



ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

**Fifth Annual Meeting of the
Interagency Group for Water in Africa**

Alexandria, Egypt 3-5 December 1996

REPORT OF THE MEETING

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OF THE INTERAGENCY GROUP FOR WATER IN AFRICA**

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Organization of the Meeting

1. The fifth annual meeting of the Interagency Group for Water in Africa (IGWA) was held at Alexandria, Egypt from 3 to 5 December 1996. The meeting was hosted by the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office of the World Health Organization (WHO/EMRO), at their office premises in Alexandria. It was convened, organized and serviced by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), as the secretariat of IGWA, in collaboration with the host agency.
2. The meeting was attended by representatives from the following UN and other agencies: UNICEF, UNIDO, IAEA, UNEP, OAU, WHO/AFRO (Brazzaville), WHO/EMRO (Alexandria), WHO (Geneva), UNECA, and WMO. List of participants is included at Annex 1.

Opening of the Meeting (Agenda Item I)

3. The meeting was opened by Dr. M. El Sheikh Mahgoub, Director, Health Services Development, WHO/EMRO (Alexandria) on behalf of the Regional Director, Dr. Hussien A. Gezairy. In his opening statement, Dr. Mahgoub welcomed the participants to Alexandria and expressed his pleasure and satisfaction in WHO/EMRO being able to host this meeting for the first time in the five year life of IGWA. He elaborated on the importance of the meeting and especially on the role of IGWA in coordination and harmonization of water activities in Africa by the UN and other regional and subregional agencies. He further stated that WHO was also very much concerned with the environmental impact of water development activities. A copy of his opening statement is included at Annex 2.
4. Dr. Nur of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) made a statement at the opening session. He noted that the World Food Summit (Rome 1996) stressed, inter alia, the development of water resources. He highlighted the importance of the Nile river as a critical issue and stressed the need for political agreement between the Nile riparian countries. Nile water use must be on a sustainable basis, he noted, when highlighting the need for improved utilisation of the Nile's water resources to achieve food security. There needs to be an expansion of irrigation with small scale irrigation receiving more emphasis for environmental and economic reasons. Dr. Nur reported that African Governments had adopted a common

position that underlined the importance of irrigated agriculture. He also stated that training was a prerequisite to successful water resources programmes and that accelerated development of hydropower in Africa was necessary. He noted that development must proceed in a complementary interactive manner. His full statement is included at Annex 3.

5. The representative of UNICEF (Ms. V. Tobin) then made some introductory remarks at the meeting outlining how UNICEF was broadening its approach to consider environmental health impacts in its programmes. Additionally, UNICEF is giving more attention to policy, at several levels, to integrate health, educational and environmental factors into its work, as studies have shown how water projects can have negative health and environmental impacts. Finally, the UNICEF representative stressed the desire for a closer working relationship with other UN agencies regarding water issues.

6. Mr. A.F. Hoque of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (Addis Ababa) made some remarks at the opening session, mainly outlining the proposed agenda for the meeting and thus setting the tone of the meeting. He also elaborated on the role of IGWA in promoting joint collaborative programme activities in water sector in Africa by UN and other agencies. He cited recent examples of such joint collaborative efforts by ECA on one hand and each of WMO, UNEP and IAEA on the other. Mr. Hoque also thanked, on behalf of all participants, the host agency (WHO/EMRO) for their hospitality and for efficient arrangements for the meeting. A copy of Mr. Hoque's opening remarks is included at Annex 4.

Election of Bureau (Agenda Item 2)

7. During the opening session, the meeting unanimously elected the following as the bureau of IGWA for 1996-1997:

- a. Mr. K. Khosh-Chashm, WHO/EMRO: Chairman
- b. Mr. I. Nur of OAU, and Mr. Degefu of WMO: Vice Chairmen
- c. Mr. D. Smith, UNEP/Ms. V. Tobin, UNICEF: Rapporteurs

Adoption of Agenda (Agenda Item 3)

8. The secretariat (ECA) of the Group had earlier prepared and circulated (July 1996) to all IGWA member agencies a proposed agenda for this meeting. This proposed provisional agenda was placed at the meeting for further review and possible amendment. After some discussion, the agenda was adopted with some changes. The adopted agenda is enclosed at Annex 5.

Proceedings of the Meeting**Study on Transboundary Water Issues in Africa [Agenda Item 4(a)]**

9. The representative of ECA secretariat introduced this issue to the meeting. He provided the background information leading to the preparation of this study by the ECA Regional Advisor on Water at the request of the 4th Annual meeting (1995) of IGWA held at IAEA (Vienna). This request was included at the report of this 4th annual meeting which suggested a three stage process for this study. UNECA was to act as the focal point for this process with assistance from UNEP, FAO and the Zambezi River Authority. A consultant was to be identified and engaged subject to availability of resources.

ECA prepared the terms of reference for the consultant and wrote to a number of funding agencies including UNEP and UNDP. UNEP suggested that an ECA staff member undertake a mission to UNEP headquarters to collect information on the subject and by using these and the ECA in-house materials and resources, prepare the study for consideration by the fifth IGWA meeting. Accordingly, the ECA Regional Advisor on water resources undertook a mission in July 1996 to UNEP headquarters in Nairobi. Based on information collected during this mission and on the in-house technical materials available at ECA, the regional advisory prepared a study on this issue. The Regional Advisor then made a detailed presentation on this study. The following is a summary of his presentation:

10. Africa has some fifty four transboundary river basins. Fourteen African countries have most of their entire territories falling within transboundary river systems. The concept of international cooperation for the development of transboundary river/lake/groundwater basins is not a new issue - it goes way back into the history of mankind. Unfortunately, despite this fact, in Africa only a handful of transboundary river/lake basins have any form of intergovernmental organizations charged with integrated development of these basins.

11. Since the nineteen seventies, the world community has been engaged in dialogue trying to resolve major problems and adopting strategies towards the satisfaction of basic human needs such as food security, shelter and water supply.

