



YOUTH WORLD WATER FORUM

FINAL STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

This declaration reflects the opinions of the young people participating in the 2006 Youth World Water Forum, Mexico City.

In 2000, the youth was designated as a stakeholder in all water related issues. Since then, young people have taken an active role, continually reinforcing the significance of their involvement. The youth plays a critical role in ensuring that water resources will still be available to future generations. In order to achieve this, systems of education must promote adequate water conservation.

WATER FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Development cannot be understood purely in economical terms. It is important to ensure that the actions made towards sustainable development prioritise the needs of communities above economic growth.

Education and youth empowerment works to create more democratic processes inside international bodies, governments, industries, and civil society, thus guaranteeing the development of communities without exhausting water, an important resource. Education is a fundamental tool in development, particularly in capacity building, science and technology, and the consequent distribution of this knowledge to communities.

Every time a culture is organised around water, the culture will develop, not just in relation to water, but also in other areas such as participation and democracy. The youth desires to be the force impelling society to participate in water issues and the link between government policies and the needs of the community. It is necessary to guarantee the participation of youth at all levels through legal instruments in order to make this process of participation official.

IMPLEMENTING INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The youth believes that mankind must be the steward of water in all ways. Furthermore, four major aspects should be addressed within this issue: water quality, water quantity, access to water and water security.

The only sustainable and efficient way to address the issues is through IWRM ¹. Since IWRM is a democratic communication process, it searches for a consensus. Governments must link their actions to populations, allowing them to manage water.

Education is the foundation of water management. Empowerment, the competency of water management and efficient access to transparent information are the three pillars of a cooperative,



responsible and solidarity- based civilian management. The decisions should be made with respect to the needs expressed by the communities.

Governments must take concrete actions to supplement IWRM with adequate financial and technical support, setting exchange mechanisms and negotiating openly with communities. All governments should establish indicators, corresponding to local values, to evaluate IWRM. These governments must also define professional standards to ensure that the water managers can competently make decisions for sustainable water use.

The youth have played an important role in involving stakeholders, but should play a bigger role by taking action, especially in their communities. Schools must provide an integrated education, teaching different perspectives regarding water management.

WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION FOR ALL

Water is a universal and unalienable human right that must be incorporated into the constitution of each country. This water should be clean, readily available, from a secure source and sufficient for the population's needs; sanitation must be guaranteed. However, currently 20% of the world's population has no access to water and 50% do not have adequate sanitation, provoking water-related illnesses.

The creation of water and sanitation services entails structural, social, environmental and technological costs. Access to water and sanitation must be guaranteed for the poor. International cooperation is necessary to help finance local action for water and sanitation supply in LEDCs 2.

Community social participation is vital to decide which party assumes the costs of water supply and to regulate this supplier, which requires transparency and accountability. Education is needed to inform the participating communities about sanitation, water conservation and technology, thus developing capacities while creating a water culture. There should be a balance between the financial, technological and educational factors of water supply.

WATER MANAGEMENT FOR FOOD AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Many difficulties exist relating to the division of water between agriculture and the environment. Irrigated agriculture uses 70% of available freshwater; ecosystems suffer when irrigation practices are inefficient and when potential environmental degradation is not considered. In addition to water shortages, short sighted agricultural practices lead to water pollution from agrochemicals and biological waste.

Educating young people in sustainable agricultural practices is of utmost importance to solving the above problems. Fortunately, technological advancements have been made reducing the amounts of water needed to produce agricultural products. As a result, more water remains available to maintain ecosystems.

To secure the continuation of such advancements, it is vital to invest in young people's education, capacity building and gaining practical experience, especially at the local level. Traditional and cultural practices should also be taken into account. Training the youth to introduce changes on a local level allows communities to become aware of existing problems.



In addition, young people are able to take the lead in exchanging information and knowledge, learning from each other's practices and experiences. The youth caucus has created and is still creating networks for such exchanges of information. Therefore, the youth plays a key role in improving local practices, as well as solving problems on a regional, national and global level.

Young people should thus be incorporated in present projects, after receiving the education that enables them to do so. This will assure continuity and sustainability for the future.

The role of industries should be taken into consideration in future discussions of this theme, as industrial practices contribute to water resource depletion.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk management is a critical tool for the decision making process. The potential consequences of risk are fundamentally significant to societies becoming more aware of sustainability, hence the need to pay immediate attention to risk management.

Globally, climate change and sea level rises have already warned that neglecting risk management would have a direct negative impact on people's daily lives. Focusing on the local level, an increasing number of people are suffering from flood and drought caused by a lack of risk management. Additionally, on a specific level, risk management is an efficient way to control oil spills from shipwrecks. There is no doubt that risk management must be expanded immediately.

It would be wise for the future generation to possess a complete view of risk management from social, economic and environmental perspectives. Holistic education programs are needed to achieve this. Due to the complexities of risk management, some special educational activities like field surveys and environmental experiments need to be given to young people. Additionally, everybody should clearly understand what they should do in case of emergencies. It is a responsibility for local governments to inform citizens on this issue.

FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Improvements need to be made in the structure and organization of the YWWF 3_. In order to share a common ground with the World Water Forum, the youth forum should work on similar themes with youth-specific focuses. Furthermore, there should be more interaction between the forums beginning with the preparatory process, while setting up action-oriented agendas for the YWWF. The importance of the continuity of the forums needs to be emphasised, allowing the use of past experiences to form future plans. The ideas listed above should be put into action by a network of young people.

“Be the change you want to see in the world.”

Mahatma Gandhi



Convoking Organizations:

Tokio Mizu Youth (TOMY)

Youth Water Action Team (YWAT)

Organización Iberoamericana de la Juventud (OIJ)

Office Quebec - Ameriques pour la Jeunesse (OQAJ)

The Hague International Model United Nations (THIMUN)

Asamblea Nacional de Jóvenes Indígenas (ANJI)

Asociación de Scouts de México, A.C. (AMSAC)

Escuela de Lideres, Va

Colegio Green Hills

Institute de le Recherche pour le Developpement (IRD)

Centro de Capacitación para el Desarrollo Sustentable (CECADESU)

Mision Rescate: Planeta Tierra, A.C.

Hombre Naturaleza, A.C.

Parlamento de la Juventud por el Agua de América Latina y El Caribe

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1. Integrated Water Resources Management
2. Less Economically Developed Countries
3. Youth World Water Forum