

Final session

In the closing session of the Forum, Dr. Parviz Koohafkan thanked all the participants for their very rich and substantial contributions to the advancement of the GIAHS and outlined the follow-up of the meeting. The FAO Secretariat of the GIAHS intended to interact further with all those who had joined in the meeting as well as with those invited who could not attend, in the next steps of the programme. The wider membership in the programme was particularly appreciated and encouraging.

The GIAHS needed further help and support and all participants were invited to mobilize support in obtaining the GEF approval of the full-fledged GIAHS Project by next January/February 2007. All efforts will be made on the part of the Secretariat to ensure that the existing pledges materialize and the participants concerned will be kept informed in this respect. Additional resources will be sought for the programme in order to cover more systems and proposals will be invited to this effect. As regards to the policy framework for the GIAHS, it will be further explored by analyzing the existing treaties and other instruments, examining the mandates of international bodies concerned, and commissioning further legal studies. Much will depend on the political momentum created in support of the GIAHS.

Developing a suitable draft instrument is likely to take time and therefore steps are being taken to start preparations immediately. It was clear from the meeting discussion that the scientific underpinning of the programme should be further developed. A research agenda and baseline data should be established for each system and cooperation will be sought to give further scientific guidance to the programme and its individual projects. In closing, Dr Koohafkan reiterated its most sincere thanks to the participants and appealed to each of them to become a “champion” of the GIAHS programme.