12. It is widely recognised that the rational exploitation of water resources can help African States not only to become self sufficient in food security but also to accelerate socio-economic development. It is also a well-known fact that international drainage basins are unique geographical entities ideal for harmonised and coherent development of water resources.

13. Since political boundaries rarely coincide with hydrological ones, problems concerning the optimum use of shared water resources and equitable distribution of costs and benefits are extremely complex.

14. The existing intergovernmental organizations responsible for the development and management of river basins in Africa are the Kagera, Niger, Senegal, Gambia and Lake Chad. Efforts are also being made for some sort of co-operative arrangements amongst the riparian countries of other river/lake basins like Zaire, Zambezi, Nile and Lake Malawi for integrated development of their natural resources and environmental protection.

15. A review of performance of the existing river/lake basin organizations in Africa will show that generally, their performance has been disappointing, varying from a complete failure in some cases to reasonably successful in others. It has been noticed that the main reasons for their failure are:

- a. Excessively wide scope of activities incompatible with available human and financial resources;
- b. Too little autonomy provided by the member States to these organizations;
- c. Lack of prompt payment of contributions by the member States,
- d. Lack of well trained and experienced personnel;
- e. Dependency on external technical and financial assistance;
- f. Choice of heads of organizations on basis of political ground rather than efficiency.

16. The experience of the Mekong River Commission was cited as a case study for African experts as one of the most successful example of co-operation amongst riparian countries with diverse political and cultural views. In this case the participating countries (Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam) most successfully managed to establish and strengthen links for co-operation in order to enhance basin-wide development.

17. The strategy of making river/lake basins geographical units for multi-purpose planning is fitting since they are natural entities which can be viewed as vehicles for socio-economic development of riparian countries. It is necessary to recognize that the river basin units form one eco-system continuum in which careful planning could mean efficiency and equity. The river basin unit can accommodate

sustainable development by encompassing a range of activities that seek to maintain an equilibrium of the eco-systems and bio-diversity and therefore enable optimum utilization of resources through proper and rational planning.

18. The study recommended that the countries sharing transboundary basins should co-operate and agree to use the river/lake basin entity as development nuclei and adopt the method of multipurpose planning for development of resources in these basins.

19. Following this presentation, a detailed and positive discussion on the study and on where and how to proceed forward took place.

20. It was agreed that the study was a very good one and that governments should be informed of its recommendations at the highest decision-making level. The key issue of the lack of political will to establish and support RBOs was a major point of discussion. The problem of inadequate coordination among UN Agencies also was discussed at length.

21. The meeting requested ECA to present and distribute this study at the next session of the ECA Conference of Ministers and at the OAU Council of Ministers with a request to forward the document to the OAU heads of states and governments. The modalities of presenting the study at the OAU Council of Ministers are to be sorted out by representatives of the two organizations.

22. The meeting requested all UN Agencies to supply ECA information regarding their water sector activities in Africa. In this connection the meeting requested ECA/IGWA secretariat to devise a standard format and requested the UN Agencies to forward information to ECA by using this format. The meeting further requested all concerned UN agencies to increase emphasis on their river basin programmes in Africa.

Study on Intercountry and Inter-Agency Cooperation in the Nile River Basin (Agenda Item 4b)

23. Under this item, the meeting considered the ECA study "Problems and Prospects for Intercountry cooperation for Integrated Water Resources Development of the Nile River Basin." The representative of ECA noted that the document briefly described the hydrological and geographical features of the Nile River, elaborated on the Nile water use and early plans for such uses and then outlined the historical backgrounds of various international agreements among its riparian countries for sharing the Nile water. The document further elaborated on the role of international organizations in fostering and promoting intercountry cooperation in the Nile basin. The study also identified the problems and constraints for cooperation in this vital

area. Finally, the study recommended a number of measures to enhance cooperation in the Nile basin area. These were briefly as follows:

- a. The International agencies would be more effective if they are geared to integrated common development of the Nile water resources.
- b. The Nile basin countries had shown common interest in establishing a central body for coordinating the planning and development of the basin but they have yet to find a common ground on how to go about it. The International agencies could assist the countries in mastering the required mutual trust among these countries and can promote a dialogue leading to the establishment of such a central body.
- c. ECA's role in this respect could be compared to the role of ESCAP dealing with the Lower Mekong River Basin. This would be also in line with the role entrusted to ECA by both IGWA and the UNACC Subcommittee on Water Resources.
- d. International organizations through assistance to this central body for the Nile could assist the basin countries in preparing their national water master plans and consolidate these into an overall integrated plan for the entire Nile basin.
- e. International assistance should be directed to enhancing water use efficiency and to addressing the environmental degradation problems in the Nile basin.
- f. Once these basic objectives were achieved, the central body could be transformed into a Nile River Basin Commission with the responsibility of supervising the implementation of the integrated plan for the Nile basin development.
- g. In view of the requirement for a rather large capital outlay for these developmental activities, it will be necessary to establish an international development fund for the Nile basin to augment national endeavour. Resources from this fund would be available to all riparian countries to supplement their national budgetary allocations to study and plan for their own part of the basin.

24. In view of the above, it was hoped that the meeting participants would carefully review these recommendations and come up with identification of some specific action areas where they could collaborate with each other's agencies to

promote integrated water resources development of the Nile River. In this regard, care should of course be taken to take into account of the various other international initiatives presently going on in this area.

25. After lengthy discussion on how best to proceed from hereon, the meeting:

- a. Took note of the study and expressed its appreciation of ECA for preparing such a comprehensive, easily read and practical document.
- b. Agreed that IGWA members should attempt to attend the 5th meeting of the Nile 2002 to be held in Addis Ababa in February 1997 and that efforts should be made to present this document at that meeting or at a subsidiary meeting held at that time.
- c. Requested ECA to undertake similar studies on other key African river basins, in cooperation with other agencies.
- d. Agreed in principle to assist ECA in the preparation of other such studies.
- e. Agreed to send information to ECA on their activities within the Nile basin.
- f. Agreed that improved harmonization of activities in the Nile basin should receive special attention by all agencies.

