

## EDITORIAL

The *International Journal of Water Resources Development* is now in its 29th year, having started in 1983. As expected, topics and depth of discussions have changed over the years. The focus, however, has remained on the water problems facing the world (see Biswas, 1983) and on the possible innovative means to solve them, with the objective of improving the quality of life of the people in different parts of the world.

Viewed through the lens of water, it would appear that water is one of the most important natural resources for overall development of any city or any country. Nevertheless, viewed through the lenses of policies and politics all over the world, this is clearly not the case. In spite of the fundamental role water plays in achieving overall development, economic prosperity, improvement of quality of life and environmental conservation, water resources all over the world, with very few exceptions, are increasingly scarce, polluted, mismanaged, misgoverned and poorly allocated. For example, the topics analyzed in this special issue remind us that, as important as water infrastructure is for development, there are still many lessons that need to be learnt in terms of management of related social and environmental issues.

Our journal has been produced by Taylor & Francis (T&F) from its inception, becoming part of a group whose history, as mentioned by Global Journals Publishing Director David Green, is the history of science publishing. In a workshop organized back in 2007 in Zaragoza, Spain, Dr Green gave a most engaging presentation on the evolution of water resources information and communication. He explained that Richard Taylor launched the *Philosophical Magazine* in 1798, with William Francis, a chemist, joining him in this enterprise in 1834. Some 56 years later, in 1890, pioneered abstracting journals launched *Science Abstracts*. In 1936, Taylor & Francis was established as a private limited company, with academics and directors as shareholders. The company was floated on the London Stock Exchange in 1998.

According to Dr Green, T&F has made a series of successful acquisitions over the years. Between 1798 and 1998, T&F was a privately owned, science-focused scholarly publisher. In the 1980s, it acquired Falmer Press, Psychology Press, Crane Russak, and Hemisphere. In 1998, it merged with Routledge and Carfax, broadening the portfolio into social science and humanities, as well as medicine. One year later, in 1999, T&F acquired Scandinavian Universities Press and its medical journals, mostly society-owned. Later on, in 2001, it was the turn of Gordon and Breach (STM and social sciences), and in 2003, of BIOS, CRC (STM), Frank Cass (political science, strategic studies, history), Marcel Dekker (STM), and Swets and Zeitlinger (STM/HSS). In 2004, it merged with Informa plc, and in 2006, with Lawrence Erlbaum, publisher of 100 psychology, education, communications and linguistics journals. It also entered into a co-publishing agreement with UNISA Press. Most recently, in 2012, it acquired Earthscan.

T&F is a very strong publisher, especially in the social sciences, arts and humanities under the Routledge imprint, and legacy physical and applied sciences under the T&F imprint. Approximately 10,500 articles are published in these journals every year, with roughly one-third of these articles appearing in policy-oriented journals.

The evolution of communication technologies has brought enormous advantages in terms of information dissemination. The traditional printed flow of information from authors to readers has given place to a digital flow, which has exponentially increased our ability to reach users in all corners of the developed world, and progressively more in the developing one. National and international publishing houses have also diversified their products, trying to provide services to different users in the most efficient manner. This includes the possibility of accessing a growing number of e-books and e-journals free of cost in many parts of the world. In the case of T&F Group, now one of the largest publishers worldwide, its portfolio has grown to include academic books, journals, e-books, textbooks, media, software, reference and online learning resources.

The gains from this incredibly rapid expansion of publishers, products and means of dissemination are immense for the academic and research world in terms of the quantity of information it can now access. Nevertheless, the challenge of improving the quality of knowledge remains, as does the need to promote the further excellence of discussions in many fields of theory and application of science as well as overall policy making, management, development and governance-related issues.

In the field of water resources development, the radical changes the global landscape is undergoing at present make it of utmost importance for universities, research centres, academic bodies and, most importantly, professors and researchers, to openly debate the relevance of the research that is being carried out as well as its usefulness to the advancement of science. Now more than ever, the change, challenges and increasing uncertainties facing efficient and equitable water resources policy, management, development and governance are of such extent that the research community cannot afford not to engage in debates on paradigms, policies, practices and programmes with the only goal to advance in science, in policy and in implementation.

The involvement of multiple actors in water resources planning, development and management, together with the concomitant rise in importance of issues such as responsibility, accountability, transparency, equity and fairness, have opened richer fields of research. In addition, simultaneous consideration of interrelated issues such as water and food production, fuel (including bioenergy) and electricity generation for an increasingly energy-hungry world, as well as the uncertainties introduced by climate change, failed states and globalization, for example, are making water management much more challenging than in the past and thus much more thought-provoking in terms of related research.

To acknowledge the impact of the work of our authors, from this year, we editors and the publisher of the journal have decided to recognize each year the paper that has been cited the most in the preceding year. The author(s) of the most cited paper will be awarded a special plaque acknowledging their contribution. In addition, the main author will receive a complimentary annual electronic subscription to the journal.

We would like to invite the academic, research, policy and water development communities, those authors who have published with us and those who have not yet done so, to submit their papers for possible publication in our journal. Further questioning,

debate and the challenging of prevailing wisdoms will only be positive: they will help to promote the advancement of knowledge.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank most sincerely all our reviewers who have supported us along the years with their valuable comments on the manuscripts. We are fortunate to have had the continuous support of outstanding experts who have generously given us their time and their insights, for which we are most grateful.

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### **Reference**

Biswas, A. (1983). Major water problems facing the world. *International Journal of Water Resources Development*, 1, 1–14.