

## Editorial

The idea of establishing a World Water Council (WWC) was first raised in mid-1991. It was discussed in some detail at the International Conference on Water and Environment, organized by the United Nations System, in Dublin, Ireland, in January 1992. This issue also came up at the Ministerial Conference on Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation, held in Noordwijk, the Netherlands, in March 1994.

During the 8th World Congress of the International Water Resources Association (IWRA), convened in November 1994 in Cairo, Egypt, a Special Session was organized on the institutional arrangements for international cooperation on water. This Session included three background papers and a panel discussion which featured leaders of prominent international associations and other organizations. This thematic issue of *Water Resources Development* includes the three background papers and a summary of the discussions.

The Cairo Session authorized Dr Mahmoud A. Abu-Zeid, the then IWRA President, to establish an Interim Founding Committee (IFC) to carry out the preparatory work to establish the Council. The members of IFC are the following: M.A. Abu-Zeid (Egypt, Chairman), Mohamed Ait Kadi (Morocco), Jamil S. K. Alawi (Bahrain), Leonard A. Bays (UK), Asit K. Biswas (UK), Gunila Björklund (Sweden), Madhav A. Chitale (India), Fernando González Villarreal (Mexico), Brian Grover (World Bank), Atef Hamdy (Italy), Frank Hartvelt (UNDP), Guy le Moigne (World Bank), Patrick Kahangire (Uganda), Sandra Postel (USA), Aly M. Shady (Canada), Glenn Stout (USA), Ranjit Wirasinha (Collaborative Council) and Xu Zhifang (China).

The first meeting of IFC was held in Montreal, Canada, 31 March–1 April 1995. At this meeting the members suggested the following on which comments are invited. The World Water Council is to be a non-profit, non-governmental, non-political organization. It will provide a neutral, independent and participatory forum, for its members and the global public, for exchanging views and information, for sharing experience and concerns, and for recommending actions to promote its mission and achieve its objectives. The interests and activities of the Council will be limited to those which cannot be managed at appropriate lower levels, particularly at the national and local levels. It will endeavour to rely on existing institutions to carry out specific tasks within their own areas of competence.

The specific objectives of the Council are to:

1. Identify critical water issues of global implication on the basis of available assessments of water.
2. Provide the forum to define a common strategic vision and platform to launch actions required for sustainable management and protection of global water.
3. Promote suitable mechanisms to raise awareness about critical water issues at all levels of decision making.
4. Provide advice and relevant information to institutions and decision makers

concerning actions which are required to ensure the sustainability of global, regional and national water.

5. Sponsor programmes and actions to promote policies and strategies for comprehensive water resources management.
6. Contribute to provision of mechanisms to resolve issues related to trans-boundary waters, including river basins and aquifers.
7. Assist in ensuring availability and accessibility of water for the poor and disadvantaged population and ensuring social and gender equity.
8. Promote the implementation of effective policies and strategies for integrated management of water demand and encourage appropriate actions to concerned organizations.

Membership of the Council may include:

- Professional and scientific associations, research and academic institutions;
- National World Water Council committees or coalitions of national water organizations;
- River basin organizations;
- Inter-governmental organizations and national water agencies;
- International development agencies including foundations, voluntary organizations, international development banks and bilateral external support agencies;
- United Nations specialized organizations;
- Private sector entities: consultants; manufacturers; utilities; service corporations and water companies;
- Non-government organizations working on water-related issues.

During its formation stage, the World Water Council will be directed by an Interim Board of Governors, selected from among founding stakeholders, who will prepare the draft constitution and by-laws of the World Water Council and oversee the development of the membership. The General Assembly, comprising all active World Water Council members, will be convened to approve the draft constitution and by-laws of the World Water Council, at which time the Interim Board of Governors will be dissolved.

The readers are encouraged to send comments on any aspect of the Council to the Chairman or any member of the Interim Founding Committee.

*Asit K. Biswas*