

Agreed Minutes

Eighth Governing Board Meeting Regional Centre on Urban Water Management

(under the auspices of UNESCO)

Tehran-Iran

04 September 2012

The Eighth Governing Board (GB) meeting was held in Tehran, 04 September 2012. The meeting was attended by the following honourable members:

Member States:

- **Iran**
H.E. Mr. Majid Namjoo, Chairman of the GB and Minister of Energy
Dr. Homayoun Motiee, Director, RCUWM-Tehran
- **Tajikistan**
Mr. Rahmat Bobokalonov, Minister of Water Economy and Land
Improvement
- **India**
H.E. Mr. Shri Vincent H. Pala, State Minister for Water Resources
- **Iraq**
H. E. Mr. Bokhtiar A. Rahman Abdulkarim, Advisor to the Minister of Water
Resources
- **Oman**
H.E. Mr. Ali bin Mohamed Al Abri, Under-Secretary for Water Resources
Affairs, Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Water Resources
- **Egypt**
Mr. Gamal Ismail Shaker Ibrahim, Representative, Ministry of Water
Resources and Irrigation
- **Syria**
Mr. Mouhammad Ousama Al Akhrass, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Water
Resources
- **Afghanistan**
Representative from the Embassy
- **Bangladesh**
Representative from the Embassy

- **Lebanon**
Representative from the Embassy
- **Pakistan**
Representative from the Embassy

Organisations:

- **UNESCO-IHP**
Mr. Imam Bisher, Deputy Secretary
Ms Tarja Virtanen, Director, UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office
 - **UNESCO-IHE**
Mr. Saroj Kumar Sharma, Representative
 - **The International Water Academy**
Mr. Ulf. Arne Gurgens, Chairman of Board of Trustees
 - **Inter-Islamic Network for Water Resources Development and Management**
Mr. Shihab Najib Al-Beirut, Representative
- 1- **Dr. Homayoun Motiee** as the Director of the Regional Centre on Urban Water Management welcomed all the participants to the 8th Governing Board Meeting. He wished a very pleasant stay in Tehran for all those traveling from abroad.
 - 2- The meeting was officially opened by **H.E. Mr. Majid Namjoo**, Minister of Energy, Islamic Republic of Iran and the Chairperson of the Governing Board.

The highlights of his speech were as follows:

- Appreciating the members efforts towards promoting RCUWM's activities and achievements
- A quick glance on RCUWM's activities after the 7th GB meeting particularly the International Drought Initiative
- The Centre is approaching its second 5 year period of activities and the third 5 year will launch after the evaluation is carried out by UNESCO
- Addressing one of the most important challenges of the 6th World Water Forum (Marseille, France, 12-17 March 2012) as Climate Change. I.R. of Iran focuses on both developing structural and non structural capacities as well as capacity building, training and public awareness
- A call for cooperation on the new International Drought Initiative (IDI)
- Two new candidates for RCUWM's Governing Board Membership are Armenia and Qatar and the Centre is waiting for their feedback

- 3- UNESCO's speech was delivered by Ms Tarja Virtanen, Director and Representative of UNESCO Cluster Office in Tehran.

The highlights of her speech were as follows:

- She thanked the Ministry of Energy, I.R. Iran and RCUWM-Tehran for hosting the 8th board meeting
- There are two active category II Centres acting under the auspices of UNESCO in Iran as RCUWM-Tehran and ICQHS (International Centre on Qanats and Historic Hydraulic Structures in Yazd)
- The International Drought Initiative (IDI) requires a strong support from RCUWM's member states and organizations
- She briefed the participants on the strategic plan of the 8th phase of IHP
- RCUWM and other member countries may focus on the activities related to the main themes of the 8th phase of UNESCO-IHP in general and on Urban water management in particular
- Appreciating the Islamic Republic of Iran's efforts in being involved in IHP VII as well as in the formulation process of IHP VIII.

The draft agenda was put on the floor and it was unanimously adopted as follows:

- Opening
 - a. Director of the Centre (Welcoming)
 - b. Chairman of the GB (Opening Speech)
 - c. UNESCO Representative (Opening Speech)
 - d. Adoption of Agenda
 - Director's Report on implemented activities in 2010-11, budget and work plan of 2012.
 - Remarks by GB Members
 - Comments and approval of the Director's Report
 - Member's contribution towards the Centres activities
 - Water Challenges in member countries
 - Renewing RCUWM's agreement for the 3rd 5 year period
 - Date and Venue of the 9th GBM
 - Other issues
 - Closing remarks
- 4- The Director's report, "activities, achievements and budget for 2010 - 2011 and the proposed work plan and estimated budget for 2011-12" was delivered by the Director of the Centre.

