, irrigation involving qualified technicians from its member States. These projects witnessed great success for various reasons: use of local equipment, participation of the population, low-costs, etc.

15. Unlike the small projects, the above-mentioned big ones are at various stages.

16. The latest developments concerning those big projects can be summarized as follows:

Balingho anti-salt dam in the Gambia

17. The main objective of this dam was to restrict to the bare minimum salt intrusions in order to obtain a fairly big reservoir for storing drinking and irrigation water. As such, it is a priority project of the organization. The feasibility studies were carried out in 1984 by a German firm with an estimated cost of 128.5 million U.S. dollars. Since then, the organization has been seeking funds for the construction of the dam and by 1991 the funding had not yet been secured. Moreover, it is worth noting that in 1988 the updated cost of the construction of the dam amounted to 186 million U.S. dollars.

Kekreti dam in Senegal

18. The objective of this dam was to produce hydroelectric power to meet the needs of the region on the one hand, and on the other hand to store enough water for agriculture purposes. The feasibility studies which started in 1982 were concluded only in 1988. Till 1991, the organization was looking for funds to implement this project.

Konya dam in Guinea

19. This dam was meant for hydroelectric power, irrigation and regularization of Gambia river flow. The feasibility studies were carried out and submitted to donors but by the end of 1991 the organization had got no positive response from those donors.

Salthingo dam in Guinea Bissau

20. The Salthingo dam on the Koliba-Corubal in Guinea Bissau was due to generate hydroelectric power. The studies were completed in 1985 and submitted to donors but with no positive response from the latter until recently.

21. One can see that the status of big projects is rather disappointing due to funding problems.

22. Indeed, since its inception the organization received an external assistance amounting to only 27 million US dollars, which is far from being adequate for the implementation of its programme.

23. The negative attitude of the donors is due to the fact that the organization does not in general comply with the conclusions of the studies on the one hand and with the view points of the donors themselves who always recommended the nationalization of the programme of OMVG.

24. Under these particularly unfavourable circumstances, member States tried to adopt new strategies to improve the situation.

25. Consequently, on the occasion of the 18th ordinary session of the Council of Ministers new approaches were adopted by member States for the period 1990-1991.

26. The new measures consisted of:

- adopting a minimum programme which will be implemented in close collaboration with member States and donors who will provide necessary financial support and technical assistance; and
- adopting a plan for the restructuring of the High Commission of the organization. This plan envisages the merger of the posts of High Commissioner and Secretary-General of the organization, a budget in consonance with restructuring effects which makes provision for paying indemnities to redundant staff who have to leave the organization and operational budget (representing 50 per cent of the 1989-1990 budget) for the High Commission for the 1990-1991 fiscal year.

27. This recovery plan should enable OMVG to operate on a new basis and to obtain the financing and technical assistance needed to implement the minimum programme adopted by the 18th session of the Council of Ministers.

B. Organization for the Development of Senegal River (OMVS)

28. OMVS is the outcome of a long subregional cooperative process.

29. In 1963, Senegal, Mauritania and Mali decided, indeed, to establish an Inter-States Committee for the development of the Senegal River Basin.

30. In 1968, the Inter-States Committee was substituted by the Organization of States crossed by Senegal River which Guinea joined.

31. It is only in 1972 that the Organization for the Development of Senegal River (OMVS) was created owing to the cooperation between three States: Senegal, Mauritania and Mali. Right from its inception the activities of the organization were geared towards navigation, irrigation and electric power generation.

32. The main objective of the development of Senegal River was to regularize the river system and to bring the flow to the level of 300 m³/s at Bakel owing to the Manautali dam.

33. The aim was to ensure:

- (i) the irrigation of a surface equivalent to 375,000 hectares in the final phase (240,000 hectares in Senegal, 126,000 hectares in Mauritania and 9,000 hectares in Mali);
- (ii) the production of 800 GWh of hydroelectric power;
- (iii) the permanent navigation between Kayes (Mali) and Saint Louis (Senegal) on a distance of 950 km.

34. The second objective of the OMVS was to construct the Diama anti-salt dam near the river mouth. This dam would stop the intrusion of the salt water towards upstream during the lowest water level and would also be used for irrigating about 30,000 hectares.

