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CEPAL

Economic Commission for Latin America



REPORT OF THE INTER-SECRETARIAT WORKING GROUP ON  
WATER RESOURCES IN LATIN AMERICA

(Santiago, Chile, 16 and 17 August 1982)



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## I. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

### Place and date

1. The Second Meeting of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Water Resources in Latin America was held at CEPAL headquarters in Santiago, Chile, on 16 and 17 August 1982.

### Attendance 1/ \*/

2. The United Nations Secretariat was represented by the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs.

3. Representation by other United Nations bodies included officials from the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

4. The meeting was also attended by officials from the following United Nations specialized agencies: International Labour Organisation (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO).

5. Representatives of two intergovernmental organizations -the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)- also attended the meeting.

### Agenda 2/

6. The meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Election of the Chairman.
2. Adoption of the Agenda and organization of work.
3. Review and co-ordination of field and regular programme activities in the area of water resources.
4. Arrangements for review of progress in the application of the Mar del Plata Action Plan.
5. Any other business.
6. Date and place of next meeting.

### Opening meeting

7. At the inaugural meeting the Executive Secretary took the floor and welcomed the participants. He stressed the importance of collaboration and co-ordination of activities among the various bodies in connection with the follow-up on the Mar del Plata Action Plan and drew attention to the growing interest shown by the countries of the region in the practical action taken by the international system.

8. The meeting was chaired by the Acting Director of the CEPAL Natural Resources Division. All the items were considered in plenary.

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\*/ The notes to this text may be found on p. 3.

Adoption of the report

9. As agreed at the end of the meeting, the report of the meeting was circulated in draft and adopted after it had been finalized.

II. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

1. Review and co-ordination of field of regular programme activities in the area of water resources

10. The representative of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs made a brief statement on the global context of the activities related to the follow-up on the Mar del Plata Action Plan and on inter-agency co-ordination, providing information concerning the most recent activities of the Inter-Secretariat Group for Water of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination.

11. The participants exchanged information concerning activities now being carried out and those to be carried out in the immediate future by their respective bodies.<sup>3/</sup> They also provided information concerning the work which was being done in co-ordination between the various institutions, such as the agreements between FAO and PAHO/WHO and between PAHO/WHO and UNICEF to co-ordinate activities related to water supply and sanitation. A discussion was also held concerning the most appropriate mechanisms for organizing the interdisciplinary missions and it was agreed that the central role devolved upon CEPAL.

12. The Acting Director of the CEPAL Natural Resources Division introduced to the Group a revised and simplified version of the questionnaire designed to collect information on the activities of the international organizations in the area of water in Latin America. After a detailed discussion, in which the data processing system was also considered, it was agreed that CEPAL should prepare the final version of the questionnaire on the basis of the suggestions made at the meeting and that it should be sent to the agencies and bodies within a month; they, in turn, would be expected to send in their replies, based on their 1982-1983 programme, within the following three months. In the case of the specialized agencies, whose projects in the region are directly managed from their respective headquarters, the questionnaire would be sent to those headquarters through their regional offices or representatives.

2. Arrangements for review of progress in the application of the Mar del Plata Action Plan

13. The Acting Director of the CEPAL Natural Resources Division explained the Commission's intention to meet the requirement of informing the Committee on Natural Resources of the United Nations Economic and Social Council concerning the progress made in the application of the Mar del Plata Action Plan at its eighth session to be held in 1983. The Group also discussed the suggested reports on the progress made in the implementation of the Mar del Plata Action Plan and on the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, which would be submitted to the Water Committee during the twentieth session of CEPAL in 1984.

14. During the discussions, it was agreed that the reports on the progress in the Mar del Plata Action Plan should be practical and based on the design of systems for the easy detection of what was being done and what still needed to be done in

/the area

the area of water in Latin America. It was agreed that comparative studies carried out on the relative progress made in the formulation and implementation of national plans for ordering water resources could provide a basis for helping the countries of the region to fulfil the agreements contained in the plan of action. The Regional Advisor in water resources of the CEPAL Natural Resources Division described the progress which had been achieved in the preparation of such studies. In general, the meeting stressed the need to promote the preparation of comparative studies in water development with a view to obtaining appropriate frames of reference for evaluating the progress made in water development in the different countries of the region.

### 3. Any other business

15. A number of subjects were touched upon in an effort to analyse ways of enhancing co-operation among the international organizations in the area of water. In this connection, the following possibilities for lines of action emerged: (a) the preparation of joint publications, mainly guide books and manuals for the integrated development of water resources with a view to supplying the countries with information and rational procedures; (b) the joint organization of integral training courses in the area of water in which the fields of expertise of the various agencies could be covered.

16. The participants also discussed the possibility of the joint utilization of the inter-agency co-operation networks initiated by different organizations and of the services of national experts. They also discussed various ways of exchanging information among experts in Latin American water resources.