Report on follow-up of the Action Plan adapted by the 1995 UNECA/WMO Conference on Water Resources: Policy and Assessment in Africa (Agenda Item 5)

26. The UNECA/WMO Conference on Water Resources: Policy and Assessment in Africa, which was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in March 1995, adopted a Strategy and action plan and recommended among others that ECA and WMO play key roles to promote the Strategy. It also called upon UN agencies to incorporate the strategy and action plan in their activities. As a follow-up, ECA and WMO circulated the recommendations of the Conference to respective Member countries and to relevant UN Agencies for implementation. The WMO representative provided the following additional information on this item.

27. WMO took further action and integrated the activities identified by the Strategy and action plan in its World Hydrological Cycle Observing System (WHYCOS) and its regional component HYCOS. In this regard WMO formulated

subregional HYCOS projects in Africa. The main objective of each HYCOS project is to promote the rational use, conservation and protection of water resources through improved collection, exchange and application of hydrological data and projects.

28. The status of each HYCOS project in Africa is as follows:

a. **MED-HYCOS (Mediterranean Countries)**

MED-Hycos is being implemented by WMO with a World Bank Grant. As of now, 8 countries out of the 15 eligible to benefit from the project have accepted the project. From Africa, Tunisia is the only country among the 15. Egypt expressed its wishes to postpone its participation until an agreement is reached with countries of the Nile River Basin.

The first training course for Data Collection Platforms (DCPs) was held from 23 September to 4 October in Toulouse and Montpellier, France. Sixteen countries sent representatives.

b. **SADC-HYCOS (Southern African Countries)**

EU has officially accepted to fund the project. Call for tenders have been launched for both equipment and technical assistance.

c. **AOC-HYCOS (Western and Central African countries (Afrique d'ouest et Centrale)**

Preparation of the project document is underway. The final version has to be given to the French Ministry of Cooperation in 1997. Funding for implementation is expected from France and the EU.

d. **Congo-HYCOS**

In April 1996, the WB asked WMO to prepare a proposal for preparation of an enlarged CONGO-HYCOS for the Congo River Basin. Following discussion with the WB and the EU, the EU is now willing to fund the preparation of the project document by WMO. This project would not only cover the hydrological aspects, but also the meteorological, climatological, environmental protection, for natural resources management purposes.

e. **NILE-HYCOS**

CIDA has repeatedly expressed interest in assisting the development of a project for the Nile basin within the framework of TECCONILE. WMO assisted the Director of TECCONILE in preparing a project profile which will be submitted for consideration by the Tecconile Technical Committee and the Council of Ministers.

Collaboration and Joint Programme Activities (Agenda Item 7b)

a) **UN Systemwide Special Initiative on Africa**

29. The representative of UNEP highlighted the outcome of the second meeting of the Water Working Group of the UN Special Initiative on Africa held in October 1996 in Paris. This was co-chaired by UNEP and the World Bank. The report highlighted the agreement reached on concerted efforts to be made in four countries, namely Uganda, Mali, Ethiopia, Mozambique and one river basin, the Zambezi. The idea was to initially concentrate on these four countries, thereafter expanding to another four countries. Both resource mobilisation and country-level collaborative efforts were stressed. Agencies agreed to submit to UNEP information on their activities relevant to the Africa Initiative.

30. The idea of initially working in four countries through the SIA was to demonstrate how all the UN agencies could work collectively and to demonstrate mechanisms to assist governments in the most effective manner. The aim was also to revitalise the ESAs to allocate additional financial resources to Africa to combat the donor-fatigue that has resulted from the influx of funding in the past 20 years with limited impact. By demonstrating that UN Agencies can play a role in ensuring that funds are more efficiently used, this can help to mobilise additional resources accordingly.

31. A question was raised as to how additional funding could be mobilised. Perhaps, at the country and regional levels, more collaborative efforts could be made to mobilize ESAs and governments to allocate additional resources.

32. It was agreed to support the decisions of the Paris meeting and to request all agencies to distribute documents pertaining to the Special Initiative for Africa and create sufficient awareness.

33. The ECA representative stated that the Special Initiative on Africa involved 25 billion US dollars over a ten year period. No new resources have presently been allocated. These funds are those required to achieve the objectives for the five main themes of the Special Initiative: water; food security; governance, social and

human development and lastly, resource mobilisation. Two billion has been estimated for the water sector. UNDP and ECA are co-ordinating the overall efforts of the SIA.

34. The Water Working Group is chaired by UNEP and the World Bank. At the second meeting of the group in Paris, convened in conjunction with the 17th meeting of the ACC Sub-committee on Water Resources, it was discussed how to mobilise additional financial resources necessary to achieve the stated goals. It was stressed that a resource mobilisation strategy was needed. However, efforts should be made at both global and national levels. There are four areas of concern for the Water Working Group:

- a. Assuring sustainable and equitable freshwater
- b. Household water security
- c. Freshwater assessment
- d. Water for food security

35. It was agreed that responsibilities would be as follows: UNEP for assurance of freshwater; WHO for household water security; WMO for freshwater assessment and FAO for water for food security. It was questioned as to whether UNICEF should assist WHO in responsibility for household water security. It was agreed that this would be one of the recommendations of the meeting.

36. The meeting was informed that a letter was sent to the UNDP Resident Representatives in the four named countries in Africa requesting to exercise their co-ordinating role to strengthen collaborative efforts.

37. The question was raised as to the relationship between SIA and the Africa 2000 Initiative. It was agreed that collaborative efforts have already been established between the two through both the ACC and through the Collaborative Council for Water Supply and Sanitation. At its third bi-annual meeting held in Barbados last June, it was agreed that an Africa Working Group should be established to develop inter-agency activities and the Group would co-ordinate its efforts with both Africa 2000 and the SIA.