35. Additionally it would provide drinking water for the consumption of the urban population in the region.

(b) Present status

36. Since its inception till late 1985, the activities of the organization were centred on the search for funds for the construction of the Manantali and Diama dams.

37. The construction of the two dams required a funding of about 700 million U.S. dollars provided by fifteen donors.

38. The organization realized these two works within the scheduled time-frame and saved about 130 U.S. million dollars.

39. The Diama and Manantali dams became operational in 1986 and 1988 respectively.

40. Parallel to the implementation of the common programme (Diama and Manantali dams) the organization sought additional funds for consolidating the investments feeder roads, afforestation, etc.) on the one hand, and on the other hand for the realization of the second phase of the common programme (electric plant, Saint-Louis and Kayes ports, port facilities, etc.).

41. By the end of 1988 the cost of this wide programme was estimated at 996 million U.S. dollars for the period 1988 to 1993.

42. Through its evolution and its achievements, one can say that OMVS is the most successful of the river and lake basin development organizations in Africa.

43. However, it is witnessing a decisive phase commonly called the "post-dam" phase during which it has not only to pursue the search for funds for realizing the second phase of the common programme but also to secure means for optimizing the use of basic infrastructures.

44. Given the particularly unfavourable circumstances, the OMVS has adopted recently a new policy which should enable it to pursue the development of the river basin in the coming years.

45. This new policy can be summarised as follows:

- (i) restructuring of the High Commission and reduction of staff by over 25 per cent;
- (ii) management of common works by an agency placed under the supervision of the High Commission;
- (iii) reflection on long term costs and benefits of the programme;
- (iv) creation of a communication body to endow OMVS with the means of fulfilling its mission not only at the level of its member States but also as it relates to organizations, associations and donors with whom it cooperates.

C. Niger Basin Authority

(a) Background

46. The predecessor to the Niger Basin Authority was the Niger River Commission. Indeed, the Niger River Commission was established in 1964 and was made up of nine countries situated in its basin: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Chad.

47. Its objectives consisted merely of collecting and disseminating basic data.

48. It was in 1980 that the Commission become the Niger Basin Authority and its major orientations were:

- promoting cooperation between member states; and
- carrying out the integrated development of the basin.

49. In 1981, the Authority prepared its biennial plan based on a development plan called "Prospective plan for the development of the Niger Basin" and whose implementation required about 56 million U.S. dollars.

50. Between 1981 and 1982, contacts between the organization and donors elicited only commitments representing 39 per cent of the cost of the following projects:

- (i) Hydroniger project;
- (ii) a project for improving the waterway;
- (iii) an inter-States project on multi-purpose water studies;
- (iv) a project for a planning unit;
- (v) a project for the design of an electric network in West Africa;
- (vi) a project on agricultural development planning.

51. As regards the participation of member States, decisions were made as to the secondment of required staff to the Authority and the strengthening of economic cooperation between member States.

52. All these efforts resulted in some progress in the implementation of the programme but the organization was already faced with serious managerial problems, which led member States to appoint successively several Executive Secretaries.

(b) Present status

53. The above-mentioned constraints which are worsened by a lack of planning, have led member States to take a series of measures for the recovery of the organization on the occasion of the meeting of the Council of Ministers held in Niamey in 1986.

54. It was in 1987 at the Summit of the Heads of State and Government that all those measures and recommendations were endorsed and the Summit consequently decided to:

- (i) redefine the objectives of the Authority;
- (ii) refocus the activities of the organization;
- (iii) appoint a new Executive Secretary;
- (iv) improve the financial situation of the Authority.

55. The implementation of this strategy resulted on the part of member States in a financial support which unfortunately proved insufficient in view of the Authority's needs.

56. This crisis situation has led the member States to convene an extraordinary session of the Council of Ministers in December 1988 at Bamako at which new arrangements were made in various fields namely:

In the technical field:

57. The Council of Ministers adopted a five-year programme for the period 1989-1993. This programme comprises on the one hand studies and activities necessary for the planning of the long-term development of the Niger basin, and on the other hand the identification of a programme of action for development with immediate impact.