17. The representative of UNESCO provided information concerning the progress achieved in the activities related to the regional project for the utilization and conservation of water resources in the rural areas of Latin America and the Caribbean. He also gave some information concerning the forthcoming publication of a Spanish version of the journal World Water, to be issued in co-operation with the UNESCO Regional Office.

### 4. Date and place of the next meeting

18. It was agreed that the next meeting of the Group would be held in Santiago, Chile, in June 1983.

### Notes

1/ See the list of participants in annex 1.

2/ E/CEPAL/SEM.6/L.1.

3/ See annex 2 for the list of documents submitted to the meeting.





Annex 1

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

A. United Nations Secretariat

Department of International Economic and Social Affairs

Pierre Najlis  
Senior Programme Officer for Water  
Office for Programme, Planning and Co-ordination (PPC)  
United Nations  
New York, N.Y. 10017  
United States of America

B. United Nations bodies

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

Héctor Soza  
CEPAL/UNIDO Joint Industrial Development Division  
Casilla 179-D  
Santiago, Chile

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Eduardo Fernández Espinar  
Resident Representative  
United Nations Development Programme  
Bandera 341, 9° piso  
Santiago, Chile

Evelyn Nielsen  
Assistant Programme Officer  
United Nations Development Programme  
Bandera 341, 9° piso  
Santiago, Chile

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Francisco Galdames  
Advisor  
United Nations Children's Fund  
Isidora Goyenechea 3322  
Santiago, Chile

C. United Nations specialized agencies

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Kazuki Takamiya  
Regional Officer in Land and Water Promotion  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
Providencia 871  
Santiago, Chile

International Labour Organisation (ILO)

François Agostini  
Director, ILO Office in Chile  
Bandera 341, 8° piso  
Santiago, Chile

Pan-American Health Office/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO)

Miguel Angel Aguilar Oliva  
Representative in Chile  
Pan-American Health Office  
Monjitas 689, 5° piso  
Santiago, Chile

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Christiaan E. Gischler  
Regional Hydrologist  
UNESCO Regional Office in Science and Technology for  
Latin America and the Caribbean (ROSTLAC)  
Bulevar Artigas 1320  
Montevideo, Uruguay

D. Intergovernmental organizations

Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

Johann A. Schmalzle  
Representative in Chile  
Inter-American Development Bank  
Pedro de Valdivia 0193, piso 11  
Santiago, Chile

Mauricio Foncea N.  
Specialized Assistant  
Inter-American Development Bank  
Pedro de Valdivia 0193, piso 11  
Santiago, Chile

Organization of American States (OAS)

Hugo Benito  
Chief of the River Plate Basin Project  
Organization of American States  
1889 F Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 2006  
United States of America

E. Secretariat of the Meeting

Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL)

Axel Dourojeanni  
Acting Director  
Natural Resources Division  
Economic Commission for Latin America  
Casilla 179-D  
Santiago, Chile

Terence Lee  
Water Resources Unit  
Natural Resources Division  
Economic Commission for Latin America  
Casilla 179-D  
Santiago, Chile

Medardo Molina  
Regional Advisor in Water Resources  
Natural Resources Division  
Economic Commission for Latin America  
Casilla 179-D  
Santiago, Chile

Annex 2

LIST OF DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED TO THE MEETING

Basic documents

1. Provisional agenda (E/CEPAL/SEM.6/L.1).
2. Annotated provisional agenda (E/CEPAL/SEM.6/L.2).
3. Co-ordination of water resource activities in Latin America (E/CEPAL/SEM.6/L.3).
4. Proposed schedule of work.

Reference documents

1. Organization of American States, Actividades de cooperación técnica, Department of Regional Development, Energy and Natural Resources, OAS Secretariat, August 1981.
2. Organization of American States, Resultados de la cooperación técnica, Department of Regional Development, Energy and Natural Resources, OAS Secretariat, August 1981.
3. FAO, Recursos naturales, a summary of activities, August 1982.
4. FAO, Aprovechamiento del agua en las fincas (brochure).
5. UNESCO, Final Report of Meeting of Experts on the Major Regional Project for the utilization and conservation of water resources in the rural areas of Latin America and the Caribbean, Mexico City, 8-13 March 1982.
6. UNESCO/ROSTLAC, Boletín PRM, No. 1, Montevideo, Uruguay, July 1982.
7. United Nations, Statement of activities, Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, New York.
8. United Nations, Actividades 1982-1983 del Departamento de Cooperación Técnica para el Desarrollo, New York.
9. United Nations, list of projects of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, New York, July 1982.
10. CEPAL, explanatory table showing progress in the region's water plans, prepared by Mr. Medardo Molina, Regional Advisor in Water Resources, Natural Resources Division, August 1982.
11. ILO, El PIACT y la cooperación técnica, International programme for the improvement of working conditions and environment, Working Conditions and Environment Department, Geneva, January 1979.