

## **Project Concept Paper**

### Meeting of the expert advisory group: UNESCO-IHP project on Water and Cultural Diversity

Paris, France (7 – 8 January 2008)

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This paper provides an overview of a project of the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) of UNESCO on water and cultural diversity, which was launched in summer 2007. It also includes some background information and outlines future steps to be taken in order to meet the project objectives. The purpose of this document is to focus the discussions at the expert advisory group meeting, to take place in January 2008. The advisory group, composed of experts representing a variety of sciences pertaining to water, will provide direction and guidance to the activities implemented under the project.

In the longer-term, the advisory group is expected to evolve to form the core of the Community of Practice (CoP) to be launched on the IHP website. Through the CoP, some of the longer-term objectives of the project—namely, development of methodological guidelines and policy recommendations for mainstreaming cultural diversity in integrated water resources management—will be realized.

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#### **1. Introduction**

Water has been recognized as indispensable for sustainable development: for the preservation of the natural environment and the alleviation of poverty and hunger (UN-Water, 2005). It is in fact water that cuts through and connects the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) ([http://www.unesco.org/water/wwap/facts\\_figures/mdgs.shtml](http://www.unesco.org/water/wwap/facts_figures/mdgs.shtml), accessed 15 November 2007). In order to manage water in a sustainable manner amidst the “water crisis” the world is projected to face in the short-term, particularly in developing countries (UNESCO-WWAP, 2003), it is necessary to address the complexity of issues—the specific social, cultural, economic and political dimensions—surrounding water. In the recent past, however, “hard core” engineering and natural sciences have dominated approaches to water resource management. In order to redress this situation, the field of work of UNESCO’s International Hydrological Programme (IHP) has gradually been extended over the past decade to include social elements (UNESCO 1996; UNESCO 2002), such as law and history. Yet, a truly comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach that would frame water issues in the larger cultural context was missing. Driven by this gap, UNESCO-IHP launched, in summer 2007, an initiative on water and cultural diversity. Building upon previous activities implemented by UNESCO on water and culture, this project reflects a particularly important element of IHP’s new vision of water—that sustainable management of water is as much cultural as it is technical. As ecosystem approaches, including considerations linked to biological diversity, have enriched the concept of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in the late 1980s and early 90s (GWP, 1999; IUCN, 2000; Falkenmark, 2003), it is believed that the consideration of cultural diversity is the missing link that can make the concept of IWRM operational.

#### **2. Background**

The dominant weight that had been given to technological solutions and infrastructure in water resource management shifted in 1977 with the Mar del Plata UN Conference on Water in Argentina, when social factors such as institutions, education and knowledge were recognized (Black, 1998). As a result, more importance was given to communities and societies (Evans and Appleton, 1993; Blagbrough, 2003; Schouten and Moriarty, 2003; IRC, 2007). Stakeholder participation in water resources management became widely acknowledged as essential for sustainable development (Chambers, 1983; Narayan, 1995; OECD and DAC, 1995; Wilson,

2006). The new paradigm of IWRM, born in Mar del Plata and reconfirmed in 1992 at the International Conference on Water and Environment (ICWE) with the four Dublin Principles (Young et al 2004) offers solutions for sustainable water management by viewing the entire water cycle together with human interventions (Rogers et al., 2000). In addition, dynamics of cross-cultural interactions in resource management and the complex cultural and power dimensions of water resources management have increasingly been examined (Wittfogel, 1957; Donahue and Johnston, 1998; Webster, 2006; Jackson, 2002). The relationships between people and technology regarding its transfer, knowledge, community participation and cross-cultural learning have been highlighted in several studies (Hazeltine and Bull, 2003; Visscher, 2006; Visscher et al, 2006).

However, it is still claimed by many that human factors—such as behaviour, attitudes, practices and knowledge—are not sufficiently included in water management and decision making (Barnes and Ashbolt, 2006). This is often blamed on the gap between theory and practice (Moe and Rheingans, 2006; Sobsey, 2006). Despite enormous investments made in the water sector (JMP, 2004, 2005), local situations have not significantly improved as population growth has exceeded water supply and sanitation development. Although great progress was made during the International Decade on Water Supply and Sanitation (1981-1990), the 1980s are still considered a lost decade. Thus, a major change in current practices in the water sector has been called for.

