Rivers in Morocco as a Means for Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT

Rivers constitute the main surface water resources in Morocco. Their capacity has exceeded 79% of the country's global water capacity. The significant rivers include the Sebou (81 miles), Oum Er-Rbia (367 miles), Moulouya (310 miles), Draa (684 miles), Bou Regreg (149 miles), and Souss (112 miles). These rivers and their tributaries provide water for large agricultural areas, which are managed by their respective hydraulic basin agencies (ABH). On the other hand, many cities and urban agglomerations have emerged, leading to extensive use as a source of drinking water, for fishing, domestic, touristic and industrial activities. Unfortunately, these varied activities generate polluted water that impact negatively the environment. From a socio-economic perspective, rivers can elicit cooperation between administrative regions, mainly healthy rivers that could boost national growth. Climate change has generated successive long-lasting periods of drought that have seriously impacted water resources in Morocco. This is characterized by the decrease of river flow, lower level of the storage in the dams (Almassira case), decline in the availability for agriculture and for drinking water in the mountain zones. To face this situation, many actions have been taken by the government, starting with the promulgation of the water law, the creation of ABH, the establishment of standards of pollution, increasing of storage capacity, transfer of water from basins, the sensitization of users to shift to drip irrigation, and more resilient agriculture. Other major actions leading to reducing the consumption of water consist of shifting to the use of non-conventional water as seawater desalination, to improve the supply of drinking water and for agriculture, for green surfaces or before releasing in rivers.

Key words: Morocco, rivers, development, water, resources