38. WHO/AFRO stressed that there was a joint UNICEF/WHO initiative for school sanitation and hygiene in West and Central Africa. It was agreed that more information was needed on all these initiatives. However, all efforts were welcomed as Africa still required the most attention and resources. It was mentioned that perhaps it should be made more clear that both SIA and Africa

2000 were focusing more on resource mobilisation efforts and on advocacy. There is still scope for agencies to work together in special programmes that focus on implementation of new strategies and policies.

39. UNIDO stated that all agencies should elaborate in their own annual reports, areas of joint collaboration and support. There is an ongoing programme of UNIDO in support of SIA named the Alliance that recently was launched. The Alliance for African Industrialisation (AAI) is a support initiative in line with the UN System-wide Special Initiative on Africa. It was officially launched in October 1996 in Abidjan by his Excellency, the President of Ivory Coast with several heads of States and delegates of over 20 African countries. UNIDO's thematic priority programmes were included in the AAI with special emphasis on its high impact programmes on agro-industry, mercury pollution abatement in gold mining, women entrepreneurs and quality aspects. A package of projects is under preparation to put the AAI initiative into the implementation phase. The collaborative efforts made by UNIDO/UMO/ZRA in the Zambezi basin project is an example of good collaboration among agencies.

40. At the last meeting of the ACC, it was suggested that a request be made to Mr. G. Speth, Executive Director of UNDP to write to all UNDP Resident Representatives in Africa to inform countries of the need to co-ordinate efforts. This request should be made as soon as possible to ensure that pressure is brought to bear on all agencies at the country level. A request should also be made to all UN agencies, the World Bank and bi-lateral agencies for additional financial resources to be allocated to Africa.

(b) Enhanced Collaboration for Water Supply and Sanitation Development

41. The first presentation on this item was made by the representative of WHO, Geneva. Three elements of collaboration in the area of water supply and sanitation were presented; The Interagency Steering Committee for Water Supply and sanitation, collaboration between UNICEF and WHO, and AFRICA 2000.

Inter-agency Steering Committee

42. The history of the Steering Committee was presented from its inception as a response to the UN Water Conference, Mar de Plata, 1977 to its last meeting at the headquarters of UNESCO, Paris, October 1996. The Committee brought together the UN Agencies active in the water supply and sanitation sector to exchange information and identify areas of common interest for potential collaboration. Although established as a co-ordination mechanism for the International Drinking Water and Sanitation Decade (IDWSSD), it continues to co-ordinate efforts in the 1990s towards achievement of universal access to water

supply and sanitation. In 1995, the Committee was strengthened through being recognised, in light of Agenda 21 (UNCED), as a task force of the ACC sub-committee on water resources to provide a focus on water supply and sanitation issues.

UNICEF/WHO Collaboration

43. UNICEF and WHO collaboration in the area of water supply and sanitation was strengthened in 1990 in light of the review of the sector status at the end of IDWSSD. The collaboration included a Joint Water Supply and Sanitation Programme (JMP) aimed at supporting countries to strengthen their monitoring capacities as a means of improving sector planning and management. The third JMP sector report was circulated at the meeting. Another area of common concern where collaboration has been developed is in health and hygiene education including school sanitation. This is viewed as important for behavioral change as a result of provision of basic service and to ensure their sustainability. The experience gained by UNICEF and WHO in developing effective collaboration was reviewed as this could provide guidance to other agencies.

Africa 2000

44. An introduction to the AFRICA 2000 initiative was given. It was emphasized that this was an initiative under the Ministries of Health of Africa, expressed at the WHO Regional Committee for Africa in 1993. The African Ministers decided that it was important to put new life into water and sanitation programmes for the remainder of the decade. The objectives are:

- a. Raise awareness of African water and sanitation needs
- b. Establish consensus among African governments on joint actions to be taken
- c. Create new partnership between African governments and ESAs
- d. Increase mobilisation of internal and external resources.

45. The current directions of AFRICA 2000 were declared through the Brazzaville Declaration, namely:

- people's choices will determine priorities
- local resources will be used to determine African solutions
- partnership among all organizations will be encouraged
- foreign aid will be based on national and not donor priorities.

Collaborative Efforts on behalf of UNICEF

46. The representative of UNICEF highlighted areas where efforts were already being made. Some of the challenges that still face the sector, as identified in the UNICEF Sector Strategy Paper approved by the UNICEF Executive Board in 1995, were the following:

- a. Reinforcing political will and encouraging countries to prepare plans of action in support of reaching the unserved
- b. Overcoming the perception that the extension of water supply and sanitation services is necessarily costly
- c. Expanding coverage through building capacity of communities rather than through centralised service delivery
- d. Mobilising both external and national resources, the flow of which has stagnated or declined
- e. Ensuring that environmental concerns and water resource management objectives are integrated into ongoing programmes
- f. Maintaining the focus on research and development of least cost approaches
- g. Focusing on cost sharing, cost recovery and financing mechanisms

47. A joint strategy was developed by WHO and UNICEF to operationalise the common elements of strategies of both agencies. Through this joint statement WHO and UNICEF reiterate their intention and strategy to collaborate. It is intended that they will use their individual resources and knowledge base to support capacity building at country level towards sustainable national programmes aimed at accelerating coverage levels.

48. The Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) as outlined in the presentation by WHO has been successful in its advocacy efforts to highlight progress made and areas of concern. More efforts now need to be exerted in country level co-ordination. These need to be continued in Africa and a joint meeting is planned for 1997 in the EMRO region.

49. UNICEF is working closely with the UN system-wide Special Initiative on Africa and is playing a leading role in health and education. Other initiatives that UNICEF is supporting in Africa includes the West and Central Africa School Sanitation and Hygiene Project. For hygiene education and sanitation efforts co-ordination is undertaken through the Collaborative Council Working Group. UNICEF is an active partner in this endeavour. UN Agencies need to continue to work together at national, regional and global levels to complement each others strength and to support governments more effectively.

