Wuhan Declaration

13th WORLD LAKE CONFERENCE

Rehabilitate the Lake Ecosystem : Global Challenges and the Chinese Innovations

November 5, 2009

Water is essential for all life on our planet. Adequate supplies of freshwater of acceptable quality are a prerequisite for human health, food security, industrialization and economic well-being. The essential role of freshwater in maintaining the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems that provide life-supporting ecosystem services also is fundamental to human existence.

Freshwater is a finite resource that nature distributes unequally in time and space. As a result, many parts of the world suffer from fresh water extremes, including either shortages (droughts) and excesses (floods). In this context, lakes exhibit a special prominence among our global freshwater resources. Containing more than 90% of all the liquid freshwater on the surface of our planet, they support a range of human activities, including agriculture, commerce, transportation, recreation, tourism, and food and energy production. They also provide important habitat for a diverse array of organisms.

It is because of their fundamental importance that we are gathered here in Wuhan, the city of more than a hundred lakes, on the occasion of the 13th World Lake Conference to discuss current lake management issues and challenges.

A fundamental theme of this 13th World Lake Conference, therefore, is that we must enhance control of lake pollution and rehabilitate lakes overloaded with pollutants, so as to restore their ecosystem services as soon as possible and make contributions to the development of ecological civilization.

Preamble

Recognizing that the survival of all life on our planet, including humans, depend on adequate supplies of fresh water of acceptable quality;

Recognizing that lakes represent the major source of readily-accessible liquid freshwater on the surface of our planet;

Noting the findings of the IPCC Technical Report VI on climate change and water and agreeing that taking care of lake ecological resources is an important measure for addressing global climate change issues;

Realizing that scarce water supplies, water pollution, degraded ecosystems, and shrinking wetlands are a serious threat, both to the survival of humanity, and to sustainable social development, particularly for developing countries;

Recognizing that unsustainable consumption and production patterns, inadequate institutional and legal structures for protection and management of lakes, insufficient financial resources and incompetent pollution control technologies, as well as the challenges and uncertainty associated with increasing environmental degradation are among the continuing root causes constraining the sustainable use of lakes, their basins and their resources;

Reaching a common vision to restore the balance and vitality of lakes and their basins, utilizing natural processes to the maximum extent, to enhance control of internal pollution, to facilitate a harmonious relationship between humans and water systems, and to promote sustainable economic and social development; and

Recognizing that innovations developed in China and elsewhere to address issues related to the protection and sustainability of lake basin ecosystem services, and that lessons learned in their implementation, can potentially benefit lake basin management efforts on a global scale.

Therefore, the participants at the 13th World Lake Conference have developed a number of recommendations to address issues discussed and the conclusions reached at the 13th World Lake Conference.

Recommendations

Accordingly, it is recommended that governments, communities, enterprises, water users and providers and all other relevant lake basin stakeholders jointly undertake the following actions:

- *Develop and implement comprehensive strategies for rehabilitating lakes that include strict environmental protection measures, that promote sustainable industrial development at the basin scale, and that significantly reduce point and non-point pollutant loads to lake ecosystems. The new strategic thinking of ecological rehabilitation of lakes is a beneficial exploration of developing countries in controlling lake pollution and preventing ecosystem degradation;*

- *Preserve ecosystem services, the key to sustainable development, as well as a major objective of Lake pollution control;*

- *In recognition of the current global financial situation, governments, civil society and the private sector should explore new and innovative financial instruments to provide the financial resources needed to address sustainable lake basin ecosystem services;*

- *Promote partnerships involving governments, communities, industries and non-governmental organizations, and promote public participation as the basis for a more community-oriented approach to complementing a strictly regulatory approach to the common goals of environmental protection and maintenance of lake basin ecosystem services;*

- *Encourage innovation in the concept of lake management and research in eutrophication control technologies, and promote development and implementation of multi-disciplinary technologies for enhancing ecological restoration of lakes and their basin;*

- *Combine lake management with adaptation of climate change in the context of the emerging realities of global climate change, and boost the development of low-carbon economy, circular economy and green economy;*

- *Building on ILEC's continuing positive experiences in many countries, promote Integrated Lake Basin Management (ILBM) as the primary approach for lake basin management, including integration of this approach into international, national and local level lake basin management policies and programs, and recognition of the institutional, legal, economic, scientific, technological and information pillars comprising ILBM governance;*

- *All countries strengthen cooperation to enrich the ILBM concept on a global scale, including expansion of the knowledge base of lake basin management experiences, and establishment of close linkages with global core activities of other transboundary water systems*