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INITIATIVES FOR THE FUTURE OF GREAT RIVERS



INITIATIVES POUR L'AVENIR
DES GRANDS FLEUVES
INITIATIVES FOR THE FUTURE
OF GREAT RIVERS





Panama

Defining the river of tomorrow

Rivers are fragile ecosystems. They are situated at the heart of current climatic and environmental issues (energy production, food security, public health, mobility, etc.). Resources of freshwater vital for human life and the development of societies lie at the centre of balances of power. Poorly managed, increasingly scarce and victim of demographic pressure and climate change, it can give rise to conflicts. Our societies must demonstrate their capacity to reconcile the uses of water in order to ensure that the services rendered by rivers durably benefit the greatest number. Because rivers could also provide solutions for people and for the climate.

Faced with these challenges, action is necessary from every discipline and all the actors involved with rivers.

An association in the general interest founded by CNR and chaired by Erik Orsenna, Initiatives for the Future of Great Rivers (IFGR) brings together actors who give a voice to rivers. Gathering river managers, the representatives of institutions (basin organisations, national supervisory bodies) and experts (climatologist, anthropologist, economist, historian), IFGR offers an original, international and multidisciplinary forum open to stakeholders and oriented towards action in favour of tomorrow's rivers. Its works are organised around three themes: **governance, human and ecosystem health, and the link between rivers and oceans**. Its goal: obtain recognition of the wealth represented by rivers and the role they play in the development of the territories they cross, through collective reflection, creating maximum awareness, and following an integrated approach.

Lastly, IFGR wants to contribute to enriching national and international debates on energy transition and building a sustainable world.



Nautical sports on the Rhone



A pilgrim in the Ganges

Editorial by the Chairman



ERIK ORSENNA

An economist and writer, and the author of a reference work on the future of water, Erik Orsenna is an expert in sustainable development. He is also a member of the prestigious Académie Française. For more than fifteen years, his travels around world have fuelled his essays on the hidden rationales of globalisation and the management of natural resources.

I have loved rivers ever since I was a child.

This love has never left me. With age, it has even tended to get stronger. Whenever I arrive in a new place, I run to a bridge that lets me watch the water run under it. If you only knew how I pity the cities that no river crosses. These modern, indifferent cities may well vaunt their pride, but I know they are orphans.

Would you like to know why I like rivers? For at least five reasons, the five characteristics that can be found in all rivers.

First of all, a river is life, since all living things need water to survive.

Next, all rivers are paths. A route for goods and people.

The river is also a force that requires only us to help it turn mills and dam turbines.

The river is a kingdom whose inhabitants are not only fish but also legends.

Lastly, the river is a mirror. Not only does it reflect the sky but also the populations it crosses. Tell me the relation you have with your river and I'll tell you the type of society you belong to. The Ganges tells the story of India like the Nile does for Egypt and the Mississippi the southern states of America.

Each river differs from the others though they are all faced with the same challenges: climate change and rising sea levels, pollution, unbridled urbanisation, resource sharing, etc. Indeed, rivers fulfil an array of functions. This requires just as many competences to understand them better and improve their management. That is the point of Initiatives for the Future of Great Rivers, an original forum of high level dialogue between rivers.

Erik Orsenna

Chairman of "Initiatives for the Future of Great Rivers"



Boats on the Mekong River

Organisation

The rivers Committee, chaired by Erik Orsenna, gathers environmental experts of international repute that focus on the economic, social and societal dimensions of rivers.

