



Organization of
American States

THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES AND WORLD WATER DAY 2013 International Year for Water Cooperation

2013 has been declared by the UN General Assembly as the “International Year for Water Cooperation”([resolution 65/154](#)) encouraging the countries to promote international cooperation to reach the agreements on water resources contained in Agenda 21, in the Program for the Implementation of Agenda 21, in the Millennium Development Goals UN Declaration and in the Implementation Plan of Johannesburg.

This initiative addresses increasingly global concerns on water security when confronting global and local challenges produced by a non sustainable use of the resource, contamination issues and the effects of climate variability and change. Taking into account that almost half of the available surface water in the world is located in transboundary basins and that more than 60% of world population live in shared basins, water resources management between bordering countries becomes a challenge, a priority and a sensitive matter.

During more than 50 years, the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (GS/OAS), through the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI) and the Department of Sustainable Development (DSD) has been supporting the member countries to develop plans, policies and projects oriented to improve management, protection, conservation and sustainable use of water resources while addressing other issues like poverty reduction. It is in this context that water resources become a factor for understanding, cooperation, and integration and at the same time is a mechanism that strengthens democracies, peace and promotes development.

These actions according with OAS mandates and its Inter America Program on Sustainable Development (PIDS) address water governance developing policies and regulations for an integrated management of water resources, for capacity building among the local, regional and national institutions in charge of water resources, and giving support to political dialogue and inter American cooperation, information exchange through specialized networks.

To reach this goal the GS/OAS establishes partnerships with various inter American institutions such as PAHO, IDB, IICA and among the sphere of the United Nations: UNEP, UNDP, UNESCO. It collaborates as well with development banks like The WB, BCIE and with other non governmental organizations UICN, GWP, WWF, CI and cooperation agencies within OAS member countries and permanent observers. In the framework of these partnerships, the GS/OAS executes various large water resources projects particularly in transboundary regions where it is well known and recognized.

The hemispheric water agenda promoted by key stakeholders propose strategic areas in line with OAS agenda, highlighting its relevance when supporting implementation and development. Among them:

- Promote the hemispheric water security supporting actions developed in the framework of the UN and the OAS to reduce impact caused by global crisis and its effect on water resources.
- Support and promote policies aiming a new culture in the use of water originating opportunities towards economic prosperity and social well being.

- Implement and establish options for adaptation to climate variability and change and the impact on water resources, particularly those that can contribute to a resilient and competitive society.
- Encourage exchange of experiences and good practices of Water Governance for an effective management of water resources among member countries and at the same time promoting government interactions with water key stakeholders.
- Support the efforts of Bi national and Regional Commissions in the framework of the IWRM approach using the water resources as a catalytic mechanism of peace and democracy.
- Support the OAS Member States in the negotiation processes in the framework of the UN regarding transboundary aquifers.

The GS/OAS is pleased to celebrate the World Water Day in the framework of the International Year for Water Cooperation and takes the opportunity to invite the Member Countries to continue their efforts towards the hemispheric water security that will promote peace, integration and development in the Americas.