HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL SEGMENT DEDICATED TO BASIN MANAGEMENT

THURSDAY 24TH OF MARCH 2022, DAKAR

Executive summary of the Basin Segment outcome

1. **For the first time in the History of the World Water Forums, a high level political segment dedicated to basins was organized!**

INBO, UNECE, OMVG, OMVS & the Swiss Confederation secured this decision from Senegal and the World Water Council. Having basins represented in their own segment, alongside the "historic" Ministerial, Parliamentarian and Local authorities segments, is an outstanding recognition.

- It is a **powerful consecration of basin management as an essential tool to achieve water-related SDGs, in particular the universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all**.
- It is a simple yet impactful statement: **all drinking water taps ultimately depend on the basins of lakes, rivers and aquifers**!
- It is the **ultimate accolade**, from the global water community, **on the necessity to raise basin management as a top political priority for the 2023 UN Water Conference**.

2. **A massive and unprecedented political mobilization supported the Basin segment.**

It was opened by the President of the World Water Council, **Mr. Loïc Fauchon;** the Minister of Water of Senegal, **Mr. Serigne Mbaye Thiam;** the Minister of Equipment and Water of the Kingdom of Morocco and World President of INBO, **Mr. Nizar Baraka**; and the High Commissioner of the Organization for the Development of the Senegal River (the transboundary basin organization on the territory of which the Forum was hosted), **Mr. Hamed Diane Semega**.
The Dutch and Tajik Co-Chairs of the 2023 UN Water Conference, **Mr. Henk Ovink**, and **Mr. Sulton Rahimzoda**, also praised the initiative of this high level political event dedicated to basins and its translation into action: *the Dakar Action Plan for river, lake and aquifer basins*.

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The extraordinary mobilization for this Basin segment was made obvious through the high level of the speakers of the 2 panels respectively on national basin management and on transboundary basin organizations). Indeed, the world's two biggest transboundary river basins (the CICOS and the OTCA, for the Congo and Amazon basins) were represented and more than 150 people participated in the event.

3.**The Dakar Action Plan for river, lake and aquifer basins embraces a philosophy of action!**

In line with the objective of Senegal and the World Water Council for this World Water *"Forum of responses to achieve Water security for peace and development"*, the **Action Plan seeks ambitious and concrete commitments** on basin management **to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs**. For example, the announcement of over 400 million euros in funding for transboundary basin management in Africa (for 60% of the African territory, and 900 million people) was made during the segment by the *Team Europe initiative* (European Union and its Member States, European Investment Bank, African Union and the African Ministers' Council on Water). The **Plan already received the political support of 73 organizations from 44 countries, basin organizations and ministries, donors (multilateral and bilateral development banks), universities, NGOs and companies**.

4.**The groundwork is being carried out: join the effort to raise basin management as a top political priority for the 2023 UN Water Conference!**

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Introduction

The World Water Forum is the largest and most important international event on water. Organized once every three years, it brings together decision makers in water management: politicians, donors, academics, civil society and the private sector.

This unique platform diagnoses the challenges of water management, develops proposals for action plans and submits them for commitment by States, international organizations and civil society actors.

At the **9th World Water Forum** (21-26 March 2022, Dakar), the basins of lakes, rivers and aquifers received an unprecedented attention.
For the first time in the History of the Forums, **the decision was made** by the World Water Council and the host country, Senegal, **to integrate a new high-level political segment dedicated to basins** (or *Basin Segment*), **alongside the "historic" Ministerial, Parliamentarian and Local authorities segments**.

INBO, UNECE, OMVG, OMVS and the Swiss Confederation collectively carried the proposal of a Basin Segment. **This group of partners of the Basin Segment developed the argument on the interest of a Basin Segment at the World Water Forum and of basin management as a top priority for the 2023 UN Water Conference**:

- **Improving water resources management** at basin level is **essential to achieve water-related SDGs**, in particular the universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all: all drinking water taps ultimately depend on the basins of lakes, rivers and aquifers!
- **Basin organizations need to accelerate the implementation of the actions included in their basin management plans**.
- **All the actors** interested in basin management and in the delivery of these results (in particular ministries, donors, UN agencies and water users' associations) **need to accelerate and strengthen their support to basin organizations**.

This group was grateful to see the confirmation of the Basin Segment and had the honour to be entrusted by Senegal and the World Water Council with its organization.

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Launch of the Dakar Action Plan for River, Lake and Aquifer Basins; associated commitments

The objective of the Basin segment is **to present exemplary actions of basin management that delivered tangible and concrete results**, and therefore **promote basin management**, as an excellent tool to achieve water related SDGs, and as a **top priority for the 2023 UN Water Conference**.

In order to achieve this objective, a document of commitment was prepared for the World Water Forum Basin segment: the Dakar Action Plan for river, lake and aquifer basins. Its declaration was developed by INBO, UNECE, OMVG, OMVS and the Swiss Confederation.
To read it, scan the QR code.

