



Canadian International  
Development Agency

Agence canadienne de  
développement international

# **Canada's Role in the Creation of the World Water Council**

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## **Executive Summary**

### **1. Framework of the Study**

This report is a study on the role of Canada and of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in the creation of the World Water Council (WWC). The study is one component of CIDA's Infrastructure Services Performance Review (ISPR). The purposes of the study is to analyze and assess Canada's (and particularly CIDA's) capacity to influence an international policy subject in the global context. CIDA was the only bilateral donor involved in the creation of the WWC. This report was conducted in Canada and Sweden in 1998 and early 1999.

The methodology consisted of a review of relevant documents and policies, participation in an international conference, and interviews with major stakeholders, representatives of multilateral organizations, representatives of NGOs and members of civil society.

### **2. Background**

The idea of setting-up a World Water Council was born during the UN Conference on Water in Argentina, 1977 and was established in 1996 in Marseille, France. Its mission is to promote awareness of critical issues and to facilitate efficient conservation, protection, development, planning, management and use of water in an environmentally sustainable basis for the benefit of all life on the earth. Membership is open to any organization with an interest in the area of water, including federal, regional or local government departments, United Nations organizations, professional associations, research institutes and universities, private sector and industry, development agencies and international financial institutions and non-governmental agencies. As of November 1999, 206 organizations, representing 50 countries are members. Members from 26 developing countries represent 70 percent of the world's current population.

The WWC and its members create a forum to discuss the problematic of water and to guide and influence decision makers with responsibility for water management. The main current initiative of the WWC is to prepare a "Long Term Vision for Water, Life and the Environment for the 21st Century" or the Vision project. CIDA's senior water policy advisor is the Chairman of the Vision Management Committee. The Vision project will be truly global with special attention given to the developing countries and the poor. Consultations will take place in 16 regions, across five technical sectors and a number of thematic and high-level discussions. It will be presented during the Second World Water Forum scheduled for March 2000 in The Hague, The Netherlands.

### **3. Process**

A more comprehensive view of water management started to take shape in the 1970s. Some of these water management issues were briefly addressed at international conferences where Canada and CIDA played an important role. During the years (1992-1996) prior to the establishment of the WWC, Mr. Aly Shady, a senior water policy advisor, represented CIDA in all meetings and

conferences. CIDA's main objective was to ensure that developmental issues would be incorporated in the overall mission and objectives of the new organization.

This policy dialogue activity was complex and demanding and required tact, diplomacy, as well as an extensive knowledge and understanding of global water issues at the technical and institutional level. There were additional challenges owing to the many different public and private organizations involved in negotiations and discussions.

Three institutions from three countries, Egypt, France and Canada, signed the original articles of incorporation. As a founding member, CIDA has a permanent seat in the WWC and is one of the two Vice-Presidents. Once the WWC was established, many delegates from DFAIT, CIDA, the Ministry of Environment, the Government of Quebec, and the City of Montreal participated in the WWC's meetings and international conferences.

There was some risk to this endeavor. There was no guarantee that the end result would be the creation of the WWC.

#### **4. Results and Lessons Learned**

Respondents expressed a high degree of satisfaction for the creation of the WWC. The study confirmed that CIDA made a significant contribution to the creation of the WWC. CIDA also played an important role in the WWC's publications. CIDA's senior water policy advisor wrote many of the documents published by the WWC including the WWC Brochure, the Journal and other publications. The lessons learned is that the WWC's documents could have been more widely distributed in CIDA and within other organizations which are members of WWC.

CIDA also played a key role in co-ordinating and assisting the WWC in a series of major international conferences in 1997 and 1998. Along with other members of the Board of the WWC, CIDA helped to focus the policy dialogue on water and developmental issues. CIDA and the WWC played a leading role in preparing thematic background papers for these conferences and contributed to the preparation of international press briefings. CIDA influenced the content of the speech delivered by French President Jacques Chirac at the UNGA in 1997. While it is too early to assess the impact of the WWC on the UNGA, the G-7 Summit, the CSD and other high-level international forums, this study concluded that the WWC contributed to raising fresh water issues, with a focus on development, in these meetings. Canada played a key role in this.

CIDA helped to attract individuals and organizations to enroll in the WWC through its participation in international conferences. We also encouraged many Canadian organizations from the public and private sector to enroll.