Recently, the theme water and cultural diversity, introduced to the discourse by UNESCO<sup>1</sup>, has received much attention in the international realm. While demonstration of links between water and culture, or artistic expressions inspired by water are common, systematic analyses of the relationships between cultural diversity and water, and their implications for sustainable management of water resources, are not. A large gap is the lack of integration of cultural factors in water resource management and policies, which can be addressed by a comprehensive and systematic assessment of research and case studies on the topic of water and cultural diversity, and linking the worldwide activities dealing with this topic. This project attempts to fill this gap.

### 3. Definition: Water and cultural diversity

Among the 24 UN agencies that deal with freshwater issues, IHP<sup>2</sup> is the only broadly-based science programme that focuses on water. Implemented by the IHP, this project, within the framework of the Seventh Phase of IHP (UNESCO, 2007), will focus on fresh water. Water readily available for human access in rivers, lakes and reservoirs makes up only 0.007% of the world's total amount of water (including ocean resources) and fresh water covers approximately 0.8% of the earth's surface. However, fresh water is not only important for biodiversity—supporting almost 6% of all described species (Dudgeon et al, 2005)—but also for cultural diversity. In addition to supporting human life, health and well-being, fresh water has been a catalyst for civilization and diverse cultural meanings are encoded in it.

<sup>1</sup> One of the functions of UNESCO is to act as a laboratory of ideas and a standard-setter to forge universal agreements on emerging ethical issues. As an organization that deploys its action in the fields of education, natural and exact sciences, social and human sciences, culture, and communication and information, UNESCO is, in principle, in a unique position to deal with interdisciplinary issues. On the theme of water and cultural diversity, activities began in 2000 at the Second World Water Forum, where UNESCO organized a thematic session on “Water and Indigenous People”. In 2003 at the Third World Water Forum, various events around the theme water and cultural diversity were coordinated by UNESCO, French Water Academy, and Japan Center for Area Studies/ National Museum of Ethnology. In 2005, at an international symposium “Conserving Cultural and Biological Diversity: The role of sacred natural sites and cultural landscapes”, two sessions were organized on the theme of water and culture. In 2006, UNESCO was responsible for coordinating the World Water Day under the theme “Water and Culture”, and organized a session at the World Water Forum called “Water and Cultural Diversity: Mediating for sustainable development” with the Japan Consortium for Area Studies and National Institute for the Humanities, Japan.

<sup>2</sup> The IHP (<http://www.unesco.org/water/ihp>) is UNESCO's international scientific cooperative programme in water research, water resources management, education and capacity-building.

The term culture will be understood as in UNESCO's Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2002): "a set of spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, which encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs". The focus of the project is on cultural diversity, thus it will not simply look at the relationship between water and culture but rather, between water and diversity of cultures. Cultural diversity may be understood as, but not limited to, diversity in the following: (1) practices (rituals, production systems, and knowledge transmission systems); (2) ways of living together (social systems including institutions, legal systems, leadership and tenure systems); (3) value systems (religion, ethics, spirituality, beliefs and worldviews); (4) knowledge (know-how and skills); (5) languages; and (6) artistic expressions (art, architecture, literature and music).<sup>3</sup>

#### 4. Project Focal Areas

Based on parameters of water and cultural diversity defined above, the project will focus on the following five areas:

- cultural significance of water;
- social and political institutions that govern water use;
- cultural practices that contribute to conservation of water and related resources;
- contested uses of water; and
- water heritage.

These focal areas, which illustrate the diverse ways that people and their cultures are associated with water, will form the basis of a conceptual framework. This in turn will facilitate systematic analysis of how cultural diversity affects and are affected by water.

##### Cultural significance of water

Covering two-thirds of the planet's surface and composing two-thirds of our bodies, water occupies an important part of our lives and thereby embodies various cultural significances. This focal area will explore the diversity of meanings attributed to water and the different perceptions of water. Such explorations are important because "meanings poured into water... exert a powerful influence over every decision involved in water use" (Strang, 2004: 3).

