

Bora Bora outcome
26th of May 2008

I have first to convey the regrets not to have been able to be here with us from Eric Pommier. He gave me the presentation which follows.

It is a pleasure to meet again some of the experts who contributed to the Bora Bora seminar.

Bora Bora was the 1st session of 3. We start the second one to-day and look forward to the last one in Honolulu at year end. The Bora Bora program is available at <http://peccfrenchpolynesia.blogspot.com>

The full 3 steps endeavour was endorsed by the PECC and is expected to bring added value to the next World Water Forum to meet in Istanbul in 2009.

As Pierre Victoria stated in its communication in BB last november, “island territories, coastal regions and isolated communities were almost forgotten during the Mexico forum”. In contrast, “the World Water Forum has acknowledged the vulnerability and particular needs of small islands countries”.

Although the island and coastal countries share a number of common problems with all countries in the world, the meeting in BB showed the many ways in which they differs from others.

The ability of the islands to tackle water scarcity is constrained by their size, their vulnerability to climate changes and natural disasters, but also sometimes by the cultural tradition of their population. In addition, together with the coastal countries, they have to deal with a specific question, which can be an asset or a scourge, their vicinity to the ocean. Ocean is the ultimate water resource, and at the same time, it could obliterate the fresh water resources stored in the land mass.

It appeared in BB that we have to think and talk about the whole water cycle and not only about fresh water, particularly in relation to the presence of lagoons .I understand that the question was raised during last week meeting convened by the NC economic and social council.

The BB case was a good example of an integrated development of the sort: desalinization linked to the tourism industry (which had the need and the means

to get fresh drinkable fresh water), sewage treatment, reuse of water, lagoon preservation, and incidentally, renewable energy from the ocean.

We agreed on some basic issues. A real governance, based on a legal framework, is necessary to protect the resource and its distribution and set up a differentiation strategy between the human, agricultural and industrial uses. A pricing policy has to be implemented, balancing the fact that water is not a free good, but also an absolute human need. Could it be free up to a fixed quantity, like in South Africa?

Technical approach have been identified in relation with their respective costs.

Finally, we dealt continuously with the permanent environmental questions: how to prevent, rather to cure, pollution, and how to reach the same output with a smaller input?

I look forward to the present session, with its particular accent on mining industry.