It provides the **technical definition of the principles for actions and commitments needed**, with mobilization of the main stakeholders of basin management (basin organisations and committees, ministries, donors, UN agencies and water users' associations, etc.) **to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs by strengthening cooperation, planning, the legal and institutional framework of basin organisations**, and the search for innovative financing, with five priority commitments:

Confirm the basin organizations role and effectiveness in the service of water security, peace and sustainable development.

Value the positive impact and concrete results produced by basin organisations, including economic and social development, shared facilities and an ecological approach.

Strengthen visibility and institutional frameworks, especially for transboundary basins.

Promote innovative and autonomous financing mechanisms at basin level, including cross-border.

Plan the implementation of integrated management between uses at basin scale.

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Launch of the Dakar Action Plan for River, Lake and Aquifer Basins; associated commitments

The Dakar Action Plan for river, lake and aquifer basins already received **the political support of 73 organizations from 44 countries, basin organizations and ministries, donors (multilateral and bilateral development banks), universities, NGOs and companies.**

More importantly, and in line with the objective of Senegal and the World Water Council for this World Water *"Forum of responses to achieve Water security for peace and development"*, **it seeks ambitious commitments on basin management to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs.**

During the basin segment, two first concrete responses were launched:

1. The announcement of over 400 million euros in funding for transboundary basin management in Africa (for 60% of the African territory, and 900 million people) was made during the segment by the Team Europe initiative (European Union and its Member States, European Investment Bank, African Union and the African Ministers' Council on Water).

2. The signing of agreement between the Organization for the Development of the Senegal River (OMVS) and the Adour-Garonne Water Agency, in order to further develop the exchange of experiences on basin management planning between these two historic partners.

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Attendance and program of the Basin Segment

The Basin segment was attended by more than 150 participants.

Masters of ceremony

Dr. Eric Tardieu
Secretary General, INBO

Mr. Mohamed Fawzi Bedredine
Regional Coordinator, OMVS

The official opening ceremony featured the intervention of high level political speakers supporting the role of basin management for the achievement of all of the water related SDGs

Mr. Loïc Fauchon
President of the World Water Council

Mr. Serigne Mbaye Thiam
Minister of Water, Senegal

Mr. Nizar Baraka
Minister of Equipment and Water, Kingdom of Morocco
World President of INBO 2019-2024

Mr. Hamed Diane Semega
High Commissioner
Organization for the Development of the Senegal River (OMVS)

The official opening ceremony also included the presentation of the Dakar Action Plan by Dr. Eric Tardieu (Secretary General, INBO) and its endorsement by two of the patrons of the initiative:

Mr. Lansana Fofana
High Commissioner of Organization for the Development of the Gambia River (OMVG),

Mrs. Sonja Koeppel
Water Convention Secretary,
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

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Participants of the Basin segment were also privileged to hear, in this section of the Basin segment, an intervention of the Dutch and Tajik Co-Chairs of the 2023 UN Water Conference on the status and steps for the preparation of the conference, and on their interest for the approach of IWRM a basin level.

Both Co-Chairs of the 2023 UN Water Conference expressed a strong support for the *Dakar Action Plan for river, lake and aquifer basins* and provided advices on its promotion:

Mr. Henk Ovink
Special Envoy for International Water Affairs,
The Netherlands

Mr. Sulton Rahimzoda
Chairman of the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea,
Special Envoy of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan to the High Level Panel on Water and Climate

Mr. Henk Ovink invited to

adopt an action-oriented approach from the Dakar World Water Forum to the UN Water Conference, in order to present exemplary basin management achievements in March 2023, in New York.

Mr. Sulton Rahimzoda invited to

adopt a diplomatic approach on transboundary cooperation given the sensitive nature of that topic.

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2 panels were organized on:

1. "**National Basins** and the integration of policies, a contribution to sustainable development",

"We must adopt an integrated approach at a relevant scale, that of a vast territory such as the river basin. In the Loire-Brittany basin, the Water Agency allocates 70 million euros in subsidies each year for the implementation of Nature-Based Solutions, with multiple benefits for sustainable development, adaptation to climate change and the preservation of biodiversity."

- **Mr. Thierry Burlot**,
President, Loire-Brittany Basin Committee, France.

2. "**Transboundary basins** and cooperation between actors, a contribution to peace"

"Our future on peace, what will happen tomorrow, depends on what we are doing today about water and sound transboundary water resources management."

- Mrs. Judith Enaw
Secretary General of the International Commission of the Congo-Oubangui-Sangha basin -CICOS
President of the African Network of Basin Organizations -ANBO

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Attendance and program of the Basin Segment

The program gives a insight on the extraordinary mobilization for this Basin Segment, with the high level of the speakers of the both of these panels and the representation of the organizations covering the world's two biggest transboundary river basins (the CICOS and the OTCA, for the Congo and Amazon basins).

In addition to the commitments made during the Basin Segment (cf. TEI commitment of the EU and African Union p. 4), the *Dakar Action Plan for river, lake and aquifer basins* calls to take action and submit exemplary projects of basin management that have delivered tangible results for the achievement of water-related SDGs.

The groundwork is being carried out: join the effort to raise basin management as a top political priority for the 2023 UN Water Conference!

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