



World Meteorological Organization



Global Water Partnership

THE ASSOCIATED PROGRAMME ON FLOOD MANAGEMENT

Global Coordination



FIRST COORDINATION MEETING

(Geneva, 21-24 November 2001)

FINAL REPORT

1. GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE MEETING

1.1 The First Coordination Meeting of the Associated Programme on Flood Management (APFM) was held in the Headquarters of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in Geneva from Wednesday 21 November to Saturday 24 November 2001. The meeting was organized by the Technical Support Unit (TSU) of the APFM, established in WMO.

1.2 The main objectives of the meeting were:

- (a) to discuss and review regional plans for flood management projects prepared by the regional bodies of the GWP, which has been mandated to TSU as one of its activities during the Inception Phase of the APFM, and
- (b) to compile a draft concept paper on "Integrated Flood Management".

1.3 In order to attain these objectives, the meeting was attended by representatives not only of the relevant regional bodies of GWP, but also of certain other international organizations and by experts with various backgrounds acting as advisors to the meeting. The list of participants is attached as Annex 1 to this report.

1.4 The meeting was chaired alternately by Dr Q.K.Ahmad and Dr C.Tucci, both of whom are members of the Steering Committee of the APFM.

1.5 The meeting followed the agenda and time schedule given in Annex 2.

2. COMMENTS ON REGIONAL PLANS

2.1 OVERALL DISCUSSIONS

2.1.1 Throughout the discussion on regional plans, it was recognized that each region has its own very rich experience of flood events, from which lessons learned can be extracted, both as regards good and bad practices.

2.1.2 The following points were regarded as matters of common interest:

- (a) The importance of including development perspectives (social and economic activities, social welfare, etc) in any flood management programme, and not limiting thinking only to the geographical basin boundary.
- (b) The importance of sharing information between upstream and downstream countries, an especially important factor in cases where dam operation in upstream areas is included.
- (c) The importance of reviewing and disseminating information on past cases where plans failed, as well as successful cases. These should be compiled for the "Toolbox".
- (d) The importance of ensuring the participation of all stakeholders, especially local communities and their residents.

2.2 SOUTHERN AFRICA

2.2.1 This would be a good pilot case as to how the global APFM can support stakeholders in a region, especially a regional policy and action programme.

2.2.2 This strategy is a planning process, the output of which will be the development of projects. The APFM then would come in to help ensure the IWRM focus/requirements are met in each of the projects that are developed.

2.2.3 The technical focus of the strategy (the inclusion of equipment with detailed technical specificities, etc) was questioned, especially the second element on early warning systems. It was recognized that the APFM covered both non-structural and structural measures and that regional requirements do differ. It is Southern Africa's view that these warning systems are needed, hence their inclusion in the strategy. Therefore it was recommended that setting strategies for early warning systems should be included within the GWP-Southern Africa programme to be implemented in conjunction with SADC, in line with the concept of Integrated Flood Management, their practical implementation being a matter for the national technical agencies responsible.

2.2.4 The connection between the mitigation strategy and other socio-economic factors is already in place.

2.3 SOUTH ASIA (SASTAC)

2.3.1 It was noted, after the ISC meeting in August, this proposal was passed to JICA for potential funding. The following observations may be taken into account in further refining the proposal.

- (a) The IWRM context should be made more explicit.
- (b) Both loss reduction and capacity building at the local level should be addressed within the broad vulnerability reduction context.
- (c) Cultural imperatives as well as people's knowledge/experience in facing floods should be taken into account.
- (d) Involvement of parliamentarians, relevant bureaucrats and journalists should be built into the process of consultations in finalizing the outcome of the study project.
- (e) The budget should be recast, with no increase in the total to reflect (d) above and other appropriate adjustments.

2.4 SOUTH AMERICA (SAMTAC)

2.4.1 In South America there are great differences (climatic, topographic, hydrographic/fluvial, etc) between countries. It may therefore be beneficial to attempt a "subregional" classification, transcending national borders, in picking case studies, in order to maximize regional benefits from the study.

2.4.2 It was suggested to involve concepts of vulnerability and resilience.

2.4.3 Also it was suggested to recognize explicitly negative effects caused by ongoing practices and regulations.

2.5 CENTRAL AMERICA (CATAC)

2.5.1 The project document should include a list of acronyms.

2.5.2 Administrative questions should be channeled to the CATAC-CRRH representative on the APFM Steering Committee. Direct project concerns may be addressed to CEPREDENAC as project driver.