- Ricardo Javier Álvarez:** Vice-President of the Argentinian subsidiary of the Ibero-American Institute of Maritime Law (IIDM) and legal coordinator of South American Waterways
- Pascal Bourdeaux:** Historian, Associate Professor at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes
- Corinne Castel:** Archaeologist, Director of Research at CNRS
- Julien Clément:** Doctor of anthropology; Quai Branly Jacques Chirac Museum
- Daniel Dagenais:** Vice-President of Operations of the Montreal Port Administration
- Katherine Daniell:** Doctor of water sciences and researcher at the Australian National University
- Thierry Guimbaud:** Managing Director of Voies Navigables de France (VNF)
- Bernd Gundermann:** Architect, founder and director of Urbia-Group – Think Beyond

- Md Mozammel Haque:** President of the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA).
- Mirdad Kazanji:** Director of the Pasteur Institute of Guyana
- Kabiné Komara:** International Consultant, Member of the International Action Council
- Sergio Makrakis:** Associate Professor and researcher at the University of the State of Western Paraná, Brazil
- Ghislain de Marsily:** Emeritus Professor at the Sorbonne University and at the Ecole des Mines de Paris, member of the Academy of Sciences
- Gilles Mulhauser:** Managing Director of water for the State of Geneva, Switzerland
- Tamsir Ndiaye:** Managing Director of the Manantali Energy Management Company (SOGEM-OMVS), Mali
- Erik Orsenna :** Economist, author, member of the French Academy

- Irina Ribarova:** Professor at UACEG (University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy), Sofia, Bulgaria
- Papa Abdoulaye Seck:** Minister of Agriculture and Rural Facilities of Senegal
- Hamed Diane Semega:** High Commissioner of the Organisation for the Development of the Senegal River (OMVS)
- Alfredo Sese:** Technical Secretary of Transport and Infrastructure at the Rosario Commodity Market (BCR), Argentina
- James Spalding Hellmers:** Paraguayan Managing Director of Itaipu Binacional
- Yangbo Sun:** Director of International Cooperation of the Yellow River Conservation Commission, Ministry of Water Resources, China
- Marie-Laure Vercambre:** Director of Water for Life and Peace programme, Green Cross International
- Anne-Claire Vial:** President of ARVALIS - institut du végétal (the French arable crops R&D Institute)





Djoudj National Bird Sanctuary (Senegal)

Our missions

- **Collective reflection and interdisciplinary dialogue:** develop a network of knowledge and practices dedicated to rivers
- **Dialogue and meetings:** spreading public awareness of the essential role played by rivers to reinforce individual and community commitment
- **Whistle-blowing and cooperation:** influence decision-makers and associate them in our actions
- **Develop solutions:** share, support and jointly develop concrete and reproducible solutions for rivers

Our means of action

- Two annual sessions – one in France, one abroad – which bring together the rivers committee and the stakeholders to dialogue on a theme or to study a practical case
- Advocacy
- Participating in coalitions devoted to water and in major international conferences on water and the climate
- Operational workgroups
- Conferences aimed at the general public
- Pedagogic projects such as writing competitions



Rice field in China



Hydropower plant and lock of Bollène, on the Rhone

Partners and network:

They already support us



CNR, THE FOUNDING MEMBER

“CNR is France’s leading producer of 100% renewable electricity. Since 1934, the year in which it was entrusted with the Rhone River concession, CNR has cultivated love and respect for the river. Our concession, almost without equivalent elsewhere in the world, gathers three major uses of water: electricity production, navigation, and irrigation. Bolstered by the experience gained from these three activities, and because we think that rivers have a role to play in today’s societies, CNR has launched “Initiatives for the Future of Great Rivers” and it is now IFGR’s main sponsor.”

Elisabeth Ayrault
Chairwoman and CEO of CNR



THE PRINCE ALBERT II OF MONACO FOUNDATION, SPONSOR

Founded by HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco in June 2006, the Foundation is actively engaged in climate change, renewable energies, biodiversity and water management. It primarily acts in three areas: the Mediterranean Basin, the Polar regions and the least developed countries severely affected by the effects of climate change. The Foundation seeks to spread awareness of the impact of human activities on the environment, promote more nature-friendly behaviours and encourage innovative initiatives.

Our network



IFGR’s 3rd and 4th sessions were labelled by the Conference of the Parties for the COP22 and COP23.



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