



Pakistan Water Forum

A platform for discussion on water



INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE



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A Review & Analysis

In view of the importance of water in the national economy and limited additional resources, more efficient use of water needs to be ensured, particularly in the agriculture sub-sector, which consumes over 90% of the total available water. Water is considered as a provincial subject but as we are aware, many functions of an inter-provincial nature fall under the Federal Government. For instance, WAPDA's Water Wing carries out overall planning of water resources on the national level. Aside from WAPDA, federal Chief Engineering Advisor, Federal Flood Commission and Indus River System Authority also assists the Ministry of Water and Power in performing a number of water-related assignments.

Provincial Irrigation and Drainage Authorities (PIDAs) and/or the Irrigation Departments (IDs) are the custodians of the provincial irrigation networks in association with Area Water Boards. They not only carry out the operation and maintenance of the system and the distribution of water within their respective provinces, but also design and develop new irrigation and drainage works.

The Ministry of National Food Security and Research is responsible for activities related to water-for-agriculture. A federal Water Management Cell within the Ministry is responsible for planning, evaluation and monitoring of the projects. In the past, they have been involved in two Mega projects under the President and Prime Minister's initiatives. The Cell also coordinates the activities of the provincial On-Farm Water Management Directorate Generals.



In addition to the large federal and provincial institutions directly involved in the water development and management, there are a number of institutions at the federal and provincial levels which deal with education, research and dissemination of various sub-sectors of water, i.e., its domestic, agricultural, industrial and environmental uses. They also deal with various sources of water – surface water, groundwater and the wastewater. These institutions have been established both by the public sector and the civil society. Furthermore, there are quite a few international institutions and non-profits, which are working on several facets of water management.

However, the idea should be to look at water as a whole and as a finite and a limited resource. Irrigation, drainage and hydropower are not the only areas of water management – a number of comprehensive approaches have been suggested by the experts, which cover the Integrated Water Resources Management and Integrated River Basin Management. The issue is of a complex nature as there are a large number of stakeholders and their institutions.

In the early 80s, the water users' association Acts were promulgated in the provinces and water users started participating in the improvement of watercourses as they contributed towards the cost-sharing of these improvements. These user-organizations were further strengthened with the promulgation of Provincial Irrigation and Drainage Authorities (PIDAs) Acts in 1997 and at the moment the water users are getting organized at the distributary canal command level as Farmers' Organizations. The involvement of NGO sector has further strengthened the approach of the participation of water-users for domestic water supply, sanitation and to some extent in agriculture. Now, the participation of communities is an essential element of any development programme and their contribution in cost-sharing has gone beyond 30%.

The news about water scarcity is hitting the headlines these days. The extreme events of floods and droughts are getting severe both in terms of the frequency and intensity. It demands for reforming the existing institutions and enhancing their performance. Institutional reforms are always difficult for any institution because these reforms will be effective only if there is an ownership. However, taking the first step, a strategy for improving the performance of these institutions should be put in place. This will allow for effective implementation of programmes at all levels.

The need for establishing informal forums for providing opportunity to the stakeholders is supported by most of the stakeholders in the Consultative Workshops organized in Karachi and Lahore, so that they can share their knowledge, information and experiences. Ultimately such a forum will lead towards providing support to the policy and decision-making institutions in the form of independent opinion for the development and management of water in the country.

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Pakistan to provide a platform for the stakeholders involved in all aspects of water development and management. This forum was active during 2001-02 but after the completion of the Balochistan Water Programme, the Forum could not be continued. The experience has shown that the sustainability of such forums is essential and in future, efforts would be made to take an initiative for the Pakistan Water Forum in such a way that the Forum could be sustained on long-term basis.



Keeping that in mind, IUCN and Oxfam-Novib have joined hands to facilitate the Pakistan Water Forum and provide a platform where major stakeholders can share and exchange their experiences, views and ideas. Anyone interested in this forum can fill out the membership form (<http://cms.waterinfo.net.pk/>) and contact the PWF Webmaster for further details. The IUCN and Oxfam-Novib in consultation with the stakeholders will prepare a draft document illustrating the form, role, functions and organizational structure of the Forum and present in the First informal meeting of the Forum for inputs and approval.

Complete list of Federal, Provincial and International institutions, as well as non-profits and civil society organizations working on water-related issues will be prepared and posted on the Pakistan Water Gateway (www.cms.waterinfo.net.pk/).