WHO Collaborative Efforts in the EMRO Region

50. WHO/EMRO representative presented a report on water activities by the EMRO Region. The water supply and sanitation programme in Afghanistan, Djibouti, Iraq, Pakistan, Palestine, Somalia, Sudan, and the Republic of Yemen are in need of considerable support.

51. A project outline for improvements of water supply and sanitation in African countries of the EM Region was presented. This , developed for potential funding from ADB is titled "Regional Technical Co-operation Initiative for Africa." The objectives are: to assist in rapid coverage of population with safe water supply in unserved areas in Djibouti, Somalia and the Sudan; to develop and help in implementation of a rural sanitation programme in Djibouti, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Somalia and the Sudan; to improve provision of water supply coverage in the rural areas of Tunisia and Morocco; and lastly, to increase the low-cost sanitation coverage among the high risk groups in Djibouti, Egypt, Morocco, Somalia, the Sudan, and Tunisia with special reference to urban poor and slum areas.

52. Seven countries of the WHO Eastern Mediterranean region that lie in the African continent are included in the project. These are: Djibouti, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Somalia, the Sudan and Tunisia. The project has three phases. During the start up, it is intended that the following will be accomplished: agreement of countries to participate; preparation of a tentative plan of action; a regional consultation for the high level decision makers to finalise the plans and programmes. In the preparatory phase a rapid assessment is to be conducted of the sector in Djibouti, Somalia, and Sudan by using the existing material and in close collaboration with other UN agencies. Development of national low-cost sanitation strategy will be undertaken for high risk groups in all countries, based on the proposed new strategy. There will be mobilisation of technical co-operation and development of high priority projects and programmes with an investment plan. During the investment and implementation phase a new proposal will be developed based on the experience gained and the progress of activities.

53. WHO/EMRO and countries concerned might approach the affluent countries of the region, regional funds, international organizations and external donors to finance the programme. Cost associated with travel and other expenses of staff would be covered from the funds raised from the above sources. While on mission, the input of seconded staff will be coordinated by the WHO/EMRO Environmental Health Programme in close collaboration with the recipient countries.

54. Some recommendations for greater collaboration with all agencies are the following:

At the country level:

- a. Learn lessons in co-operation with partners in the sector especially those where new experiences have developed e.g. private sector, NGO involvement etc.
- b. Share and disseminate lessons learned and develop improved policies and strategies with key stakeholders.
- c. Work collectively in implementing the national plans of action developed in achievement of universal access to water supply and sanitation services.

At the regional level:

- a. Continue energetic advocacy for sector at the highest level.
- b. Share and learn from other partners.
- c. Co-operate with other interested partners to develop workplans on technology, communication and information.

WHO/AFRO, Collaborative Efforts

55. WHO/AFRO representative presented activities of WHO in the AFRO region. To date, the AFRICA 2000 Initiative received strong political commitment from the countries in the region. AFRICA 2000 focal points have been appointed in almost all countries of the region and a number of national consultative meetings have been held to review the water and sanitation sector policy and strategies.

56. WHO sponsored sub-regional technical workshops on operation and maintenance system and assisted 18 countries in implementing demonstration rural water supply and sanitation projects in cholera affected districts. Technical and

financial support has been provided to countries to promote participatory method of health and hygiene education, community management of rural water supply systems, water quality monitoring, human resources development and development of tools for operation and maintenance.

57. The "Healthy City" concept has been adopted in the region and projects have been started in over 16 cities in partnership with local authorities, community groups and other external partners. The "Healthy School" concept gained support by all countries in the region and several district-wide competitions were sponsored by the WHO/AFRO for the award of prizes for those "Healthy Schools" providing clean and safe environment.

58. AFRICA 2000 Initiative has taken the right step and need support from all donor agencies willing to provide health promotion in the African Region through the implementation of the Brazzaville Declaration.

Report on Joint Programming

59. The ECA representative informed the meeting that the WMO/ECA conference held in 1995 was a collaborative effort. There is a memorandum of understanding between the IAEA and the ECA for ECA to host two professional experts from the Atomic Energy Agency at the ECA facilities at Addis Ababa. It is very cost effective and convenient arrangement for collaboration and for the benefit of the African member States. It is envisaged that in the future, similar arrangements could be made among other agencies. ECA also collaborated with the Perugia University in Italy in organizing a training workshop in March 1996 for participants from Ethiopia Eritrea on arid zone hydrology.

60. The representative of IAEA also elaborated on the collaborative efforts between ECA and the IAEA. The first programme is for technical co-operation including the use of isotope techniques with special emphasis on water resources. In Egypt, laboratories have been established for water resource assessment and management. In Tunisia, isotope methodologies have been introduced and developed towards a more efficient utilization of water resources focusing on vulnerability to pollution and dynamics of water. Monitoring Schemes are being supported in Namibia for the measurement of flow evaporation and infiltration rates in marshlands for surface water resource management.

61. The first phase of a regional technical co-operation project for Africa was started in 1995 aiming at the use of isotopic techniques in combination with other hydrological tools to determine groundwater renewal rates in special regions of Egypt, Ethiopia, Morocco, and Senegal.

62. Within this area of activity, two co-ordinated research programmes (CRD) are currently being implemented which specifically address problems related to African countries. Seven countries participated in the CRD on isotope techniques in water resources investigation in semi-arid regions to investigate possible solutions associated with the inadequacy of water quantity and quality.

63. A second CRD is planned on groundwater renewal in water scarce regions which aims at improved and reliable estimates of the replenishment rates of groundwater resources, through the use of isotopes in the unsaturated zones in arid regions. These estimates will provide the basis for sustainable extraction amounts of the groundwater without causing over mining of the resources and excessive decline of the groundwater table.

d) World Water Day for 1997 and 1998

64. The meeting was informed that ECA assisted the Ethiopian Government to celebrate this day in 1996. Each year at the ACC meeting on water resources a theme is selected for the World Water Day. In 1997, it will be related to freshwater assessment. However, to date a phrase has not been coined. It is planned to have a major event in Morocco around the same time. The King himself has taken a keen interest in the event. Invitation have been extended to a number of heads of states. This will most probably be held in March 1997. It is not sure at this stage how the collaboration will proceed. The World Water Council will be playing a leading role in the preparation in Morocco.