RCUWM managed to successfully hold 18 events including 10 workshops, 2 training courses, one technical visit, 3 conferences and 2 exhibitions during 2010 and 2011.

It is worth noting that RCUWM has covered 100 percent of its running costs as well as 41.5 percent of its operation costs while this figure is estimated to be around 100 percent for its running costs and 7 percent for its operation costs during 2012-13. Therefore member states and organizations are all invited to effectively contribute in jointly organizing various RCUWM's events as well as implementing its projects.

Another important issue raised by the Director of RCUWM was to hold the board meeting biennially rather than yearly in one of the member countries.

Detail information on the activities, projects and costs (running and operation) during 2010-2011 as well as the proposed work plan and estimated budget for 2012-2013 has been presented in the compendium passed to the attendees.

- 5- All distinguished members of the GB presented their viewpoints on their country's and organization's policies and strategies in Water Management issues as well as activities carried out by RCUWM-Tehran.

The highlights presented by the member countries/organizations representatives' were:

Tajikistan:

- Thanking the Chair for hosting the 8th board meeting in Tehran
- The importance of water related issues as well as joint cooperation between all stakeholders at national and international levels in Tajikistan
- Water resources in Tajikistan are plentiful and we are ready to help other water scarce countries in the region
- Tajikistan's preparedness for joint cooperation with I. R. Iran
- 2013 World Water Day's theme is Water Cooperation. Tajikistan proposed to host the 9th Governing Board meeting of RCUWM during late 2013 at the time of the International Conference on Water.

Oman

- Appreciating the Centre and its colleagues for their taintless efforts in organizing this event
- Oman's preparedness for cooperating with different countries in solving water management challenges
- Oman is ready to exchange knowledge and information on unconventional water, use of wastewater, wastewater reuse and desalination.
- Oman has organized a seminar entitled as "Application of RS and GIS in Water Resources Management" and a Conference entitled as "Drought Management Strategies in Arid and Semi-arid Regions" in between the 7th and 8th GB meeting.

- Oman's representative accepted to host a seminar on "Use of Unconventional Water in Urban Water Management" during either late 2013 or early 2014 in Oman.
- Drought management issues gain a high importance in Oman, therefore this country looks for joint cooperation with other countries on this issue.

India

- India is also amongst the water stressed countries
- Few families in India benefit from private water networks while others benefit from public sources
- Water policy should be developed for efficient use of water
- Public participation is a must in the water sector in India
- The private sector should be involved in water and wastewater sector
- India is ready to present its experiences in both flood and drought management
- RCUWM could play an important role on carrying out training events and implementing projects related to flood and drought management, climate change and water cooperation among its member states.

Iraq

- One of the complicated challenges of Iraq is the micro particles and dust in the air due to the decreasing amount of water in Euphrates and Tigris rivers
- Euphrates water has considerably decreased due to the increasing trend of agriculture downstream
- Shortage of clean and fresh water in many parts of Iraq which results in a direct use of water from the rivers by people.
- We are prepared to sign and exchange bilateral agreements with our neighbouring countries in concern with the shared water resources. RCUWM's GB meeting is a good opportunity in this respect.
- Iraq is ready to co-organize training events on water laws and other related water issues with RCUWM-Tehran during the coming years.
- Iraq representative accepted to host a training event on groundwater management in Iraq during November 2013.
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Egypt

- RCTWS-Cairo is prepared to collaborate with RCUWM-Tehran in carrying joint events either in Egypt, Iran or any other country in the region.
- RCTWS intends to mainly focus on activities related to the 8th phase of UNESCO-IHP in its upcoming work plan

- Capacity building and training, water resources management, river engineering are amongst the interested issues.
- Water security is one of the most important issues in Egypt
- Due to our new countries situation we are prepared to promote mutual cooperation with RCUWM's member states.

UNESCO

- UNESCO representative addressed the most important issues of the 8th IHP phase which are mainly focusing on water security and water challenges
- The eight phase mainly focuses on water shortage and water management and RCUWM could effectively get involved in this phase
- The Centre could focus on shortage of water with emphasis on urban water management

UNESCO-IHE

- Business as usual could certainly no more solve water related challenges
- Lack of knowledge and human capacity is a vital problem which needs to be further worked on.
- Urban population growth, urban network leakages, lack of water development plans and methods of wastewater treatment and reuse are amongst the most important issues which RCUWM could further focus on in close cooperation with its member states/organizations

The International Water Academy (TIWA)

- Water for poor and training the poor is one of the most important goals of TIWA
- Training courses on water management issues should be conducted for young professionals
- Taking into consideration the target country's culture and language is an important issue
- Gender and water are amongst other important subjects which need to be further addressed
- Importance of climate change and its impacts on snow melting and glaciers