Cultural identities are often rooted in freshwater ecosystems. For example, for the Stó:lō, a Coast Salish First Nations people living along the Fraser Valley in Canada, their identity lies with the river. A Stó:lō fisherman has been quoted as saying:

... my history tells me that salmon is the reason I am here. We are salmon people... The salmon, and the Fraser River, define who we are. We take our name from the word that we give the river: Stó:lō (Carlson, 1997: 140).

Such identities, in particular as they refer to native claims to land, have been portrayed for the Maori living along the Te Ika Whenua river (Waitangi Tribunal, 1998), Native Americans of the American Southwest (Weinstein, 2001) and for the Murray Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations in Australia (Morgan et al, 2004).

Similarly, the important role water plays in the construction of identities in Western cultures has been illustrated for the residents of Dorset, England (Strang, 2004), Germans and Americans

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<sup>3</sup> The definition adopted in this project, which is grounded in anthropology, differs slightly from the original definition still commonly used in the discipline, which views culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor, 1958 [1871]: 1). UNESCO's definition tends to promote "right to culture" and thereby sees cultural diversity as a goal, as something positive that should therefore be protected and promoted. For a critique of UNESCO's concept of culture, see Eriksen (2001).

(Anderson and Tabb, 2001), Norwegians (Nynas, 2004), and for residents along the Danube and the Rhine (Malpas 2006). On the other hand, cultural perceptions of water held by scientists and engineers that have underpinned water policies around the world have not been well documented.

Water is often considered sacred, a purifier and a source of power. Diverse expressions of the significance of water are manifested in symbolism, myth and rituals of cultures around the world, thereby demonstrating the essential role water plays in belief systems and mythologies. The ecological and spiritual perspectives on fresh water held by First Nations people in Canada are described by Blackstock (2001), meanings attributed to water as described in ancient Sanskrit literature, beliefs and religious festivals are reviewed in Nair (2004), and qualities attributed to water by women, both for sacred purposes and domestic uses, are described in Singh et al (2004).

#### Social and political institutions that govern water use

This focal area will examine the diverse range of social and political institutions that govern management and use of water.<sup>4</sup> Analysing formal and informal institutions at different scales of governance and use—including national and international regulations, shared practices in the basin, and local norms of water use and conservation—is necessary to better understand the use, access, and control of water at a range of different scales. Such studies are important because, as Mosse notes in his study of water control technology in South India:

... water resources are never simply there; they are produced by social and political systems. Water resources are the product of history... water systems are not only shaped by, but also shape social and political relations. Water makes history, but in far more complex ways... (2004: 272).

Lansing's seminal work in Bali demonstrated that water temples, not kings, controlled the flow of waters for irrigation, as well as the symbolic systems that define social coordination. Thus,

...water temples must... be understood, not only as a system of irrigation management but in terms of their role in the process of sociogenesis... (Lansing, 2007 [1991]: 129).

Studies that have followed include Agrawal's examination of indigenous participatory institutions ruling drinking water supply in India (1993); case studies of local institutions for managing water resources focusing on small-scale irrigation systems presented in Mabry (1996); the various "rules" on water allocation and rights in indigenous farmer-managed irrigation systems discussed by Adams et al (1997); community institutions of indigenous water resources management, namely, tank irrigation systems in South India analysed by Mosse (1997); rules of water allocation within an indigenous irrigation system in Tanzania described in Gillingham (1999); the important role qanats play in organizing society and social life documented by Kobori (1999); principles of social organization that govern irrigation systems in the Andes described by Trawick (2001); institutions of governance in four cross-border regions in Europe and North America analysed by Blatter (2004); and social processes behind maintenance of an adaptive co-management system for a wetland landscape in southern Sweden described by Olsson et al (2004).

#### Cultural practices that contribute to conservation of water and related resources

This focal area will draw attention to the diverse range of practices, traditional and otherwise, that contribute to the conservation of water and related resources, which are rooted in customs, beliefs, knowledge, worldviews and values of local people. Traditional knowledge in particular has played vital roles in protecting springs, rivers, lakes, wetlands and forests that protect

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<sup>4</sup> Institutions are formal and informal rules and procedures that structure the behaviour of social actors, and include rules, norms, laws, policies, regulations, organizations and partnerships (Brechin et al, 2003).

watersheds.<sup>5</sup> Such knowledge and practices often demonstrate sustainable ways of managing natural resources because the worldviews that underpin such knowledge are holistic and:

typically emphasizes the symbiotic nature of the relationship between humans and the natural world... [and] view[s] people, animals, plants and other elements of the universe as interconnected by a network of social relations and obligations (ICSU and UNESCO, 2002: 9-10).

