



# 5th General Assembly

Marseille, France, 14-16 October 2009

## World Water Council

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Strategy 2010-2012  
Input Board of Governors  
Madrid, 20 June 2009

The following note provides an overview of the inputs received during the 34<sup>th</sup> Board of Governors meeting on the development of the World Water Council 2010 – 2012 strategy. The comments are organised along major headlines and not attributed to individual speakers. The below issues will be further enriched by inputs received from the consultation of the members through a short questionnaire and additional input received from members, partners. Also, on several issues, governors have committed to develop more detailed outlines of possible initiatives.

### **1. CURRENT SITUATION**

The world is changing and the Council will need to evolve with it. Changes affecting water and the Council not only relate to climate change, but rather include a wide variety of changes that the world is experiencing. An evolving Council not only needs to update the themes it is working on, it also needs to changes in the way it is communicating, it is fostering partnerships, and it is working with its members.

The current world situation is often captured by the concept of 'crisis'. Not only a financial and economic crisis but also a development and environmental crisis. In a crisis situation it is important to work together with all parties involved towards the same ends. While a crisis is unfolding one should, however, not forget to place the Council's work in the context of sustainable development and the need to improve the management of our environment to tackle the world's resource crisis.

### **2. COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC ROLE AND STRENGTHS**

To Council needs to become more strategic in where it focuses its attention on. In doing so, it has to maintain its leading position and build on what it has done and where it is good at including the World Water Forum, the High Level Panels and its programmatic work. However, the Council does not exist solely to organise a World Water Forum every three years. It increasingly needs to focus on what happens between and besides World Water Forums. This work can be developed through capitalising from Forum work and reports, elaborate on Forum outcomes and define a hierarchy of priorities on water issues.

The Council is to promote and foster a greater sense of global collective action that interlinks the water community, including at the regional level. It has to continue to strengthen its openness and inclusivity and establish exchanges with other sectors and communities. Its added value is to assemble different people around the table and create multi-stakeholder platforms to discuss water issues. This involves explicitly connecting elected officials with thematic issues to foster uptake of these issues in the political arena.

The convening power of the Council is enhanced by its role to reinforce the reflection and debate around key themes through casting light on critical resources and development issues. In doing so, it can play both a re-active and a pro-active role. It can help to clarify the debate, particularly when problems are complex and cross cutting and views are divided. It can also help to define critical obstacles and near future blockages to create focus in the dialogue. Based on this work, it could add further value by giving strong messages on critical issues.

Furthermore, the Council's role is to bring focus to collective action to achieve tangible impacts on policies and practices. This implies that it should focus also on problem solving and the development of concrete proposals for action. However, the Council is not an implementing or monitoring body. Implementation or oversight could best be done by Council members and partners.

### **3. THEMATIC ISSUES**

A number of key issues were identified in relation to the policy and programmatic focus for the Council in the period 2010-2012.

#### ***'Outside the water-box'***

Water is a means for other economic and social sectors to achieve their goals and ends. Given the importance of water for societies, the Council needs to open dialogues with other sectors and communicate at high level and with decision powers in these sectors. It is only in partnership with other bodies that the Council will be able to influence policies and decision makers in other sectors, including at governmental level. A range of sectors could form the focus of attention of the Council, including: energy, agriculture, industry, health, environment, education, and tourism.

#### ***Water and Sanitation***

The world continues to face a major challenge with reaching the Millennium Development Goals. Both for water supply and for sanitation many countries are set to not achieve the goals if no major actions are taken. The Council will need to see how it can work with its members in the promotion of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

A particular emphasis needs to be placed by the Council on sanitation. The Council could create a further focus on 'total system' thinking and practices in sanitation. It could bring together parties to create political will to implement sanitation solutions.

In addition, the Council could provide greater focus to the debate on what constitute a 'proper, more efficient use of water'. Special attention could be given to multi-use operations of infrastructure to stimulate growth, reduce poverty and maintain the environment. Finally, the Council could further emphasize work on the resources itself focusing on creating awareness on the lack of knowledge on the resource that is essential for a sustainable management.

#### ***Global Change & Climate Change***

The world has changed and continues to rapidly change giving rise to a great deal of uncertainties. Water management interventions are often amongst the key mechanisms humans have used to adapt to uncertainties. There is a need to better understand the relative importance of the many changes and pressures societies and water will come under in the decades to come.