At the institutional level, the WWC is now well established and is collaborating closely with many UN agencies, with the Global Water Partnership, and with its members. It is expected to play a major role through its current major activity, the Vision project, which is supported by many members, including the 12 International Water organizations.

CIDA raised development issues throughout the policy dialogue process which resulted in the implicit incorporation of poverty reduction in the main goals of the organization. In future, CIDA should continue its efforts to include poverty reduction more explicitly in the mission and objectives of the WWC.

The study confirmed that women are under-represented in the WWC Board and also as members. Women were not often consulted in the creation of the WWC nor does the organization specifically include a gender strategy. The main lesson learned is that there is a need for more work in this area. The WWC has established good partnerships with donors and with other international water associations and organizations such as the GWP. The WWC has now established professional rapport and a real partnership with its stakeholders. CIDA has a mandate to promote the awareness of development issues to Canadians and to encourage their involvement in international development co-operation. In an era of globalization, there is a strong need for all citizens of Canada to become aware of the world water issues especially those from the developing world and to get involved in international co-operation. One of the main lesson learned is that participation and partnerships are essential for the WWC. However, it is important for the WWC to seek more partners from developing countries, especially from Africa, from the NGO community, and to include better representation for women.

Policy dialogue is a complex and dynamic process, which is part of the mandate of CIDA officers at all levels. There is a wide range of experience and knowledge within CIDA, built from experiences like its involvement in the establishment of the WWC. This could be used to develop tools for staff which would help to plan the human and financial resources required, to better define expected results, to assess the risks, to outline the senior management support required, and to implement and monitor policy dialogue activities.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

### ***Conclusion***

Presently, the major challenge is on integrated water management. Water planners are compelled to pay more attention to integrated water management by recognizing the entire hydrologic system and the environmental implications of all water uses. Because of the growing global pressure on water resources, societies will have to address the issues more holistically. Advice will be needed from many interest groups, including those with political, environmental and commercial interests, as well as the more technocratic water specialists. These technocrats will continue to be essential in providing scientific and analytical rigor, but it will also need to comprehend and deal with the more complex economic, financial, social, environmental and legal issues that are intensifying.

The involvement of many stakeholders, including bilateral and multilateral donors, adds to the complexity of this policy dialogue, particularly where the interests of the donors and recipient nations diverge. One important aspect is the level of local participation and ownership that this process will have entailed hence allowing for actions to be taken. According to the interviews conducted, CIDA's role was acknowledged especially by the work that the senior water policy

advisor has done in preparing, co-ordinating and participating in all the activities and public events. CIDA's main objective in that policy dialogue was to ensure that developmental issues will be part of the overall mission and objectives of the WWC. Canada's indigenous industry and capabilities are well developed and could contribute at the policy, legal, technical and institutional aspects in water management. The WWC constitutes a unique forum for Canada to influence the G-7, UNGA and others international forums on sustainable development and poverty reduction issues. As an example of this, the WWC efforts has been recognized by the French President Jacques Chirac during the UNGA special session in 1997.

The dynamic nature of this policy dialogue was a challenge for CIDA and the complex environment in which it took place made project planning in the traditional sense almost impossible. This study has demonstrated that participating in policy dialogue requires a flexible and responsive management approach.

### ***Recommendations:***

It is recommended:

- 1. That CIDA continue to support the WWC and the Vision project and also that CIDA communicate and disseminate the WWC and the Vision within CIDA, its partners, other Provincial and Federal Ministries and stakeholders. This should be co-ordinated by Policy Branch and would include the preparation of a position paper to include objectives, expected results, human and financial resources as well as a monitoring and a communication plan.***
- 2. That CIDA advocate and foster the participation of other government departments, municipalities, the private sector, universities and international partners in the WWC especially for the development and implementation of the Vision project at all levels.***
- 3. That CIDA encourage the WWC to actively improve its strategies and activities related to gender, particularly with regard to the Vision project and its publications since it is central that a gender dimension be included in the WWC and in any water program/project.***
- 4. It is recommended that CIDA build on its experience and knowledge of policy dialogue activities to develop guidelines for staff, which would include suggestions on structure, management and resource allocations; on communications and co-ordination of project teams; how to assess risk and monitor policy dialogue.***