In the field of management:

58. Four appointments were made, including a new Executive Secretary.

In the field of finance:

59. In order to improve the financial situation of the organization, the Council on the one hand adopted an interim budget for the functioning of the Authority during the first half of 1989, and on the other hand invited member States to bear the cost of the counterpart contribution to the Hydroniger project as asked for by the donor (UNDP). A plea was also made to all member States to the effect that they pay all assessed contributions and arrears so as to help ease the disastrous financial situation of the Authority.

In the field of external assistance:

60. The new Executive Secretary was instructed by the Council to pursue negotiations with donors.

61. In spite of all these measures adopted in 1988 to revitalize the Authority, the organization continues to face the same problems up to now. Indeed, the arrears of assessed contributions have steadily increased since 1988 and until 1991 the Authority had remained with no adequate funding for salaries and other expenses.

62. As regards the five-year 1989-1993 programme, nothing concrete and substantial has been achieved.

63. On the part of member States, no session of the Council of Ministers has been held since 1988.

64. However, it is thought that the situation will be improved and that member States will try to help the Authority get out of the crisis.

D. Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC)

(a) **Background**

65. The Lake Chad Basin Commission was created by Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria and Chad. Right from its inception its objective was to undertake research and studies with a view to preventing irrational exploitation of the basin water resources at both the national and subregional levels. At that time, the surface covered by the conventional basin was only 427,000 km.², which represents 1/6 of the overall basin of the lake.

66. In 1972, the activities of the Commission were oriented towards economic and social issues of the subregion.

67. Till 1980, the Lake Chad Basin Commission has achieved commendable results thanks to financial support on the part of member States and donors.

68. Between 1981 and 1985, the Commission deviated from its main objective for reasons beyond its control. Indeed, due to the situation prevailing in Chad at that time, the Commission was relocated in Maroua (Cameroon) with no working facilities (equipment, material, documents, etc.).

69. Until 1985, the Commission had gradually lost the trust of donor community and even that of its member States for above-mentioned reasons.

70. It was in 1985 that, at the Summit of the Heads of State, it was decided on the one hand to reinstate the headquarters in Ndjamena and on the other hand to expand the scope of the basin and subsequently to include the sources of Logone and Chari rivers to increase the level of the lake water resources. The same meeting invited Central African Republic to join the Commission.

71. Since then, the Commission is composed of five member States: Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Central African Republic.

(b) Present Status

72. During the same session held in 1985, member States revised the Commission's 1981 programme of action towards more concrete actions.

73. The implementation of this new programme enabled the Commission to achieve some results in several sectors.

The agriculture sector:

74. In this sector, five agricultural products development centres and one training centre have been created.

The livestock sector:

75. In the field of livestock five centres are currently operational. The main objective of these centres is to ensure the animal protection through intensive vaccination campaigns.

The forestry:

76. Two centres are currently in operation in this sector. Their objective is to contribute to the control of the ecosystem deterioration on the one hand, and on the other hand to develop strategies for combatting desertification. Indeed, these centres are developing plant species which will be used for local needs (firewood) and other species which are meant for the afforestation in the subregion.

Fisheries:

77. In this area it is worth noting that the Djimtilo centre whose activities stopped in 1979 is now being reactivated thanks to the technical assistance of ECA and FAO.

Water resources:

78. In this area, the Commission carried out various activities during the past few years notably as regards the supply of water to people and cattle (wells), the identification of underground water and the management and planning of surface water resources within the basin.

Transport and telecommunications sector:

79. Some studies were carried out on road networks with the assistance of USAID with a view to opening up the subregion for a free movement of persons and goods. As regards telecommunications, the Commission has been greatly involved in this sector particularly as

far as the project on linking Ndjamena (Chad), Kousseri (Cameroon) and Maiduguri (Nigeria) is concerned.

80. However, despite all these achievements, it is worth noting that the Commission has faced technical (lack of qualified technical staff and adequate equipment for the storage of data) and financial problems. Notwithstanding the efforts made by member States, these problems remain because the member States pay with difficulty their contributions for the smooth running of the organization.

81. The Summit of 1987 gave a new impetus to the Commission as it witnessed a clear determination on the part of member States to pay their contributions and arrears due to the organization.