65. In 1998, it is intended that World Water Day will be linked to the theme of groundwater resources. A request was made to all present to make this day one of importance and that all agencies involved should submit 1-2 pages input outlining activities undertaken in each country that can be published through the bulletin produced by ECA, i.e. Maji.

66. A question was raised as to how the World Water Council co-ordinates its efforts with different UN agencies. The lead agency responsible for WWD rotates between the UN Agencies. In 1997, the lead agency will be WMO because of the theme selected on fresh water.

Presentation and discussion on IGWA Member Agencies' activities in water sector in Africa (Agenda item 8)

67. ECA organized in March 1996 an expert group meeting on private sector participation in water resource development in Africa.

68. UNIDO will have two meetings next year as part of the Ecologically sustainable Industrial Development programme. Projects are being developed but there are constraints in financing these. It is intended to hold a workshop in Mauritius on this theme. It is planned to hold Environment Day for African countries on the 5th of October everyday and it is intended that the theme will be water resources.

69. WHO/EMRO held a meeting in ESCWA region in July 1996 to discuss a strategy for water conservation in the region. There is an information exchange network for water supply and sanitation with a focal point in every country. There is also a directory of all concerned agencies available. A need was identified for more collaboration on the issue of water quality monitoring. A lead agency should be identified to provide guidance to others. A database has already been established through the GEMS programme. Wastewater standards are not available and this is an aspect that needs further attention for the collective UN agencies. ECA stated that water resource quality monitoring was discussed at the Paris meeting of the ACC Steering Committee on Water Resources in October 1996. It was decided that it was too complex and expensive for any one agency to support. GEMS has only sampled two to three surface water sources in each continent. It was emphasised that co-ordinated capacity building efforts was more important than directly supporting monitoring efforts at the country level.

Date and Venue of the Sixth IGWA Meeting (Agenda Item 9)

70. It was undecided as to where the next meeting would be held. An offer was made by UNICEF/Egypt to host the meeting in Cairo. However, the question was raised as to whether to host two meetings in two successive years (1996, 1997) in the same country, i.e. Egypt. The dates will be set either for late November or early December 1997. A suggestion was also made for WHO/Morocco to host the meeting in 1997. A request will be made through the WHO/EMRO Office. The IGWA secretariat will be informed by WHO/EMRO for follow-up action.

Any Other Business (Agenda item 10)

71. There was no other business raised at the meeting.

Adoption of Report (Agenda Item 11)

72. The meeting reviewed the draft report presented by the secretariat and the rapporteur and approved it subject to final editing by the latter.

Closing of the Meeting (Agenda I2)

73. At the closing session, the representative of ECA thanked the WHO/EMRO concerned officers and staff for their excellent preparation for the meeting. He particularly thanked the support staff of WHO/EMRO for their excellent efforts in seeing that all meeting arrangements were made effectively and efficiently. He congratulated the Chairman of the meeting (Mr. Kosh-Chashm, Regional Advisor of WHO/EMRO) for his leadership and diligence in conducting the meeting and guiding it to its successful conclusion.

74. The Chairman, in turn, appreciated the IGWA secretariat's (ECA) effort in making all substantive arrangements (documentation etc.) for the meeting. He also thanked all agency representatives for their active participation in the deliberations of the meeting.

**FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
INTERAGENCY GROUP FOR WATER IN AFRICA
ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT 3-5 DECEMBER 1996**

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**FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
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In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

**WELCOMING STATEMENT
ON BEHALF OF DR. HUSSEIN A. GEZAIRY
THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR
WHO EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION**

Distinguished Representatives of the Interagency Group for Water in Africa,
Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me a great pleasure to welcome you to the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Interagency Group for Water in Africa. I am very glad that this important meeting is being held here, at the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, in Alexandria.

I do not have to elaborate on the importance of water to health and quality of life. The scarcity of water resources in many countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region poses a major challenge to socioeconomic development and, consequently, to the health of the population. The overall objective of your gathering, which is to harmonize the beneficial uses of water in Africa, has the potential for major positive impact on health.

This meeting relates to the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa in its focus on water priorities in the continent. These priorities include: assuring sustainable and equitable fresh water, household water security, fresh water assessment and water for food security. It can be seen from the range of areas covered by these priorities that water has much wider impact on health in Africa. Water-borne and water-related diseases are of most direct concern to WHO. In this respect, malaria, schistosomiasis, onchocerciasis and lymphatic filariasis are among the diseases that affect a large segment of the population in the Nile basin. Water-borne and sanitation-related diseases are also among the major causes of infant mortality and morbidity, particularly in poor and economically underprivileged environments.

WHO has extensive collaborative programmes with the countries concerned to assist them in control of the above diseases. To combat water-borne and water-related ailments, an integrated approach is needed, where health, social, behavioral, economical, political and administrative factors are carefully harmonized. Your meeting augurs well for adoption of a coordinated and integrated strategy in this regard.

WHO is also very much concerned with the environmental impact of water development activities, especially as it relates to health. The misuse of pesticides, insecticides and chemical fertilizers, which pollute water bodies, has environmental and, potentially, harmful and chronic health effects. Similarly, other harmful environmental changes that result from construction of dams, irrigation schemes and consequent changes to human settlement patterns can adversely affect health. Municipal and industrial wastewaters also pose health concerns, especially when polluted streams and water bodies are used as drinking water sources.

Without adequate economic development, it is difficult to achieve a satisfactory level of health and environmental services. At the same time, if proper health and environment protection measures are not present, major development schemes with regard to agriculture, hydroelectricity, industry, housing, transportation, etc. can harm people. Water and water-related schemes have a crucial impact on development and hence on health. Therefore, we in WHO strongly believe that it is imperative to evaluate the environmental and health impact of major water-related development activities from the planning stage.