Examples of traditional knowledge—which are embedded in religious beliefs or worldviews—that have led to conservation of water resources has been documented in Africa by Toulmin et al (1996), Dixon (2001) and Anoliefo et al (2003); in Asia by Ulluwishewa (1994); and for Native American tribes in Wyoming by Flanagan and Laituri (2004). This focal area will not only review practices based on indigenous knowledge, however, but also those based on Western and other dominant beliefs. An example is a case where Islamic law enforces decentralized rainwater harvesting in Tunisia, documented by Hill and Woodland (2003).

### Contested uses of water

Control over water is a powerful political tool. Throughout history, elites have employed power relationships to organize water use (Scarborough, 2003). As a result,

...crises involving water scarcity and water quality are as much a product of cultural values, social contexts, economic activities, and power relationships as they are a result of biophysical forces and conditions (Donahue and Johnston, 1998: 345).

Thus, examining the diversity of water uses, which are often contested, is important to understand the various power relations surrounding use, control and rights over water and related resources. The increasing control of water through technology, engineering and other management means and infrastructures have led to disenfranchisement—of women and then of local communities, with increasing control by first religious, then provincial authorities, and then to the central government (Strang, 2004).

Rights of indigenous and local communities to ownership of land and water resources have often been violated by governments and other powerful entities. The cultural and agricultural uses of water by the Native Americans of the American Southwest is in conflict with a multinational company's use of water for mining, as described in Whiteley and Masayesva (1998); the importance of water and management of water rights in the social life of Latin American communities are emphasized by Boelens and Hoogendam (2002); water policies that have not adequately dealt with indigenous rights in the Great Plains are illustrated by Longo and Yoskowitz (2003); the inequality of water use and institutional pluralism in water management in northern Thailand is analysed by Neef et al (2003); and an example of a large water infrastructure project that led to forced resettlement and other violation of human rights in Guatemala is examined by Johnston (2005).

### Water heritage

One of the most recognizable links between water and culture are the diverse water heritage that exists around the world. Sites listed on UNESCO's World Heritage List include historic hydraulic structures such as qanats, of which Bam has preserved some of the earliest evidence in Iran, and aqueducts, such as those in Segovia (Spain) and Pont du Gard (France). Water heritage also

<sup>5</sup> Traditional knowledge is defined here as “a cumulative body of knowledge, know-how, practices and representations maintained and developed by peoples with extended histories of interaction with the natural environment. These sophisticated sets of understandings, interpretations and meanings are part and parcel of a cultural complex that encompasses language, naming and classification systems, resource use practices, ritual, spirituality and worldview” (ICSU and UNESCO, 2002: 9).

includes sites where fresh water is dominant, such as the rice terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras.<sup>6</sup> Historians and archaeologists study such sites because:

...human-developed landscape offers the best insight into how a culture understands and adapts to its ecology... the built environment reveals many deep structures that configure social organization by providing the rationale and underpinnings for economic and political decisions (Scarborough, 2003: 9-10).

Scarborough's case studies of ancient water systems and landscapes from six regions around the world demonstrate the fundamental role water plays in shaping natural and cultural landscapes.

Cultural expressions that are inspired by or closely affiliated with water, such as paintings, photos, poems, stories, and songs can also be considered water heritage. Intangible heritage, namely, diverse expressions of cultural significances of water, are also important. These include rituals, festivals, dances, and other special occasions of cultural significance that water helps maintain, either directly or indirectly. Numerous examples of this exist around the world, such as the Maha Kumbh Mela festival in India, where Hindus bathe in the holy river Ganges; Temizusha located at the entrance of Shinto shrines, where worshippers wash their hands and rinse their mouths in a symbolic act to clean the mind and body of impurity; and baptisms where water is sprinkled or poured over one's head to denote admission to membership of Christianity.