The Council could further work on climate change and variability by building on the work done on this issue by the Council and its members at the World Water Forum and on water and disasters. As such there is a need for the Council to establish a clear post-Forum follow-up towards and beyond the UNFCCC COP15 (December 2009) on this issue. It should include guidance on a new investment framework for adapting water management to climate change.

#### ***Energy and Agriculture***

With up to 70% of available freshwater consumed worldwide for agriculture, there is a clear need for the Council to put further emphasis on this issue. In doing so, it needs to build on the work initiated with FAO and expand this to work with other members such as ICID.

There are clear linkages with water used for energy production. This issue needs also attention of the Council on its own right as significant linkages exist and need to be clarified in close cooperation with its members such as IHA and the energy sector. For both food and energy, the Council could take a leadership role in developing and promoting the use of water footprinting and establish a linkage with academia, businesses and NGOs working on this issue already.

#### ***Governance & Right to Water***

Governance is an important issue the Council needs to address. As governance is sometimes deemed rather abstract, the Council has a role to play in promoting concrete applications of 'good water governance' that lead to real impact in people's life.

Firstly, there is a need to continue to work on the Right to Water. This could include a review of the progress made in the countries that have recognized the Right to Water in their national legislation. The Council could also create a High

Level Panel on the Right to Water that prepares a review or position paper which is presented and discussed at the next Forum.

There is also a need to follow up on the Forum parliamentarians work. The Council needs to take a leadership role in the development of the Water Help-Desk for parliamentarians working closely with its members, parliamentarians and specialised partner organisations. The Council could also start working on transparency and accountability issues in the water sector, working with members and partners such as the Water Integrity Network.

The Council also has a role to play at the international level to promote 'global water governance'. This would complement work that the Council could initiate on transboundary water governance and 'hydro-solidarity'. In particular, the Council has a possible role to play as a provider of neutral ideas, enabling multi-stakeholder dialogues and mobilising its members and partners.

### ***Economics and Finance***

There is a clear demand for the Council to work on issues related to the economic and financial crisis. In doing so, the Council needs to take into account a number of perspectives, including: development views, industrial applications, end users etc. The Council could focus its work on; a) assessing the risk posed by the economic crisis to the water sector, and b) defining how investments in water could help to 'restart' the economic engine through spending on water. To do so, would require the Council to work closely with members and partners in the banking and lending sector. This work could lead to defining (new) lending approaches and priorities, and possibly to the promotion of financing for water projects and programmes more generally.

The Council could also look into the challenges posed by sustainable financing of water services including the capacity of consumers to pay for services. This could be linked to work on tariffs and taxes in the water sector to create further clarity on this amongst a wider audience.

### ***Capacity development & Education***

The water sector continues to face a major challenge in maintaining and developing capacities of water planners and managers. The Council could work on raising awareness about the wave of retirements of water professionals and the growing gap in the developing world of trained professionals. It also could focus more on promoting education and training in developing countries, encouraging long-term investments in continued education in the water sector.

## **4. REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT**

The Council is at a critical point when it comes to further engagement at the regional level. There is a role for the Council to create regional platforms to promote dialogue and (new) initiatives in regions. These would need to build on and work closely with existing regional institutions, Council members and partners. These institutions could be given lead responsibility for organising regional groupings under the guidance of the Council. Engagement with regions should have tangible and visible outputs.

Better linking with regions could be linked to improvement of the regional processes in preparation of the World Water Forum. This can be done through internet-based 'virtual fora' or working on 'subregional' (emblematic) issues using the Council's convening power.

Working in different regions, the Council needs to put more emphasis on the engagement with politicians, building on initiatives such as the Istanbul Water Consensus and the Parliamentarians Help Desk. Working with regions should attract and inspire political leaders at the highest possible levels. This could be associated with the co-organisation of regional water summits (eg in Africa, Asia...)

Further developing the Council's engagement with regions will be key to developing its membership. The Council could add value to existing regional work and through this attract new members, possibly through new types of services. In working with regions, the Council needs to recognize and work closely with existing regional structures, including the Global Water Partnership.

## **5. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS**

Why doesn't water generate more interest and attention globally? Water kills 1000s of people per day! The Council has an important role to play on this. Strategic communications is critical for the Council if it is to inform and influence

debates on water, development and the environment. The role of the Council is to articulate key issues and use the generation of knowledge to support dialogue and decision making at global and regional levels.

There is a need for narrowing the range of activities thus not being too ambitious. This would help to create greater visibility, for example through choosing more 'visible themes' and to the notion that a clearer, sharper focus would enable greater global policy impact. The Council should choose themes and partnerships that give it greater visibility and influence, particularly at the political level. To do so, requires develop influencing strategies that are particularly focused at the political level and use the influencing power of the media.

