

Concept Note of the Delegation of the Iran's Islamic Parliament

Standing Committee of Economic and Sustainable Development

Water Working Group (WG)

Water is one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century which can trigger many positive and negative global developments. Given the vastness of Asia and its considerable geographic diversity, climate conditions, dispersion of rugged areas and closeness/farness to seas, this climate in this continent is quite diverse. Rain discrepancy is noticeable in Asia as well. On the other hand, in terms of water resources, rain and accessible water, the APA member states in Asia have huge differences.

Besides, in terms of consumption of renewable water, the APA member states enjoy different conditions in a way that some of these countries consume less than 11 percent of their renewable water and some other states not only consume their entire renewable water, but also supply their water through sweetening water seas.

Renewable Water Resource Dependency Ratio indicates to what extent the APA member states are dependent to waters flowed from their neighboring states and numerous catchment areas are shared among two or several states and thus, their water resources are shared as well. In these catchment areas, rivers are usually flowing among countries and some states have better position compared with other countries. In the literature of the water-related sources and disputes, water is used as a political tool by upper states against lower ones and there exists various instances in Asia. Therefore, this issue could be a source for challenges and disputes and simultaneously, an opportunity for state diplomacy aimed at assisting to extend bilateral, regional and international cooperation.

Global figures demonstrate that various APA member states do not have proper water situation and climate change as well as global warming have left inappropriate impact in these regions. Most of these countries lie in West Asia, Southwestern Asia and the Middle East. Despite better water conditions, water pollution is a great issue and struggle in some Asian regions. In most cases, conducting measures for water resources management and water crisis settlement within national level have not been fruitful in the long run and have led to the deterioration of water indexes. Therefore, these issues reaffirm and highlight the necessity for water resources management and water crisis in the region as well as adoption of proper approach.

APA Economic and Sustainable Development Standing Committee's Water WG is a very timely opportunity for discussion and exchange of effective practices, information and valuable experiences, resolutions, coordination and planning for addressing existing and future challenges of water resources management in various regions of Asian continent as well as settling water disputes and extending cooperation in diverse water-related fields.

As the main responsibility of parliaments is law-making in different sectors and supervision over law execution, the very parliaments could take a key and effective role in directing water diplomacy of their respective governments aimed at cooperating and settling disputes as well as preparing/adopting comprehensive water-based agreements on joint water resources.

To that ends, recommendations and measures about water management resources and water crisis can be proposed from two perspectives:

- 1) Recommendations and measures within domestic scale: target governments must consider measures and actions within domestic level.
- 2) Recommendations and measures within regional and inter-state relations: governments of the member states must take different aspects of regional and international water management into account.

The following chart shows the titles and themes of the recommendations and measures for these two perspectives.

| Water management from domestic perspective | Water management from regional or international perspective |
|--|---|
| Water resources integrated management with observing sustainable development principles within national and catchment scales | Considering climate change and its various aspects in different Asian regions |
| Enhancing water efficiency in different areas of consumption within national and catchment scales | Use of water as a basis for proximal inter-state cooperation and developing/executing water-related plans based on common interests |
| Taking the thorough economic value of water into account and considering different elements of water economy in various planning | Transfer and exchange of high-techs in water sector among regional and Asian states |
| further use of reclaimed water and unconventional water resources with considering various aspects, namely environmental, technical and economic ones | Adoption of required laws for accelerating concerning issues among member states by their parliaments |
| Establishment of planning system, development and exploitation of water resources and risk/crisis management with respect to droughts and climate change | Dealing with water economy and water exchange among regional states, particularly in regard to virtual water |
| Supplying and freeing environmental water rights of water ecosystem | Data/figures exchange and region's water resources assessment among states |
| Enhancing stakeholders' participation in various processes of planning, execution and exploitation | Paying attention to the environment and its various aspects within regional and inter-state levels |
| | Water, food, energy (nexus) in region's management and inter-state relations |
| | Establishment of regional institute for water management among different Asian regions |

Objectives and Duties of Water Working Group (WG)

❖ Water WG Objectives

The initial and fundamental goal of Water WG is to propose strategic viewpoints, recommendations and resolutions to the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) about the participation of member parliaments in planning, developing and implementing national and regional strategies on water. To that ends, objectives and duties of Water WG is elaborated below:

