

MENBO Experts Meeting

Location: Palau Firal i de Congressos, Tarragona.

Date: 12 May 2010

They attend, and introduce themselves in this order:

Javier Ferrer – OPH/MENBO

Fadi Comair – MENBO, GDHER

Maria Serneguet - MENBO

Dr. Abd El-Azim El-Tantawi Badawi – Agricultural Research Centre, Egypt

Juan Valero de Palma – FENACORE, EIC

Manuel Olmedas - OPH CH Ebro

Jeannette Prétot – Water Embassy

Roger Ruport – State Secretary for irrigation and water use, Brazil

Manuel Masià – Irrigators Community Derecha Ebro

Driss Habri - Assotiation Irrigateurs Maroc

Jose M^a García de la Cuadra – President of Acequia Real del Júcar

Joaquín Andreu - UPV

Ramiro Martínez - MENBO

Topics: future MENBO Action Plan.

The Permanent Technical Secretary of the Network, Javier Ferrer, briefly introduces the network, explaining its structure, organisation, objectives and its location. He states that on today's meeting, the focus will be given to two main action lines, within the MENBO Action Plan: 1) Synergies in respect of users and irrigators communities and 2) Hydrological balance analysis tools.

The President of MENBO, Dr. Fadi Comair, thanks the presence of the attendants and expresses his satisfaction on being able to hold this meeting. He states that work is needed in important topics such as water quantity and quality, rationalisation, governance, IWRM at basin level (local, regional and international), demand management, climate change, the adoption of good practices, food security, biodiversity and irrigation. He underlines the interest in the action scope, the Mediterranean, and the importance Spain has in this sense. Thus, the Union for the Mediterranean must be the main focus of the MENBO actions. He expresses his intention of presenting an action plan built upon 9 priority topics:

1. Ethics for a sustainable basin development.
2. Exceptional or accidental natural crisis management: Water and security of the basins.
3. Public water infrastructures financing by the private sector.
4. Agricultural practices rationalisation: micro-financing for farmers, directives of MENBO, FAO, IPAMED: Positive financing perspectives.
5. Guidelines for an equal partition of transboundary water.
6. Relationship amongst transboundary basins to reinforce integrated water management.
7. Creation of water tariffs to be adopted by Mediterranean directives and regulations.

8. Creation of the Regional Training and Information Centre on water (according to the directives of UfM, MENBO, OIEau, etc.
9. Protection of the water resources quality: essential issue.

The President informs of his plans to organise a “donors” meeting in the INBO headquarters during the month of July, with the objective of finding financing to work on these 9 topics, especially on rationalisation and irrigation modernisation. Moreover, he informs the attendants of the agreement he has signed with the Water Embassy and the Saint Esprit University, which he intends to ratify on this meeting.

The PTS of MENBO suggests to divide the meeting into 4 blocks:

- 1) Interventions on the action plan
- 2) Thematic Block: Topics related to agriculture, synergies between users associations.
- 3) Analysis tools on aspects related to training and rationalisation.
- 4) Conclusions and future actions.

The Network Coordinator, Ramiro Martínez, takes the floor to congratulate the President on the ambitious Action Plan proposed. He reminds the main objective of the Network, to create a group of “Basin Organisations” and the problem that many Mediterranean countries still do not have this type of organisation, aspect that should be included in the Action Plan. He reminds that the usual procedure to adopt the plan according to MENBO’s functioning is: the Experts’ Committee proposes the Liaison Bureau to approve the Action Plan during the next General Assembly.

The Egyptian representative asks how MENBO can help to resolve conflicts or internal problems related to basins on the national level.

The PTS and the President affirm that MENBO promotes dialogue to establish objectives and roadmaps and propose guidelines documents; also it has access to Water Directors’ meetings and fosters debate on these topics 2 or 3 times a year. It is important to launch and promote dialogue.

The attendants to the meeting intervene, (representative from Brazil, FENACORE-EIC President) underlining the importance of sustainability in agriculture, efficiency, tariff models and migration from rural areas, as well as the need for regulation works to control the impacts of climate change.

The FENACORE-EIC Secretary, Juan Valero de Palma, points out the approval during the XII FENACORE Congress of manifestos in favour of the principle of basin unit, establishing thus the first synergy between MENBO and FENACORE. The collaboration between users and basin

organisations is very important and is a model to follow by other countries. He offers the support and collaboration of EIC to MENBO.

The PTS facilitates the interventions, agreeing with the participants that management at basin level and irrigation management characterise water management in Spain. Basin organisations are organs for social peace that integrate all the concerned stakeholders. The main MENBO objective is to promote management at basin level.

In the thematic block two presentations are given, one on the Water Embassy and STRATEAU, by Jeannette Prétot, and another one on an analysis tool (Aquatool), presented by Joaquín Andreu.

Presentation Water Embassy and STRATEAU (see MENBO website www.remoc.org): The structure and organisation of the Water Embassy is presented and its role is explained. The organisation collaborates with other organisations such as GEF, EMWIS, ONEMA, CORAIL, etc. It is underlined the importance to make young people aware of water use. Young people, regardless of their origin, do not present problems when working together. STRATEAU is an arbitration tool that facilitates data communication to stakeholders and valuable information transfer.

The current actions of the Water Embassy are directed towards implanting a series of courses and classes on water, orientated to young engineering students.

Aquatool Presentation (see MENBO website www.remoc.org): The product of a work line of more than 30 years is presented on the development of models and decision support systems. It is not a theoretical work, it is applied practically in many basin organisations. It does not solve all the problems but it offers useful tools for real and concrete issues, and it adapts to all kinds of data availability. It is important to analyse basins as a whole (infrastructures, superficial water bodies, groundwater, etc.). This tool is easy to use and intuitive (toolbar, icons, etc.). The creation of the Permanent Drought Committee is mentioned, as well as the actions carried out since its creation. Emphasis is given to the importance of information provided by this type of database (drought status indicators, non-dimensional indicators, etc.).

Once the presentations are finished, the PTS states that participatory management is a tool, but the organisation is another one. These tools allow to solve problems. After, he opens the floor for debate.

The participants discuss water allocation for irrigation, global models and the different resource distribution according to the particular needs of each area. The concept of “environmental measures” is addressed.

The President of MENBO thanks the two speakers for their presentations and expresses his intention to transfer the presented tools to a transboundary level, where the international

problems really exist. He thanks again the participants for their attendance and moves on to discussing the future joint work of MENBO with the Water Embassy. Moreover, he announces that a general MENBO meeting may take place in Valencia in September in order to launch the action plan. He also informs of his intention to present the MENBO Action Plan in the USA too, and to establish cooperation with the North American Water Engineers Association, and with WWF.

When hearing all the news, the representatives from the MENBO PTS remind that any news and proposals presented by the Presidency should be jointly analysed to keep the associative nature of the Network. All the members must be involved regardless of the role they play in the different government bodies of the Network. This is the work model adopted from the beginning, the same as INBO's, and its survival must be ensured. The work and success of the network is that of their members, and in this sense, any jointly adopted initiative, according to the Networks objectives, is supported and promoted.