The river Nile is the main source of water in Egypt and Sudan in our Region. Therefore, WHO/EMRO is keenly interested to ensure that health and environment aspects of water-related developments are given high priority. We will be glad to collaborate on a regional basis in strategy and policy formulation, as well as to cooperate at the project and field levels with all concerned.

One of the prime constraints to improving health in the developing countries, especially the least developed, is the lack of access to safe water and the absence of proper sanitation facilities. In relation to Africa, WHO has initiated the Africa 2000 scheme, with the aim of assisting countries to reach adequate coverage of their population with safe water supply and sanitation. It is hoped, through this initiative, to mobilize internal funds and attract necessary external funds and resources. You will hear more details about Africa 2000 in this meeting. We sincerely hope that the regional banks and funds, especially the African Development Bank, will play a leading role in mobilizing and progressing Africa 2000.

This is also a good opportunity to share with you the experience of WHO/EMRO in the rehabilitation and construction of water supply and sanitation networks in Afghanistan. This effective programme, which uses food-for work and low-cost technology, has been able to construct new, and rehabilitate out of service, water supply projects in a number of towns, despite the often severe conditions of civil strife. The experience in Afghanistan is of interest for Africa 2000. We will be glad to share the approaches and methods used in this successful programme, which has provided good water supply at very low cost.

On a broader level, we in WHO/EMRO, have proposed a Regional Technical Cooperation Initiative. As part of this action, skilled personnel from the more developed countries of the Region will be seconded to the least developed countries to provide support in attaining rapid coverage of the population with water supply and sanitation. WHO/EMRO will coordinate this initiative, which in effect is a practical form of "Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries."

Finally, I wish to inform you that WHO/EMRO is the focal point for a Regional Inter-Agency Task Force on Land and Water Resources. So far, two meetings of this task force have been held here in WHO/EMRO and strategies and measures have been developed for close coordination and cooperation between the United Nations and regional agencies.

In conclusion, I cannot overemphasize our keen professional interest here at EMRO in the deliberations of this meeting. I look forward to hearing the result of your deliberations and recommendations.

I wish your meeting success and hope you will have a pleasant stay in Alexandria.

**FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
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STATEMENT OF THE OAU REPRESENTATIVE

MR. I. NUR

Mr. Chairman,
WHO Representative,
ECA Representative,
Representatives of the Organizations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is for me a great honour and pleasure,,on behalf of the Organization of African Unity to address this august meeting at a time when you are about to discuss a topic which is a priority issue for Africa, namely, water development.

First of all, I wish to thank the Executive Secretary of the ECA for inviting the OAU to participate in your deliberations. Secondly, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the WHO/EMRO for hosting this meeting.

Coming after the World Food Summit, which stressed, among other things, the development of water resources, your meeting has chosen to deal with a number of issues including the problems, prospects and development of the Nile River Basin. The Nile River Basin involves 10 countries, it also involves problems, it is a critical issue. Member countries of the Nile River Basin have to agree among themselves, first and foremost to solve their relevant problems. UN system Organizations, IGOs, NGOs and the private sector can do their share. They can assist in the process to approach the problem, assist in the negotiations, provide options, assist in undertaking research and studies and assist in capacity building in the concerned member States.

The integrated water resources development of the Nile Basin could be divided into the following aspects:

political aspect, technical, co-operative, harmonization of activities, public awareness, information system, data base and publication of technical aspects.

The political aspect is the most important part of the integrated water resources development of the Nile Basin. If this aspect is not approached, all related issues will just go in circles. The political aspect has to be discussed by the policy making bodies of the OAU, so as the latter could give the necessary guidelines and directives for approaching the problem of the Nile River Basin.

The international community could play a central role in helping the countries of the Nile Basin to come closer to each other, and in guiding them towards the establishment of a central body for co-ordinating and planning the integrated development of the Nile Basin, as adopted and practised in several international rivers namely: Rhine, Mekong and Senegal.

The OAU General Secretariat has flagged the issue of the Nile River Basin, and your meeting can be assured to have a good partner with you. We will do our level best when we can. Let everyone of us, who is here, put his hand in the pudding at the preparation stage and not at the eating stage.

Water is like a knife, it can take away life or it can give life. We need to be careful, water use has to be sustainable especially with respect to environment. There is serious under utilisation of existing water resources for the purpose of irrigation, which is currently employed on only 8% of Africa's arable lands. There is considerable potential for small scale, rural, community - oriented irrigation schemes at affordable costs. We need to improve the efficiency of water utilization, in conjunction with other measures.

Africa has no problem of water shortage, but it has a problem of water management and development. Every year, the equivalent of 4,500 billion cubic meters of water from African rivers flow into neighbouring seas and oceans. 75% of this water could be used to irrigate as much as 220 to 260 million hectares. Every effort should be made in the area of promoting irrigated agriculture, including the development of small-scale irrigation rather than large-scale irrigation for environmental and economic reasons.

The attention of our member States should be drawn to research and development of local food crops and the necessity of taking advantage of resources provided by our rich heritage and biodiversity, to improve the quality of food and thus combat malnutrition. We cannot talk about achieving food security without talking about the development and utilization of irrigated agriculture.

The World Food Summit, which was held in Rome, Italy, from 13 to 17 November 1996, underlined that close to 800 million people from the developing countries, are suffering from malnutrition. It pledged its political will to reduce the number of undernourished people to half their present level by no later than the year 2015. The number of hungry and malnourished people in Africa has reached 175 million. There are to-day more hungry people, more poor farmers and agriculture is in a worse state than the case was two decades ago.

The African Heads of State and Government, through the OAU, committed themselves to redress the problem of food security and agricultural development. In July 1996, they adopted an African common position on Food Security and Agricultural Development in anticipation of the World Food Summit. The common position underlines irrigated agriculture, it also underlines the fact that development of Africa is the prime responsibility of the Africans themselves.