This project will not focus on water heritage described above for its architectural or artistic importance, but rather, for the cultural significances, social institutions, local knowledge (i.e., know-how and skills) and power dimensions behind the development of such heritage. Thus, water heritage will be considered as expressions—tangible or intangible—of the four focal areas described above.

## 5. Aims and Objectives

In order to find sustainable solutions to water problems, any decisions made or research conducted in water should be based on a deep understanding of the myriad interactions between people and water. Such interactions go beyond human uses of water such as drinking, washing, and fishing. It also goes beyond examining water – people relations in the framework of environmental services provided by water such as food, recreation and aesthetic values. By looking at the various ways that cultures affect water and are affected by it, this project brings an additional point of view to the one that have characterized water sciences and management in general including in IHP, and ultimately endeavours to mainstream cultural diversity in IWRM.

This project attempts to respond to the urgent need in the water field to recognize cultural dimensions of water. Its immediate objectives are to promote, to water scientists and water managers, the importance of understanding the links between water and cultural diversity; to provide information, such as case studies and other resources; and to facilitate interactions and partnerships of institutions and experts working on, or interested in, the topic.

In the longer term, the project aims to develop toolkits or guidelines that would help foster socio-cultural perspectives in water sciences, promote cultural pluralism in water management strategies, and thereby contribute to the development of culturally sensitive studies and policies on water. This project thus fits into the context of UNESCO's priorities to move towards interdisciplinary cooperation, as well as in the larger context of international development by contributing to the achievement of the MDG target of reducing by half the proportion of

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<sup>6</sup> Cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity are designated and inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List (<http://whc.unesco.org/>). Currently, there are 851 cultural and natural sites, of which 660 are cultural sites, 166 are natural and 25 are mixed.

people without access to safe drinking water and safe sanitation by 2015 and to stop unsustainable exploitation of water resources. The need for new approaches is further amplified by the fact that it is very likely that the MDGs will not be met, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa; for example, according to recent estimates (JMP 2004, 2005), the MDG sanitation target will be missed by half a billion people if the current trend continues.

## 6. Methods and Products

An expert advisory group composed of experts representing a variety of sciences pertaining to water will provide direction and guidance to this project. IHP will provide the secretariat to the project, at the same time working closely with internal and external partners such as the UNESCO-IHE<sup>7</sup>, IHP/PCCP<sup>8</sup>, IHP/HELP<sup>9</sup>, IHP/Ecohydrology<sup>10</sup>, UNESCO/LINKS<sup>11</sup>, UNESCO “Category 2” Water Centres<sup>12</sup>, WWAP Case Study Projects<sup>13</sup>, the Biosphere Reserves of UNESCO/MAB<sup>14</sup>, the UNESCO Regional and Field Offices, and UNU-IAS (United Nations University-Institute of Advanced Studies).

In order to meet the above objectives, an informative and interactive website will be created on the IHP website, which will disseminate information and create a network of people across disciplines and interests, i.e., water scientists, social scientists, water managers, policy makers and local stakeholders. The development of such a website is envisaged in three steps spanning over a three-year period, and the basic structure of the website is as follows:

<sup>7</sup> The UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education (<http://www.unesco-ihe.org/>) is an international institute for water education established as a UNESCO “category 1” institute jointly by UNESCO and the Government of the Netherlands. The Institute is the largest water education facility in the world, and the only institution in the UN system authorised to confer accredited MSc degrees.

<sup>8</sup> PCCP (from Potential Conflict to Cooperation Potential: [www.unesco.org/water/wwap/pccp/](http://www.unesco.org/water/wwap/pccp/)), a contribution to WWAP and housed within IHP, aims to foster co-operation between nations related to the management of shared water resources through facilitation of multi-level and interdisciplinary dialogues.

<sup>9</sup> HELP (Hydrology for the Environment, Life and Policy: [www.unesco.org/water/ihp/help/](http://www.unesco.org/water/ihp/help/)), a joint project of UNESCO and the World Meteorological Organization, was established during the UNESCO/WMO International Conference on Hydrology in 1999. HELP is led by the IHP and aims to create a new approach to integrated catchment management through the creation of a framework for water law and policy experts, water resource managers and water scientists.