2.5.3 The project document would benefit from explicit references to ramifications and collateral effects, such as concerns and actions in the field of geo-dynamics including unstable slopes and landslides due to excessive rainfall and flooding which may need to be monitored for the potential or actual effects of floods. Also, health issues should be included, such as developing public awareness in the context of flood control activities, both in terms of reducing or increasing vulnerability.

2.5.4 It was suggested that CEPREDENAC - CATAC recommend to the Government of Honduras to request technical advisory support for hydrological assessment and human resources development from UNESCO (Water Sciences Division) and other available sources such as CATHALAC and IHE, Delft in The Netherlands.

2.5.5 The project document should explicitly include an assessment of the extent and nature of public involvement/participation. This is an indicator of cost efficiency usually considered important by donors.

2.5.6 Nevertheless, it is important to consider the implications of granting and assessing public participation, so as not to generate resistance from participating institutional counterparts.

2.5.7 The need to address the complexity of multinational river basins for flood control was also acknowledged.

2.5.8 One other issue discussed was the need to promote the logic of investing in integrated river basin management and flood vulnerability reduction, leading to the participation of a broader-range of stakeholders and explicit activities in relation to sustainable development.

3. THE BASIC CONCEPT OF INTEGRATED FLOOD MANAGEMENT (IFM)

3.1 Three papers were distributed to the participants, namely "Integrated Catchment Management" and "Non-structural Measures", both written by Dr Colin Green and "Risk and Integrated Water Management" written by Dr Judith Rees. The first paper was prepared especially for the meeting. Information on the work prepared by his institute for the World Commission on Dams was also presented by Dr Green.

3.2 During the session, Dr Green prepared a short summary of the discussion which was reviewed on the last day of the session. This is attached as Annex 3.

3.3 It should be noted that, in spite of the broad range of backgrounds of the participants, there was complete agreement on how to approach flood management in an integrated manner, and all participants joined actively in the discussion.

3.4 The following points were highlighted and endorsed by all:

- (a) It is important to recognize the fact that the geographical boundaries of catchment areas do not necessarily identify the areas of concern in relation to human activities, both social and economic.

- (b) Links to and involvement of land use policy in flood management processes is always one key to the success of IFM.
- (c) In the process of risk management, the question is how to manage risks in the context of the many existing uncertainties. The one thing that is absolutely certain is that the future is uncertain.
- (d) The challenge is that, despite these problems, decisions must be made and programmes established involving relevant stakeholders.

3.5 The scope of the above discussions was very broad and, while they are very constructive, there was not time to formulate a draft of the concept paper on IFM during the meeting itself. Therefore, it was agreed that the discussion should continue through mutual correspondence, with the aim of formulating the concept paper with the minimum of delay. Dr Green agreed to provide the TSU with the addresses of web pages which contain useful information on the subject, so that this might be disseminated to the participants.

3.6 The meeting recognized that further work was needed to develop a draft of the concept paper, but that it was necessary first to be clear as to its length, content, level of detail and style. It was proposed to correspond on this matter so as to reach an agreement as soon as possible.

4. OTHER MATTERS

4.1 The TSU explained that there is a need to prepare "Case Studies" of past floods as an input into the GWP "Toolbox". In relation to this, it was agreed by participants that an effort will be made to seek for suitable information on past floods and relating flood management practices, both good and bad. The TSU explained that, when necessary, part of its global coordination fund might be made available to assist in the compilation of these case studies.

4.2 The TSU also explained its intention to create a web page on APFM and the idea was strongly supported. The page would include:

- (a) an open area - for dissemination of knowledge on APFM, introduction of other flood related web pages, etc.
- (b) a restricted area, offering a working space for APFM - related matters, where a code would be required to enter.

4.3 The TSU advised the meeting of its intention to hold a session on APFM at 3WWF in Kyoto in March 2003 which would include a presentation of regional activities and information from the case studies. The idea was supported by the participants.

4.4 The TSU also noted its plan to open a Virtual Water Forum (VWF) on IFM as soon as the necessary pre-arrangements are completed. This idea was also supported.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 This was the first meeting organized by the TSU since the APFM had been launched, and the meeting was regarded as the touchstone of the success of APFM. It should be noted that, in spite of the fact that most of the members had not met each other before, the meeting had been very active, constructive and a very cordial mood had evolved with a shared sense of purpose.

5.2 It can be said that a good start was made to formulating a consultation team to lead the whole APFM programmes to success. The importance on keeping links between the TSU and regional bodies was felt very evident.

5.3 It was strongly recommended by the participants that the TSU should organize such coordination meetings on APFM on a periodical basis.