The Inter-Islamic Network on Water Resources Development and Management (INWRDAM)

- The representative of INWRDAM presented a brief explanation on INWRDAM, its activities and achievements and memberships.
- INWRDAM's representative invited the Islamic Republic of Iran to become a member of INWRDAM's Governing Body

- Jordan is amongst one of the most water stressed countries with an average of around 100 m³/year/person

Embassy of Lebanon in Tehran

- The representative from the Embassy conveyed The Minister of Water Resources of Lebanon's apologies not being able to attend the board meeting
- One of the main challenges in Lebanon is the delay in constructing dams and hydraulic structures
- Groundwater pollution and drought management issues are amongst issues which Lebanon is interested to cooperate with RCUWM and its member countries

Embassy of Afghanistan in Tehran

- The representative of Afghanistan conveyed the apologies of the Minister of Afghanistan, H.E. Mr Haj Ismail for not being able to attend the board meeting due to the flight which was cancelled during the last minutes.
- He conveyed the Minister's message, for promoting mutual cooperation between the two brother countries.

- 6- The members of the 8th Governing Board Meeting presented their comments and suggestions on the Director's Report.

The governing board members appreciated the activities carried out by the Centre during 2010-2011. The report was finally approved by the GB Members.

- 7- Renewing RCUWM's Agreement for the 3rd 5 year period

The second 5 year period of the Centre's activities will be completed by mid 2013. As per UNESCO's rules an evaluation team will be evaluating RCUWM's second 5 year's performance before the third 5 year period of activities.

As UNESCO's representative mentioned a request should be made to UNESCO headquarter in Paris for the evaluation process to be started in due time. This request should be sent via RCUWM director 6 months before the third 5 year period is terminated.

All of the participants of the board meeting supported the issue of having RCUWM's agreement renewed with UNESCO due to its vast activities and outstanding achievements during the first and second five year period of activities.

Hence official procedures will need to be started by RCUWM promptly.

- 8- Date and Venue of the 9th GBM

The 9th Governing Board meeting of RCUWM-Tehran will be convened in Dushanbe, Tajikistan Late 2013 as proposed by The Minister of Water Economy and Land Reclamation of Tajikistan and approved by all members of the board.

In addition it was approved to hold the GB meeting 2-3 times in each 5 year period of RCUWM's activities, so the 9th GB meeting will be held in 2013, the 10th in 2015 and the 11th GB meeting in 2017.

9- Other issues

The focal persons presented by each member state/organization for further coordination between RCUWM and its members were determined as follows:

Oman: Mr Ahamd Al Tubi

Iraq: Mr Jafar

Egypt: Mr Gamal Shaker Ibrahim

India: Mr Vijay Kumar from the Ministry of Water Resources

Tajikistan: Mr Dolatov from the Ministry of Water Economy and Land Improvement

UNESCO: Mr Imam Bashir

UNESCO-IHE: Prof. Nagy

TIWA: Mr Ulf Gurgens

INWRDAM: Mr Jobay Bino and Mr Shihab Beiruti

10- Closing remarks

H.E. Mr Namjoo, addressed the participants of the board meeting with the closing remarks. The highlights were:

The Water High Council of the I. R. of Iran is the main focal point for solving water related challenges.

He also stated that the private sector has been actively involved in implementing water and wastewater networks and the trend towards transferring water systems and structures to the private sector is increasingly moving.

Secure purchase of treated water and wastewater by the government from the private sector is considered as an incentive for private investors.

The change in water and electricity tariffs has resulted in a 10 percent decrease in electricity and 5 percent decrease in water consumption.

He finally thanked all the members for their continuous support towards RCUWM's activities and wished them a pleasant time in Tehran during their stay.

All members attending the 8th Governing Board meeting expressed their appreciation for attending the board meeting and further expressed their gratitude for the hospitality shown during their stay in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Side Events

During the first and second day (14-15 Sep. 2012) some side meetings were held in the Ministry of Energy as follows:

- A meeting between the Iranian Minister of Energy and Tajik Minister of Water Economy and Land Reclamation
- Iranian Minister of Energy and Indian State Minister of Water Resources
- Iranian deputy minister of Energy for water and wastewater affairs and Omani Under-Secretary for Water Resources, Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Water Resources
- Iranian Ministry of Energy representatives and Iraqi delegation from the Ministry of Water Resources
- Iranian Ministry of Energy representatives and Syrian delegation from the Ministry of water resources
- Iranian deputy minister of Energy for water and wastewater affairs and INWRDAM representative
- Iranian deputy minister of Energy for water and wastewater affairs and the Director of UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office
- RCUWM director and RCTWS-Cairo representative