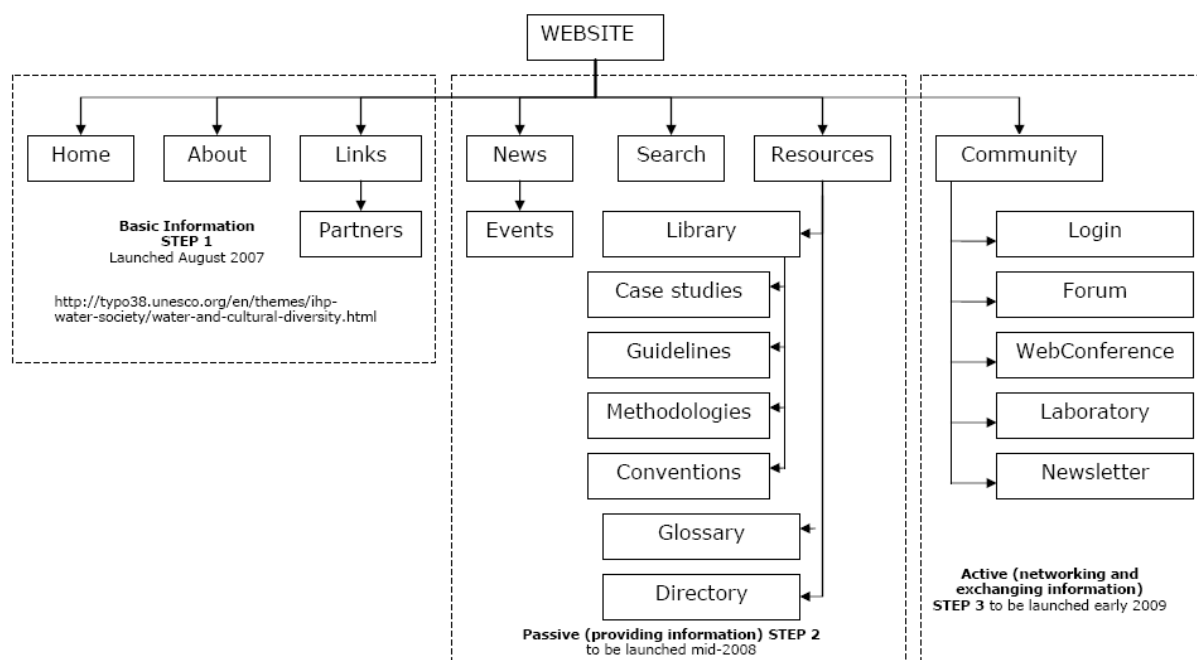
<sup>10</sup> UNESCO’s Ecohydrology Programme (<http://typo38.unesco.org/en/about-ihp/associated-programmes/ecohydrology0.html>) is a scientific programme to understand and elucidate the dynamic relationships between hydrological, social and ecological systems; to consider how these act upon each other, and to seek new ways to balance human and environmental needs for water resources.

<sup>11</sup> LINKS (Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems: [www.unesco.org/links](http://www.unesco.org/links)) is a UNESCO initiative which aims to enhance biodiversity conservation and secure an active and equitable role for local communities in resource governance by creating dialogue amongst traditional knowledge holders, natural and social scientists, resource managers and decision-makers.

<sup>12</sup> Institutes and Centres under the auspices of UNESCO, called “Category 2 centres”, are legally independent of UNESCO, but are associated with the Organization through various arrangements. Seventeen water centres covering a range of themes and geographic regions have thus far been officially established. For a list of these centres, see: <http://typo38.unesco.org/en/about-ihp/ihp-networks/ihp-institutes-centr.html>

<sup>13</sup> One of the key objectives of the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) is to help countries improve their self-assessment capability by building on existing strengths and experiences. WWAP fulfils this mission by assisting in the preparation of case studies in countries around the world in order to highlight the state of water resources where different physical, climatic and socio-economic conditions prevail. For more information, see: [www.unesco.org/water/wwap/case\\_studies/index.shtml](http://www.unesco.org/water/wwap/case_studies/index.shtml)

<sup>14</sup> The network of Biosphere Reserves ([www.unesco.org/mab/wnbrs.shtml](http://www.unesco.org/mab/wnbrs.shtml)) under Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme is a key component in MAB’s objective for achieving a sustainable balance between the goals of conserving biological diversity, promoting economic development and maintaining associated cultural values. Biosphere reserves are sites where this objective is tested, refined, demonstrated and implemented.