82. This political will encouraged donors to support development activities in the basin.

83. In order to have necessary means for pursuing the development of the basin, the organization undertook recently a restructuring of the secretariat by creating five important departments within the Executive Secretariat.

84. Within the framework of its programme, the activities of the Commission are now being geared towards the implementation of the basin development master plan. This plan was elaborated by UNEP and UNSO, on the basis of a study on causes of, and remedies to the deterioration of the environment of the basin. The master plan emphasises the development of the natural resources in the basin; it contains 26 projects of subregional nature which the Commission will submit to donors for funding.

85. Finally, it is worth noting that the organization is currently executing a project on the planning and management of the water resources of the basin funded by UNDP.

86. The activities of this project consist of designing mathematical model of hydrological simulation on the one hand, and strengthening the secretariat of the Commission

(rehabilitation of the documentation centre, data processing, remote sensing, etc.) on the other hand.

87. Till now the project has been smoothly implemented and results are satisfactory.

E. **Kagera Basin Organization (KBO)**

88. Following several consultations in 1968 between representatives of Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda the four countries felt the need to cooperate and coordinate their efforts for an optimal utilization of land and water resources of the Kagera river basin.

89. In 1970, a technical committee was set up by the governments of Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania to launch a project implemented by UNDP.

90. At that time Uganda had an observer status.

91. Following several studies on the development of the basin, the technical committee decided to transfer the site of the project from Bukoka to Kigali; this became effective the same year.

92. The following year, a protocol of agreement was elaborated for the establishment of the Kagera Basin Development Organization.

93. In 1977 the KBO was created by the Heads of State of Burundi, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

94. In 1981 Uganda acceded to the organization.

95. A plan of action was then prepared on the basis of an initial indicative plan formulated in 1979. This plan of action covered several sectors: agriculture, energy, transport and communications, small-scale industries and environment. The funding

requirements of the pre-investment programme were estimated at 30 to 50 million U.S. dollars.

96. The plan of action elaborated by the organization did not, however, elicit concrete commitment on the part of the donors.

97. Until 1982, the financial support to the organization reached about 3 million U.S. dollars.

(b) Present status

98. In 1986 the Secretariat was restructured and a reduction of costs was decided upon which resulted in a decrease of 18 percent in the organization's budget.

99. The plan of action was then revised and since 1988 the KBO has been focusing on four priority areas:

(i) Transport and telecommunications:

100. The transport and telecommunications sector encompasses projects on road and rail transport, navigation and telecommunications. As regards rail transport all preliminary studies have been carried out; the networks to be created consist of thousands of km. of railways. Concerning roads, the organization is planning to execute five projects in its member States. In the field of telecommunications, the organization is implementing a big subregional project funded by the African Development Bank. This project is nearing completion.

(ii) Agriculture:

101. In the field of agriculture several projects are being implemented. These include:

- the control and eradication of tse-tse fly in several areas in the member States. This project is funded by UNDP and implemented by ECA/JEFAD;
- the afforestation of South-West Uganda which is one of the priorities of KBO aimed at bringing about a better balance in the environment. The organization envisages to disseminate the results of the project in the other member States;
- the promotion and development of ranching; the organization is presently seeking funds and envisages to extend the project to Uganda;
- the drainage of the Malindi valley water for a rational exploitation of the soil and livestock in the area. The organization is in search for funds for the implementation of this project.

(iii) **Energy:**

102. In the field of energy, one of the most important projects of KBO is the hydro-electric project of Rusomo falls whose feasibility studies have been completed, as well as bid dossiers. There remain, however, additional studies to be carried out. Apart from this project, the organization has in the programme other small projects in the energy area whose financing is not yet secured.

(iv) **Information and training:**

103. In this sector, there exists a well equipped documentation centre and there is a project on the creation of a polytechnic training institute . The feasibility studies of this project have been completed and the organization is seeking funds for its implementation.

104. Finally, in order to manage better its programme and be more efficient in implementing its projects, the organization is planning to restructure its secretariat.

105. One can see that KBO has achieved a fairly good performance in implementing its programme but at the same time some projects are making no progress due to lack of funding.

