

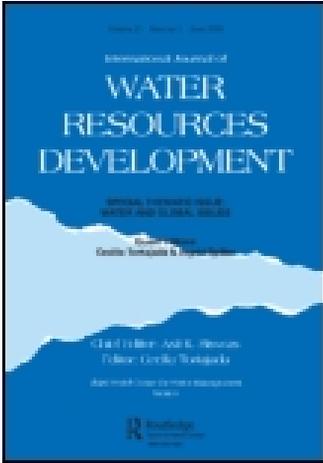
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International Workshop on National Water Master Plans

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ties. They are also at different stages of development. However, the very fact that the senior decision makers from the co-basin countries are willing to meet in such a Forum, albeit a closed one, for a free and frank discussion of the issues, can only augur well for the future.

The commissioned papers for the forum and its conclusions and recommendations will shortly be published by Oxford University Press.

*Asit K. Biswas, Chairman
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Oxford, UK*

International Workshop on National Water Master Plans

Mexico City, 27–29 March 1995

The International Workshop on National Water Master Plans was convened in the Hotel Calinda Geneve, Mexico City, 27–29 March 1995. The Workshop was jointly sponsored by the Committee on International Waters of the International Water Resources Association (IWRA), and the Comisión Nacional del Agua (CNA) of Mexico with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Participation in the workshop was by invitation only and was limited to 35 leading international and Mexican experts on national water master plans. Five national case studies were specifically commissioned for review and discussion during the workshop. These were from Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Nepal and Mexico. In addition, two other major studies were presented, one by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reviewing its experiences with some two decades of support for national water master plans in several developing countries, and the other by the World Bank recommending guidelines for preparation of national water strategies.

In opening the workshop, Guillermo Guerrero Villalobos, Director-General of CNA, pointed out that there have been major institutional changes in Mexico under the new Administration. CNA is now a decentralized organization, which is no longer part of the Ministry of Agriculture, the sector which is the biggest user of water, but part of the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Fisheries. The concept of centralized planning, which was almost exclusively carried out by the Federal Government, has been replaced by decentralized and participative planning wherein the various stakeholders have an influence in policy formulation, alternative designs, investment choices and management options affecting their communities. The problems Mexico had to face in ensuring efficient, equitable and environmentally sound development of the country's water resources have demanded constant evolution of the water planning process as well as the institutional setting and the legal framework for water management. Other developing countries have had to face similar challenges. The present workshop had provided an ideal opportunity to review the different approaches used by various countries. This sharing of experiences between the countries with somewhat similar backgrounds can only be beneficial to everyone.

In setting the scene for the workshop, Prof. Asit K. Biswas, the convenor, said

water has already become a critical resource issue for many developing countries, and a serious water crisis can be expected in numerous developing countries within the next decade. Hence, efficient national water planning is an important requirement. During the past two decades, several developing countries have prepared national water master plans with varying degrees of success. Many other countries are embarking on preparation of national water master plans. Hence, it is essential to review objectively the planning processes used by different countries so that the water profession can learn from such experiences.

There were intensive and extensive discussions on different aspects of the planning process. Many fundamental problems and issues were raised, among which were the following:

- How can sustainable water development be defined so that it has an identical meaning for everyone concerned? How can the concept be operationalized?
- National goals and objectives often change with each new government. Planning is a long-term process. How can the changing national priorities be effectively and promptly reflected in the plans?
- Plans of other major sectors such as agriculture, industry, power and environment have major impacts on water requirements and availability. How can all these sectoral plans be harmonized?
- How should the planning process be evaluated? Who should do the evaluation and for whom?
- What should be the role of private investment?
- How can the planning process be institutionalized to ensure its implementation?
- Cost recovery and water pricing are receiving increasing attention. How should agricultural water be priced, and how can we ensure the fees are actually collected?
- How can political support be generated and maintained for the water sector?
- Through what process can the stakeholders participate effectively in planning?
- What should be the role of professional and activist non-governmental organizations?
- Water has not received much attention in the national and international agenda. How can this situation be changed?
- Capacity building in various aspects of water planning is an urgent necessity. How can this be achieved?

The specially commissioned case studies and reports for the workshop, as well as the summary of its discussions and conclusions, will shortly be published by Oxford University Press, with Asit K. Biswas, César Herrera, Hector Garduno and Cecilia Tortajada as editors.

Asit K. Biswas (Oxford) and Cecilia Tortajada (Mexico City)
Chairman and Vice-Chairman
Committee on International Waters
International Water Resources Association

CALENDAR

October 17–20 1995, Iraklio, Crete, Greece

Second International Symposium on 'Wastewater Reclamation and Reuse'. *Contact:* Mrs T. Furnaraki, Municipal Enterprise for Water Supply and Sewerage of Iraklio, 1 Vironos St., 71202 Iraklio, Greece. Tel: + 30 81 229913/225833; fax: + 30 81 229991.

October 22–27 1995, Tsukuba, Japan

Sixth International Conference on the Conservation and Management of Lakes. *Contact:* Lake Kasumigaura Water Pollution Control Division, Department of Civil Life and Environment, Ibaraki Prefectural Government, 1-5-38 Sannomaru, Mito, Ibaraki 310, Japan. Tel: + 81 292 246905; fax: + 81 292 332351.

November 5–9 1995, Houston, Texas, USA

AWRA 31st Annual Conference & Symposia: 'Water Management in Urban Areas'; 'Advances in Model Use and Development in Water Resources'; and 'North American Water Resources'. *Contact:* AWRA, 950 Herndon Pkwy, Suite 300, Herndon, VA 22070-5528, USA. Tel: 703/904-1225; fax: 703/904-1228.

November 18–24 1995, Abu Dhabi, UAE

World Congress on Desalination and Water Reuse. *Contact:* IDA Program Chairman, Government of Abu Dhabi, Water & Electricity Dept., PO Box 219, Abu Dhabi, UAE. Tel/Fax: 971-2-772-530.

November 27–30, Newcastle, NSW, Australia

International Conference on Modelling and Simulation. *Contact:* Secretariat, Dept. of Civil Engineering and Surveying, University of Newcastle, Newcastle NSW 2308, Australia. Tel: 61-49-21-5735; fax: 61-49-21-6991.

January 4–8 1996, Orlando, FL, USA

CONSERV96. *Contact:* Rick Harmon, AWWA, 6666 West Quincy Ave, Denver, CO 80235. Tel: 303/794-7711.

March 4–6 1996, Arlington, VA, USA

Fifth Water Resources Operations Management Workshop: Water Resources Planning and Management Division, ASCE. *Contact:* Dr Paul Kirshen, River Systems Association, PO Box 440, Groton, MA 01450. Tel: 508/448-0934; or, Prof. Aris Georgakakos, School of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA 30332-0355. Tel: 404/894-2240.

April 16–19 1996, Vienna, Austria

HydroGIS '96: International Conference on Application of Geographic Information Systems in Hydrology and Water Resources Management. *Contact:* HydroGIS '96, c/o Austropa-Interconvention, PO Box 30, A-1043 Vienna, Austria. Tel: + 43(1) 588 00 110; fax: + 43(1) 586 71 27.

June 11–14 1996, Québec City, Canada

Ecohydraulics 2000. *Contact:* Dominique Houde, Secretariat c/o Agora Communication, 2600 Boulevard