As indicated above, Step 1, consisting of a two-page introductory website, was launched in August 2007.

Step 2 will consist of a database on water and cultural diversity. The library will be a collection of case studies and other research categorized by the five focal areas mentioned above, conventions related to the topic, as well as on existing examples of methodologies and policies that have successfully integrated social and cultural factors into water sciences and management, such as:

- Integration of traditional and non-traditional water management practices;
- Incorporation of local and traditional knowledge in water sciences;
- Approaches to water management that ensure full participation of local communities and due involvement of other stakeholders;
- Integration of social and cultural factors in making and implementing water policies.

The directory will consist of experts and institutions that are working on the topic of water and cultural diversity, and will form the basis of a network, to be strengthened further in the next step.

Step 3 will be the interactive space of the website, consisting of a community of practice (CoP), where information and opinions are shared among members and users. The aim is to create an environment that encourages virtual social interaction and collaboration of users interested in the topic of water and cultural diversity, and initiate and support cutting-edge research on the topic. Members of this network will play a central role in developing methodological guidelines to facilitate integration of social and cultural factors to water sciences as well as culturally-sensitive policy recommendations. Other products to be developed through this network include: educational/ training programmes for water professionals to mainstream cultural diversity into IWRM; public awareness-raising material, such as brochures, DVD, and games.

## 7. Challenges and Future Perspectives

Before discussing longer-term perspectives, some of the limitations to the project should be mentioned. First, the focal areas defined above are not intended to be an exhaustive list of factors that should be covered under the broad theme of water and cultural diversity. Some

aspects covered under each focal area are overlapping and furthermore, there are notable gaps in the focal areas, such as:

- history of water;
- water conflict, in particular those that arise in transboundary waters;
- various cultural heritage and expressions surrounding fishing and aquaculture;
- sanitation and health; and
- privatization of water and water trade.

The first three points are covered by are covered by IHP and close partners in the project, namely, the planned History of Water and Civilization (HWC) project<sup>15</sup>, PCCP, and LINKS respectively; the last two points are not freshwater issues directly covered by the IHP.

Another limitation is funding. IHP's regular budget can cover costs of meetings of the expert advisory committee, some travel of UNESCO staff and experts to participate efforts to promote the project, as well as a portion of the development of the website (database and CoP). Extrabudgetary funding needs to be sought in order to cover other activities, such as maintenance of the website, additional meetings or conferences and publications.

In terms of future perspectives, the project is expected to hold a session targeted towards the general public at the Expo Zaragoza (July 2008), as well as a session at the Fifth World Water Forum in Turkey (March 2009). An international conference tentatively titled "Water Anthropology: Reconnecting Water and Cultural Diversity (for IWRM)" is envisaged to be organized by UNESCO in September 2009 in Paris, where the CoP will be launched. Contributions are also expected to be made to the World Water Development Report (compiled by the UNESCO-led World Water Assessment Programme), the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) and possibly, to the World Report on Cultural Diversity compiled by the Culture Sector of UNESCO. A timeline of planned activities of the project for the next biennium is prepared in a separate document.

Having introduced the theme water and cultural diversity to the discourse, UNESCO is committed to continue to act as a catalyst within the community to promote the understanding that furthering our knowledge on the interactions between water, environment and cultural diversity should be a priority in our efforts to manage water resources in a sustainable manner. IHP's role would be to foster a comprehensive and systematic assessment of research and case studies on the topic of water and cultural diversity, and to link the worldwide activities dealing with this topic. IHP will thus be taking the step forward to make the concept of IWRM operational, and invites partners to join this ambitious process of promoting a truly comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach that frames water issues in the larger cultural context.

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<sup>15</sup> The History of Water and Civilization (HWC), a project-in-planning to be undertaken in cooperation with the International Water History Association (IWHA: [www.iwaha.net](http://www.iwaha.net)) under the framework of IHP, is primarily designed as a book series providing a systematic knowledge base for education, policy-making and awareness-raising on various topics surrounding water and civilization. It is expected that HWC will include side publications and a postgraduate short course.

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