- 1- Providing space for exchange of viewpoints about water as one of the key and fundamental challenges of the global community, particularly in Asia, and proposing viewpoints and perspectives on common challenges in this sector;
- 2- Establishing a platform for discussion on key issues of water and adopting strategic approach for multilateral cooperation in sustainable and effective management of water resources and pondering over cooperation for water scarcity and drought in different parts of Asia;
- 3- Sharing existing information about water resources management in national, regional and international levels as well as social and cultural issues with one another and merging experiences, excellent practical and scientific actions and achievements with emphasis on sustainable development and new culture of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), risk management, resilience, inclusive data mining system in meteorology, drought, floodwater, etc.;
- 4- Facilitating to identify new and effective methods in water resources management, networking and cooperating among members, establishing linking network and exploring further opportunities for deepening cooperation in the future;

- 5- Identifying major directions and orientations of cooperation among parliaments aimed at enhancing legal/institutional frameworks for implementation of water strategies with emphasis on enhancing cooperation in line with prevention of drought and sustainable management of water resources;
- 6- Assisting governments in executing water-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goals 6, 13 and 14, backing and endorsing these Goals and other water-related agreements and recommending for backing national policies and documents of APA member states;
- 7- Accelerating and facilitating inter-governmental cooperation of APA member states through measures for enacting laws/bilateral and multilateral joint agreements in order to fulfilling water cooperation;
- 8- Reinforcing the role of parliamentary diplomacy in the water, water management resources and water diplomacy sectors;
- 9- Helping to facilitate transfer of experiences and financial resources of the United Nations system, regional and international bodies in the water sector, namely the Adaptation Fund (AF), with the goal of public access to drinkable and clean water;
- 10- Helping to establish Asian Center for Sustainable Management of Water among member states in order to coordinate effective management of water resources and facilitating and strengthening collective cooperation among member states in response to common water-related crises and challenges;

❖ **Water WG Duties**

- 1- Outlining strategic planning and roadmap for synergy, coordination and directing future APA's water-related activities and programs;
- 2- Drafting documents and proposing key recommendations for sustainable management of water resources in Asia;

- 3- Pursuing, partaking and helping to execution of research/technology/statuary/standardization projects for water managements and prevention of drought and water scarcity among APA's member states in partnership with governments;
- 4- Benefiting from parliaments' capacities of member states in establishing mechanisms with the goal of developing water-based arrangements in different sectors of water management resources, water recycling, adaptation to water scarcity and preservation and development of common climate;
- 5- Exploring and proposing resolutions for enhancing activities of the entire public sectors for reinforcement of regional/inter-regional cooperation, extension of parliamentary initiatives, legally endorsing and prioritizing existing and future water-related challenges in Asia, namely through joint, constructive and inclusive water management;
- 6- Helping to encourage and facilitate the networking among APA's member states' water-related executive, research and education centers through holding conferences, seminars, exhibitions and workshops on water and its relevant issues among the APA's member states;
- 7- Helping to promote effective culture, policies, strategies and discourses in the field of adaption to water scarcity, water optimal efficiency, consumption/demand management;
- 8- Creating environment for encouraging and facilitating connection among water-related private sectors, civil society and stakeholders in member states for partnership in water resources including through implementing water projects within national and regional levels;
- 9- Submitting reports and feedbacks from results of decisions and adoptions of Water WG and elaborating future measures;
- 10- Backing efforts and successful achievements of member states in effective management of water resources and trying to exploiting their water-related successful experiences through reproducing them in the development and ratification of relevant laws and regulations;
- 11- Proposing practical resolutions on the role of parliaments in strengthening and extending capacity-building, expanding instruments, investing in water sector, drafting and adopting national and regional effective policies which enable governments in assisting water management resources;
- 12- Effectively directing water diplomacy of member states in line with cooperation and settlement of water disputes as well as acceleration and facilitation of agreements;

❖ **Membership to and participation in the Water WG**

- Every APA's member states is able to join the WG and play a part in its different activities (**Open-ended**).

❖ **Draft Agenda for the Water WG Upcoming Meeting**

- Adoption of the agenda
- Reviewing objectives and duties of the Water WG
- Recommendations for APA's water-related roadmap
- Deciding over time and venue for the next WG meeting