

SESSION 6.4.3 - Summary

Overall Conclusions:

1. There are numerous reasons for sharing data/information at the national, regional and global levels. These fall into operational, management, scientific and governance (transparency) requirements. Water managers require accurate data to provide options and facilitate decision making;
2. There has been commitment to data sharing at the national level (resolutions, agreements, etc.), but in many cases this hasn't flowed through to the national and regional level;
3. There are many barriers to information sharing, these include technical, economic, legal, socio-political and ethical, but there are solutions to all of these barriers. What is needed is the commitment to their implementation;
4. The economic value of hydrological data and information should be identified as creditable investments with high-quality future returns. Efforts to deal with water security issues require financial and human resources, which unfortunately are not always adequate;
5. Raising pressures as a result of climate change and variability and population growth mean that there should be greater emphasis placed on making data available and accessible.

Recommendations:

1. In establishing international and regional agreements for data sharing, it is essential that some level of "guaranteed provision" be incorporated as a minimum agreed requirement;
2. The UN should support comprehensive projects to improve hydrological networks and build the knowledge and information base that is needed to develop and manage water resources in a sustainable manner. Such efforts should facilitate the international exchange of hydrological and related data and products;
3. Vulnerability assessments of water resources at global, regional and national levels are essential. Such assessments should include environmental (ecosystem) aspects and will require the assimilation and integration of water related data sources (see 6.4.2);
4. The collectors of data (and meta data) should be acknowledged at every stage of the data value ladder (i.e. collection, analysis, reporting and prediction process);
5. Trust must be established between the providers of data and the users and this may require new and better communication mechanisms.

Proposals:

1. Standards for data transfer are currently being developed through the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) and this endeavour should be supported by the international community and countries;
2. The culture of water sharing will be promulgated through international and national activities;

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3. The Creative Commons licensing approach will be promulgated as a potential solution to data and information sharing arrangements at the national and regional level.