

## INTERNATIONAL WATER ASSOCIATION

### Leading Edge Conference on Strategic Asset Management

Opening Address of the Director of the Hydraulic and Environmental  
Department on behalf of the President of LNEC

LNEC, Lisbon, 17 October 2007

Your Excellency the Minister for the Environment, Spatial Planning and  
Regional Development,

Dear members of LESAM Scientific and Technical Committee,

Dear representatives of IWA and of the IWA National Committee (CNAIA),

Dear members of LESAM Organising Committee,

Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen:

On behalf of the President of LNEC, who cannot be present for health reasons, it is my great privilege to welcome you at the National Civil Engineering Laboratory, LNEC. LNEC is a research institution with a long tradition of research and thought in civil engineering in general, and in hydraulics civil engineering and urban water infrastructures, in particular. A high percentage of professionals currently in the highest positions in the water sector in Portugal started their professional, research or academic career at LNEC, from where they sow the seeds of present water policies in Portugal, as well as the design and management of hydraulic works. From its very beginning, in 1949, the Hydraulics Department has been responsible for more than 800 applied research studies developed for the Public Administration and for private and public bodies that promoted water works and water management. More than 20% of these studies were developed for foreign countries, in Europe and worldwide.

The aim and ambition of LNEC are to be permanently at the leading edge of knowledge in its fields of activity. To achieve this aim, LNEC is now part of the relevant outstanding networks of research institutions, particularly in Europe and in Ibero-American countries. Moreover, LNEC promotes high level education of graduate students, in close co-operation with the top Portuguese Universities. At present, more than 25 post-graduate students develop their research work at the Hydraulic and Environment Department of LNEC, from which near 10 at the doctorate level at the Urban Water Division (the Division responsible for chairing LESAM).

It is therefore a great honour and privilege for us to be one of the organisers and to host LESAM 2007, integrated in the celebrations of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our institution.

Please allow me to share with you 3 main reasons, among others, why LESAM is important for us.

**First**, because it symbolises the recognition that LNEC has always been open to broaden its original “hard” civil engineering R&D to other domains of engineering, such as mechanics, electronic and control, computing and information management, environment, etc.), as well as to other areas of knowledge, such as social ecology, economy, applied mathematics and physics, etc. This multidisciplinary approach is part of LNEC’s way of doing and culture. Issues related to the operation, maintenance rehabilitation and management in general of the civil engineering works are of increasing relative importance, in comparison to the more traditional fields of activity, in the scope of design and construction. For instance, we are currently elaborating with IRAR two technical guides on the rehabilitation of water and wastewater systems. Another example is the forthcoming Seminar on Rehabilitation, organized by LNEC, to be held in Angola later this month, with a multidisciplinary, large delegation of experts.

**The second main reason** why LESAM is important for us is because Infrastructure Asset Management is currently a priority R&D topic in international and in national terms, and LNEC is aiming at increasing its activity in this domain.

**The third reason** is because LNEC wishes to play a key role in the field of water supply and wastewater infrastructure asset management, in the country and outside. This was the focus of a detailed research programme recently concluded at LNEC.

Our strategy is to contribute to create awareness for the importance of strategic asset management at a national level and to increase the existing know-how at the academic, research and applied levels.

In this context, water infrastructure asset management is one of the subjects integrated in our current 4-year programmed research plan, is the object of short courses we offer, is part of the curricula of new post-graduated courses launched by various universities with which LNEC collaborates, and is dealt with in several on-going and planned research projects.

The organisation of LESAM fits in our strategy. In fact, LESAM is a great opportunity to have with us the best world experts in this area, who will teach a lot to all of us, participants of this conference, and will help us creating the referred awareness. LESAM is also an opportunity to share some of the work recently developed at LNEC in this field.

This Conference, organised by IWA, by CNAIA and by LNEC, with the support of many other organisation to which I wish to express our great appreciation, –

will contribute to exchange information and experiences, and to deepen our knowledge in infrastructures Asset management and closely related areas. The eminent professional background of the lecturers, especially of the keynote speaker and of the *rapporteurs*, will certainly contribute to the success of the meeting.

I wish you all a rather fruitful Conference and a pleasant stay in Lisbon.