III. Recent developments in other river and lake basins

A. Nile basin

106. The Nile basin is one of the most important in Africa by its size nearing that of Congo/Zaire river. The surface of the basin is about three million km². The two major sources of the Nile are the basin of the equatorial lakes plateau and the basin of the Ethiopian plateau.

107. It crosses a few diversified geographical and climatic areas in nine countries which are: Burundi, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, the Sudan, Tanzania and Zaire.

108. Though there exist bilateral agreements on utilization of water resources, there is at present no agreement involving the nine states for a rational utilization of the natural resources of the basin.

109. Several attempts were made and it was within that framework that UNDP organized in 1986 a seminar in Bangkok (Thailand) for the States watered by the Nile. The highest officials of the countries concerned participated in the meeting, particularly ministers responsible for development of water resources of Egypt, the Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania, Zaire and the Ambassador of Ethiopia in Paris as well as high officials from Burundi and Rwanda.

110. The participants unanimously expressed their will to fully cooperate towards the development of the Nile basin for the benefit of all its inhabitants. A good number of recommendations was adopted by the participants during the seminar.

11. Pursuant to those recommendations, UNDP and ECA conducted a pre-identification mission in 1987 with a view to reviewing all the issues raised during the seminar and proposing a cooperation framework restricted to the White Nile basin.

112. At the end of this mission the two institutions (UNDP and ECA) and countries crossed by the Nile with the exception of the Sudan felt that it was premature to convene a ministerial meeting prior to the project identification mission.

113. In April 1988 a compromise was found and ECA took advantage of its Conference of Ministers meeting to organize an informal consultation in Niamey (Niger) between the countries crossed by the Nile. During this consultation, UNDP and ECA were given a mandate to organize and convene further consultative meetings.

114. As for the countries concerned, they were to ensure that preliminary consultations took place at national level.

115. Subsequently, ECA and UNDP organized and convened a ministerial meeting of the States concerned.

116. The meeting came up with the following recommendations:

- (i) the Technical Committee of the Hydromet project should meet as soon as possible to examine the terms of reference of the mission;
- (ii) a briefing mission on the development of the Nile basin should be fielded by UNDP and ECA as soon as possible after the mission for the identification of joint projects;
- (iii) a ministerial meeting, preceded by a meeting of the Technical Committee, should be convened by UNDP/ECA to review the report of the briefing

mission and its recommendations and to determine the follow-up action to be undertaken.

117. In pursuance of these recommendations, UNDP and ECA convened in February 1989 a meeting of the Technical Committee of the Hydromet project in Kampala where the terms of reference of the survey mission were revised and finalized. Ethiopia was not represented at the meeting.

118. The identification mission was conducted in June 1989. It was led by UNDP and composed of an expert from ECA and seven national experts.

119. Finally, the report of the mission was sent to the states concerned for information and comments. In October 1989, workshop attended by experts from the states concerned was held in Addis Ababa with a view to finalizing the report.

120. During this workshop, the Ethiopian delegation proposed amendments to the terms of reference of the survey mission. Following the observations of Ethiopia, the participants were of the view that the situation had changed and that they had to seek the views of their governments. Consequently the meeting suggested that the review of the mission report be deferred till such a time the reactions of the other countries to the amendment of the terms of reference proposed by Ethiopia were received. The Technical Committee of the Hydromet project was to gather all the comments of the States and convene a meeting in March 1990.

121. The too few comments received from the states did not enable the Technical Committee of the Hydromet project to convene the meeting.

122. Presently, ECA is preparing a study to identify obstacles which made it impossible to pursue and complete activities relating to the project on the integrated development of the Nile basin.

123. This study will propose measures to be taken as follow-up action to activities already carried out in connection with the integrated development of the Nile basin. The report will be sent to all the states and organizations concerned for comments.

B. The Congo/Zaire basin

124. The basin of the Congo/Zaire river is the largest on the African continent and the second in the world behind that of Amazon (South America). Its surface nears 3,700,000 km² and spreads over the following countries: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zaire.

125. The river is about 5,100 km. long, Chambadi river located in Zambia, south of Lake Tanganyika, being considered as the source.

