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Economic Commission for Latin America

REPORT OF THE INTER-SECRETARIAT WORKING GROUP
ON WATER RESOURCES IN LATIN AMERICA
(Montevideo, Uruguay, 7 May 1981)

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Place and date

1. The first meeting of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Water Resources in Latin America took place at Montevideo, Uruguay, on 7 May 1981 during the nineteenth session of CEPAL. This Group was established at the Inter-Secretariat Meeting on Water Resources in Latin America (Santiago, Chile, 23 and 24 June 1980) in response to the request made by member Governments at the eighteenth session that co-ordination of the relevant aspects of regional activities undertaken by international organizations in the field of water resources should be improved. At the meeting in question it was suggested that the Group should convene one meeting a year and another during the CEPAL session.

Attendance 1/

2. The Only United Nations agency represented was the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).
3. Officials from the following United Nations specialized agencies attended the meeting: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) and its Pan American Center for Sanitary Engineering and Environmental Sciences (CEPIS).

Agenda 2/

5. The following agenda was adopted at the meeting:
- (1) Election of Officers.
 - (2) Adoption of the Agenda.
 - (3) Consideration of the proposals emanating from the CEPAL Committee on Water.
 - (4) Co-ordination and co-operation in specific programme areas.
 - (5) Information system on the relevant aspects of the activities in the region in the field of water of international agencies.
 - (6) Other business.
 - (7) Conclusions and recommendations.

1/ See the list of participants in annex 1.

2/ E/CEPAL/L.242/Rev.1.

Opening meeting

6. At the inaugural meeting a statement was made by the Acting Director of the CEPAL Natural Resources Division, who welcomed participants and stressed the importance of the meeting in the context of efforts to improve co-ordination among international bodies in Latin America.
7. The meeting was chaired by the representative of UNESCO. All topics were considered in the plenary meeting.

Adoption of the report

8. As agreed at the meeting, the report on the meeting was circulated and adopted following the conclusion of that meeting.

ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

1. Consideration of the proposals emanating from the
CEPAL Committee on Water (agenda item 3)

9. The Acting Director of the CEPAL Natural Resources Division made a summary of the debates and recommendations of the Committee on Water of the nineteenth session of CEPAL. The Committee endorsed the recommendation put forward at the Inter-Agency Meeting held at Santiago, Chile, concerning the mandate of the working group, but suggested that the working group should meet only once a year. The most important proposals put forward by the Committee to the CEPAL secretariat were basically that it should:

(i) Continue and strengthen its participation in activities of PAHO/WHO, UNDP and governments relating to the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade;

(ii) Continue consideration of progress made in the region in implementing the Mar del Plata Action Plan;

(iii) Continue to study the most promising areas for horizontal co-operation;

(iv) Continue to support governmental activities to improve water resources management, including incorporation of the environmental dimension.

10. During the debate on this topic it was agreed that, with regard to co-operation in support of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, all organizations undertaking related activities should participate.

2. Co-ordination and co-operation in specific
programme areas (agenda item 4)

11. Consideration of this agenda item was focused on the UNESCO document entitled "Proyecto regional mayor para la utilización y conservación de los recursos hídricos en las áreas rurales de América Latina y el Caribe". The representative of UNESCO introduced the project and requested co-operation from other agencies in implementing it. The basic approach proposed in the project would consist in introducing viable traditional technology from other regions of the world or parts of the region into rural areas in Latin America.

12. Emphasis was also placed on the need to step up the exchange among agencies of information on projects under implementation.

3. Information system on the relevant aspects of the activities
in the region in the field of water of the international
agencies (agenda item 5)

13. The Acting Director of the CEPAL Natural Resources Division explained the content and purpose of the document and questionnaire prepared for the putting into operation of the information system on the activities of international agencies.^{3/} He requested agencies to send in their observations on the document in question before 30 July and said that the document would also be sent to all the agencies that were not represented at the meeting.

14. It was agreed in the course of the debates that, once the observations had been received, a call meeting should be convened at Santiago, Chile, in order to prepare a final version of the questionnaire and reach agreements as to the periodicity of the survey. It was suggested tentatively that the survey should be made to coincide with the budgetary period.

^{3/} See Sistema de información sobre actividades de los organismos internacionales en el campo de los recursos hídricos (E/CEPAL/L.243).

Annex 1

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

A. United Nations agencies

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B. Specialized agencies

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C. Intergovernmental organizations

OAS

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D. Secretariat of the meeting

CEPAL

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Annex 2

LIST OF DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED AT THE MEETING

Basic documents

1. Provisional agenda (E/CEPAL/L.242/Rev.1).
2. Sistema de información sobre actividades de los organismos internacionales en el campo de los recursos hídricos (E/CEPAL/L.243).
3. Report of the Committee on Water of the Nineteenth Session (Conference Room Paper III/2).

Reference documents

1. Proyecto regional mayor para la utilización y conservación de los recursos hídricos en las áreas rurales de América Latina y el Caribe (UNESCO/ROSTLAC, Montevideo, Uruguay, May 1981, preliminary version).