



Session Name: Framework For Action	
Number of participants: -	Session Date: 21 March 2000
Rapporteur's Name: -	Session Time: 09.00 - 18.00

Presentation

The Framework for Action Day opened with brief introductions by Khalid Mohtadullah and Alan Hall. The present global FFA document was introduced as a working document put in the public domain to facilitate debate on actions, options and targets. The global FFA was described as the start of a process that should move quickly to the regional, country and local levels.

The key "Action messages" coming out of the regional FFAs - Europe, Africa, Asia, Pacific Rim and Americas were reported in plenary. The regional statements were kept very short, but the wealth of inputs coming from the regional discussions were fed back further during all thematic sessions of the FFA day.

During lunch and breaks, interactive activities were offered to participants in the "water wisdom arena" situated in the vicinity of the FFA day hall. Participants were given the opportunity to express their commitment to action in the form of brief pledging statements recorded on "paper waves" stuck on boards. Several dozens of such waves were collected at the end of the FFA day. Sonia Davida-Poblete reported in plenary on the water wisdom activities during the course of the day.

Discussion

Discussion started immediately after the introduction. A number of comments were made from the floor on the process followed for the elaboration of the present FFA document, all pointing in the same direction: participation and transparency concerns have to be taken very seriously on board for the design of the next phase. While voicing concerns on the degree of participation during the process before the Hague, a number of speakers expressed keenness for helping design the next phase and moving forward within a (better) shared framework. The discussions were then structured around major themes.

Tackling urgent water priorities:

Bill Cosgrove introduced the session putting it in the context of the transition from the "vision process" to the "action process". He reminded the floor of the main objectives of the Vision process - information, awareness, building a shared vision, paving the way for an "Action" phase... He expressed hopes that the discussion on actions will keep the "visionary spirit" of moving towards a better world; present poverty cannot be tolerated - the suffering voices have to be heard.

While recognising that necessary actions are numerous, the FFA document highlights five key areas of concerns: protecting and restoring water resources, achieving food security, improving sanitation coverage, meeting the urbanisation challenge and improving flood management. Five working groups were formed among the participants to discuss these five key areas. Reports of the groups gave very clear compass directions: foster integration between sectoral. But the action process much closer to local level. Actions were



proposed to cope with food / nature trade off's, pollution control, valuation of ecosystems, reform of irrigation institutions, urban environmental sanitation revolution (!), integrated urban planning, management of flood prone areas... a lively debate which should lead to concrete initiatives (more to come).

Good Governance

Moving to the substance of the various problems at hand, Margaret Catley Carlson started by listing a few myths and misconceived ideas such as “providing water to all implies free services”, “nature always restores itself”, “all nations must grow their own food” which confuses the debate on water governance. She then guided the participants through the various FFA action areas relating to governance. She highlighted the logical flow between the broad recommendations of the vision in terms of holistic approach, stakeholders' participation, innovations, full cost recovery, and governments' role as providers of the enabling environment and the specific action points indicated in the FFA. These points, relating to a wide range of actions such as building institutions at the basin level, financial mechanisms, regulatory frameworks, solving transboundary issues etc. generated a number of reactions from the floor.

The youth group insisted on the crucial role new generations have to play in the governance debate. The issue of transparency and accountability came prominently during the discussion relating to private sector involvement. A suggestion was offered that high-level office bearers in the international agencies should transparently disclose possible affiliations to the business community. At the same time, it was mentioned that the involvement of private sector service providers in the water supply and sanitation sector helped generating a debate on transparency and accountability and it was hoped that a similar evolution could happen in the irrigation sector. Easy access to knowledge and know how was seen as an important concern to be addressed by any governance system.

Investing for water security

The FFA document includes a preliminary analysis of the investments required in order to achieve the vision. Hilary Sunman introduced the subject, emphasising the necessity to pursue the work and collect more information for refining the analysis and breaking down the costs into regional and national figures. Ramesh Bhatia gave a brief account of the “financing issues” raised in previous sessions of the forum. He particularly insisted on the existing difficulties in operationalising full-cost recovery policies and the need to carefully couple these policies with targeted subsidies to the poor. He reported that the role of micro-credit had been clearly emphasised. In the discussion that followed, WSSCC offered to contribute in refining cost estimates relating to the WSS sector and address the issue of low cost technology. IUCN, Ramsar Convention and other groups took a similar stand relating to the costs involved in ecosystem maintenance and protection. The difficulty faced by the water domain in attracting private investments on a large scale was raised ...money flows more naturally to IT companies than water investors!

Conclusion and Actions

The way forward

Torkil Jonch Clausen offered a possible process to move the FFA forward after The Hague. He mentioned that the inputs provided in The Hague would be immediately taken on board in a supplement to the FFA document. The debate would then be brought back as quickly as possible to the regions via a series of consultations. Inclusiveness and cross-sectoral inter-actions will be at the heart of the design of these consultations.



Jon lane welcomed the process and advised GWP to strengthen its participatory skills. He recommended that the NGO's and trade unions should be included as two separate entities in the follow-up process.

The session greatly benefited from the presence of Minister Clare Short from the UK and Minister A. Ratwatte from Sri Lanka. Both stepped out from the Ministerial Conference to address the participants of the FFA session on what was the flavour of the discussions among ministers. Minister Short reported on the ministerial workshop on "basic needs", where good progress had been achieved. She reported on discussions about the issue of water as a human right, establishment of water targets, accountability and the role of privatisation. Her feedback confirmed to the participants of the FFA session that the FFA report and the directions discussed during the day were fully consistent with the spirit of the ministerial conference. Minister Ratwatte echoed her comments emphasising the need to start working towards the same goal in a co-ordinated manner. He particularly stressed the importance of irrigated agriculture in South Asia.

A representative from Spain announced a forthcoming international conference on river basin organisations. A number of organisations and individuals came spontaneously forward and pledged renewed and new efforts to make the vision become a reality. Among other pledges, Minister Short indicated that UK would increase its focus on the water sector over the next 3 years, Wateraid and a consortium of NGO's mentioned their willingness to work within the FFA, GEF had announced a doubling of its efforts on water, the Dutch government pledged its support to a major initiative in the area of water for food, several speakers from the gender groups announced a rapid move towards actions on the ground via a broad alliance of organisations concerned with gender mainstreaming.

Ismael Serageldin ended the meeting with a "water toast" launching the way forward and ensuring that GWP would continue providing an open platform for debate among all stakeholders. Duplication of efforts and fragmentation are not anymore affordable; mechanisms for moving collectively and reinforcing each other's strengths are the order of the day.