126. The basin comprises a lot of potentialities notably as regards energy, irrigation and fishing.

127. In 1983, at the request of the governments of Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire, ECA carried out a study on the feasibility of exploiting natural resources of the Congo/Zaire river basin.

128. The study entitled "Study on the establishment of an intergovernmental organization for the development and exploitation of the Congo/Zaire river basin resources" reviews the situation of the basin, its international status, analyses prospects for integrated development and joint exploitation of the river and its tributaries and finally proposes means required for concretizing these prospects.

129. In 1982 an intergovernmental meeting of experts on the development of the Congo/Zaire river took place in Kinshasa (Zaire) to examine and finalize the study.

130. The annexes to the study were amended and, following a long debate, the participants expressed the view that they needed more time to scrutinize the document before committing their respective countries.

131. In this respect, the meeting requested also ECA to include in the agenda of the Sixth Meeting of the Conference of Ministers responsible for transport, communications and planning an item on the establishment of an authority for the development and management of the Congo/Zaire river basin.

132. In 1988, this item was on the agenda of the Sixth Meetings of Experts and the Conference of Ministers responsible for transport, communications and planning.

133. During these two meetings, some delegations were of the view that certain technical aspects relating to the document should not be debated and consequently the meetings decided to postpone the discussion of the item.

134. Since then no significant evolution has been noticed and so far no authority composed of all the States concerned has been created for the rational exploitation of the water resources of the Congo/Zaire river basin.

135. However, it is worth noting that there exist bilateral agreements between some States in relation to specific projects. One of the most recent ones concerns Central African Republic and Congo whereby the two countries envisage to construct a regulation dam on Oubangui river at Palambo upstream Bangui with a view to allowing permanent navigation.

136. This dam should also enable a production of electricity sufficient to meet the needs of the region.

C. The Zambezi river basin

137. The Zambezi and its tributaries drain a surface of approximately 1,300,000 km.². This river is 3,000 km.; its source is situated on Central African plateaux and it flows into the Indian Ocean.

138. Twenty million people live in the basin area which cuts across 8 countries: Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, United Republic of Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Zambia.

139. Within the framework of its programme UNEP initiated international activities in Africa which are geared towards the implementation of the Plans of Action for the Environmental Management of Inland Water (EMINWA).

140. One of these projects concerns the Zambezi river and another one the lake Chad basin.

141. As regards the Zambezi river, three meetings were held in 1985, 1986 and 1987 with the participation of experts from the states concerned with a view to starting the Plan of Action for the Zambezi commonly known as ZAC Plan.

142. The plan as designed is a vast integrated development programme covering aspects of the development of the basin water resources including ecological components.

143. At present, all the activities relating to the implementation of the plan are coordinated by the Southern African Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC) which became recently the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC).

144. UNEP and some Scandinavian countries pursue their assistance to a few projects within the framework of the Plan.

IV Conclusions

145. This paper has reviewed the status of activities within the major river and lake basins in Africa. It has been noticed on the part of the States a willingness to cooperate and collaborate towards a rational utilization of the natural resources existing in the river and lake basins.

146. Subregional cooperation in relation to river basins can make a great contribution to ecological stability of hydrological and climatic cycles which are most irregular in this continent and help increase food production and socio-economic development of our countries.

147. In this regard, the States spared during the recent years no effort to provide means to institutions and authorities they have established in order to make the latter more effective in discharging their duties.

148. Some results have been achieved, but no doubt the objectives are far from being attained as the functioning of our institutions continues to be disrupted by several factors which are not yet under full control.

149. In this respect it is worth underlining that OMVS, the most advanced organization in Africa, is not spared; it is facing some obstacles which impede a smooth pursuit of its programme.

150. Generally speaking, the resource constraint is considered one of the major obstacles to the implementation of the programmes of those organizations.

151. In addition to the resource constraint, other factors such as inadequate manpower, socio-cultural factors and priority accorded to national economic issues make the implementation of the programmes difficult. Moreover, experience has shown that in Africa

the larger the number of States involved , the more uneasy the management of the development because of national interests primacy.

152. One can however believe that the new policies and strategies being developed by the States will enable our institutions to make progress in the near future in implementing their respective programmes.