Water plays a vital role in the production of food. The world is becoming more and more aware of the preciousness of water. It is also essential to realize the international obligations nations have towards each other in sharing and securing the utmost care in the use and management of water resources. Training of more manpower is a pre-requisite to the successful undertaking of any programme related to water development.

The other questions associated with water development is that of energy. The uncertainty of development alternative sources makes it imperative to carry out accelerated development of hydropower energy in Africa.

An important conclusion from general consideration of the factors in socio-economic development is that the role of water cannot be isolated and defined independently of other development factors. Water's role in development generally is closely associated with the roles of complementary factors and the existence of favourable water resources conditions without the availability of complimentary development factors may not be sufficient in itself to ensure development.

Mr. Chairman, I wish you fruitful deliberation.

I thank you.

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**OPENING REMARKS BY
MR. AZM FAZLUL HOQUE
REPRESENTING
UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

Dr. M. El Sheikh Mahgoub,
Director of the Health Services
Development Programme of the WHO-EMRO,
Distinguished representatives of
the United Nations and other Agencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please allow me to begin by greeting you all this morning at this beautiful setting in this historic city of Alexandria, Egypt. Let me also take this opportunity to thank our gracious host, WHO/EMRO and its concerned staff for their hospitality to all of us and also for making all arrangements for our meeting.

As you all know, the objectives of the Interagency Group for Water in Africa (IGWA) are to coordinate and harmonize the work of all concerned United Nations and other international, regional and subregional agencies involved in the water sector in Africa; and to promote interagency joint programme activities in Africa in this sector. The importance of coordination and harmonization in the water sector in Africa is recognized by all UN and other agencies including those who have not attended the annual meetings of IGWA in recent years. For example, this year, ECA as the secretariat of IGWA received correspondence from such agencies as UNDP, UNDDSMS, UNU and others emphasizing the importance of the annual IGWA meetings though regretting their inability to be represented at this meeting. Incidentally, they all requested the ECA secretariat to send them copies of the report of this meeting when it is ready and available.

These requests testify to the importance of our meeting and to that of the work of IGWA. This year's meeting of IGWA taking place in Egypt is all the more important because the meeting's agenda includes an item dealing with intercountry and interagency cooperation for integrated water resources development of the Nile River Basin. Perhaps, no other development issue is more important to our host country as the Nile River issue. It is therefore my firm belief that both our host country as well as all other Nile riparian countries will be closely watching the proceedings of this meeting and its outcome.

This year's meeting of IGWA will also discuss a number of other water issues of particular importance to Africa. It will discuss the UN Secretary-General's Special Initiative on Africa which has an important component dealing with water resources. Currently, a number of initiatives dealing with water in Africa are underway. For example, there is Africa 2000 programme by WHO; Africa Working Group of the global Collaborative Council is active in the water and sanitation sector; there is the Working Group on Water chaired by UNEP and the World Bank under the Secretary General's Special Initiative and of course there is the work of ECA and IGWA. With all these initiatives going on in the sector, there is a need for coordination more than ever before in order to avoid duplication and overlap and also to ensure effectiveness of these initiatives so as to maximize their impact in the African countries. In that respect, IGWA's role as the coordinating body is all the more important.

Distinguished participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The other role of IGWA as I mentioned earlier is to promote joint interagency activity in water sector in Africa. In that respect, I should like to mention here that ECA is currently collaborating effectively with the International Atomic Energy Agency in implementing a groundwater monitoring project in Africa. Under a mutual agreement, ECA is hosting two IAEA experts for at least a year and possibly beyond. This arrangement is found to be most cost effective and beneficial to all concerned African countries. It is expected that similar arrangements could be worked out among other IGWA member agencies.

Another prospective area for interagency cooperation as I had also noted earlier is the Nile basin area. A number of initiatives are also presently underway in the Nile basin area. For example, there is the on-going Nile 2002 initiative; there is the work of the Teconile; there is UNESCO's "Friends of Nile" initiative; and there are the ongoing efforts by ECA, UNEP, UNDP and the World Bank in the Nile basin area. It is therefore important that there is effective coordination of these initiatives as well, in order to avoid duplication and overlap. It is with this intention that ECA proposes to place on the agenda for this meeting a recent (1995) study by ECA on problems and prospects for intercountry cooperation for integrated water resources development of the Nile river basin for discussion by this Group. It is expected that the member agencies will be able to identify and agree on some joint activities in this area.

Distinguished participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I believe, we have an important and heavy agenda for our meeting dealing with some crucial water issues in Africa. It is my sincere hope that, as professionals, we will be able to put our thoughts together on these issues for the next three days and come up with a concrete plan of action for future collaboration among our agencies on these important issues.

I wish all of us good deliberations, and a successful meeting.
Thank you for your attention.



ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Fifth Annual Meeting of the Interagency Group for Water in Africa

Alexandria, Egypt 3-5 December 1996

AGENDA

1. (a) Opening of the meeting by a representative of WHO
 (b) Opening remarks on behalf of participating agencies
2. Election of officers of the bureau of IGWA for 1996-97
3. Adoption of agenda and programme of work for the meeting
4. (a) Study on transboundary water issues in Africa (by ECA) and
 discussions thereon
 (b) Study on intercountry and inter-agency cooperation in the Nile river
 basin (by ECA)
5. Report on follow-up of the action plan adopted by the 1995 UNECA/WMO
 conference on Water Resources: Policy and Assessment in Africa (by WMO)
6. Collaborative and joint programme activities:
 - (a) United Nations Systemwide Special Initiative on Africa (by UNEP)
 - (b) Enhanced collaboration for water supply and sanitation development
 (WHO/ADB/UNICEF/ECA and others)
 - (c) Report on joint programming (IAEA, FAO, ECA)
 - (d) World Day for Water 1997 and 1998
7. Presentation and discussions on IGWA member agencies activities in water
 sector in Africa
8. Date and venue of the sixth annual meeting of the Group
9. Any other business
10. Adoption of the report
11. Closure of the meeting