To strengthen the Council's leading position in terms of water and media, the Council needs to choose a limited number of themes and connect 'à l'actualité' and give us greater visibility and influence, particularly at the political level. This requires the Council not only to go with the media 'mainstream' but also influence on what the media should be reporting. In this sense, the Council could be both proactive and reactive in its media approach: create some debates and only contribute to others.

To achieve this, the Council needs to continue to work closely with a set of leading journalist. It could also develop new partnerships that help to create the visibility, particularly on issues where the Council is not known for. To create 'news stories' the Council needs to connect to the practitioners level and use the opportunity of large international gatherings to publicize issues and solutions. In doing so, the Council can also provide further moral support on issues to members through its strategic communications.

## **6. MEMBERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIPS**

The Council is a democratic institution in which the members play an important role. The current Board has to render account on its mandate to the members during the next General Assembly and assess whether it has lived up to the member's expectations. As such the General Assembly of members forms an important moment in the Council's life.

But, what is the relevance of members to the Council? Are we not putting too much importance on members? Only 6% of revenue originates from membership fees. The Council needs to clearly determine why the members are important and from that the profile of its membership, for example focusing on developing countries.

If the Council wishes to retain members, these need to feel important and represented. Members need to be interested and involved in the Council and its work. When members are more involved they can become an important resource to deliver the Council's work.

This requires the Council to more turn towards its members and develop a special membership engagement and outreach. The members need to receive a clear definition of benefits and be appreciative of these. This means that the communication with members needs to improve, including through a stronger linkage with the Board members and the Council's leadership.

Complementary to the notion of membership, there is a rapidly evolving notion of partnership development and outreach. Particularly in terms of developing pragmatic responses to policy issues, new partnerships are critical. Special attention could be given to partnerships with the United Nations, World Water Assessment Programme, and the Global Water Partnership. This could help drive forward shared agendas and foster debate and dialogue on key water policy issues, including in preparations for the World Water Forum 2012.

In general, partnerships should be on the basis of key actions to achieve change at a global level or international (regional) level. Through its strategic partnerships, the Council could gain access to ideas, resources and networks that it would otherwise not have access to.

## **7. WAYS OF WORKING**

The Council has developed a number of critical ways of working that are widely recognized.

### ***World Water Forum***

The Forum is an extraordinary event. The Council should 'surf' on the success of the last Forum and create momentum early on for the next Forum. It will be important to strengthen the Forum further and improve the quality of inputs, debates, networking and outcomes. Also the regional processes could be further strengthened. While a success, one should be careful about the size of Forum and carefully consider what would be the best size-fit.

For the Forum to remain successful the concept needs to further evolve. It needs to continue to be very open and have participants perceive this and put trust in the participatory processes developed. The upcoming General Assembly could be a good starting point for creating the next Forum buy-in.

The results of 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum are very important. However, there is a need to put more emphasis on the process for following-up on the Forum. At present, there is an insufficiently planned mechanism to induce implementation of outcomes and commitments. The development and championing of Forum outputs should form part of these strategies and comprise our major political leverage point. The Council should stimulate the application of commitments and recommendations towards institutions that have made them, for example by stimulating ownership in ministries. This with the specific objective of helping governments to develop sound policy around the key issues of the day.

#### **High Level Panels**

The High Level Panels form an important and growing asset for the Council. It is critical for the Council to continue to use the panels to underpin the implementation of Forum outputs and to help bridge thematic and political processes both between and during the Forums. Thus these panels need to be continued and embellished.

#### **Highly visible activities**

The Council could develop a limited set of key activities that are highly visible and keep engagement going in between Forums. In particular when it wishes to engage with other sectors it needs to focus on visibility and impact. Hosting additional meetings with other partners or regional Forums could be used for this purpose.

#### **Platform Exchange**

To remain relevant, the Council needs to reinforce its capacity to establish exchanges between political and technical oriented institutions and people. This provides an important niche for the Council in the near future.

## **8. MEANS**

The Council is very ambitious and one has to recognize that its human and financial resources are limited. Therefore it needs to be both pragmatic and focus on strengthening the Council's financial autonomy. With the wealth of knowledge the Council could generate, it could create new sources of income.

The Council will need to mobilise more of the resources available amongst members and partners. This will imply an evolving role for the Governors and the Secretariat to enable and facilitate partners to work together to achieve common objectives. A close cooperation with the World Water Forum 2012 will also be needed.