

Hydro-Politics: What It Is & Why It Matters

Stanley T. Asah

Human Dimensions of Natural Resources

School of Forest Resources

Politics: Not as “Dirty” a Word

- It is about power: ability to do work/accomplish something
- Broadly speaking
 - We all are politicians!!!
- Pervasive in all human societies: the force with which we interact with each other & the environment to accomplish desired outcomes:
 - Knowledge
 - Position/place
 - Differences

Hydro-Politics: The Concept?

1. “Systematic study of conflict & cooperation between states over water resources that transcend international boundaries.”
 - Hydro-Politics in the 3rd World: Conflict & Cooperation in International River Basins
Arun P. Elhance
2. “Authoritative allocation of values in society with respect to water.”
 - Hydro-Politics in the Developing World: A Southern African Perspective
Turton A. & Henwood R.

Unpacking Turton & Henwood's Definition

1. Dynamic-Ongoing
2. Authoritative value allocation via laws & policies/decision making
3. Some less/more favored than others
4. Contestation:
 1. Non universality of values
 2. Legitimacy of authority
 3. Who gets what, when, where, & how?
5. Issues of Scale: Individuals-states
6. Range of Issues: Infinitely wide, e.g.,:
 - State & Non-State actors
 - Water claims & uses
 - Values: Social, political, psychological, economic
 - Conflict & mitigation, peace, gender, ecosystem, sustainable development

Hydropolitics: Why It Matters

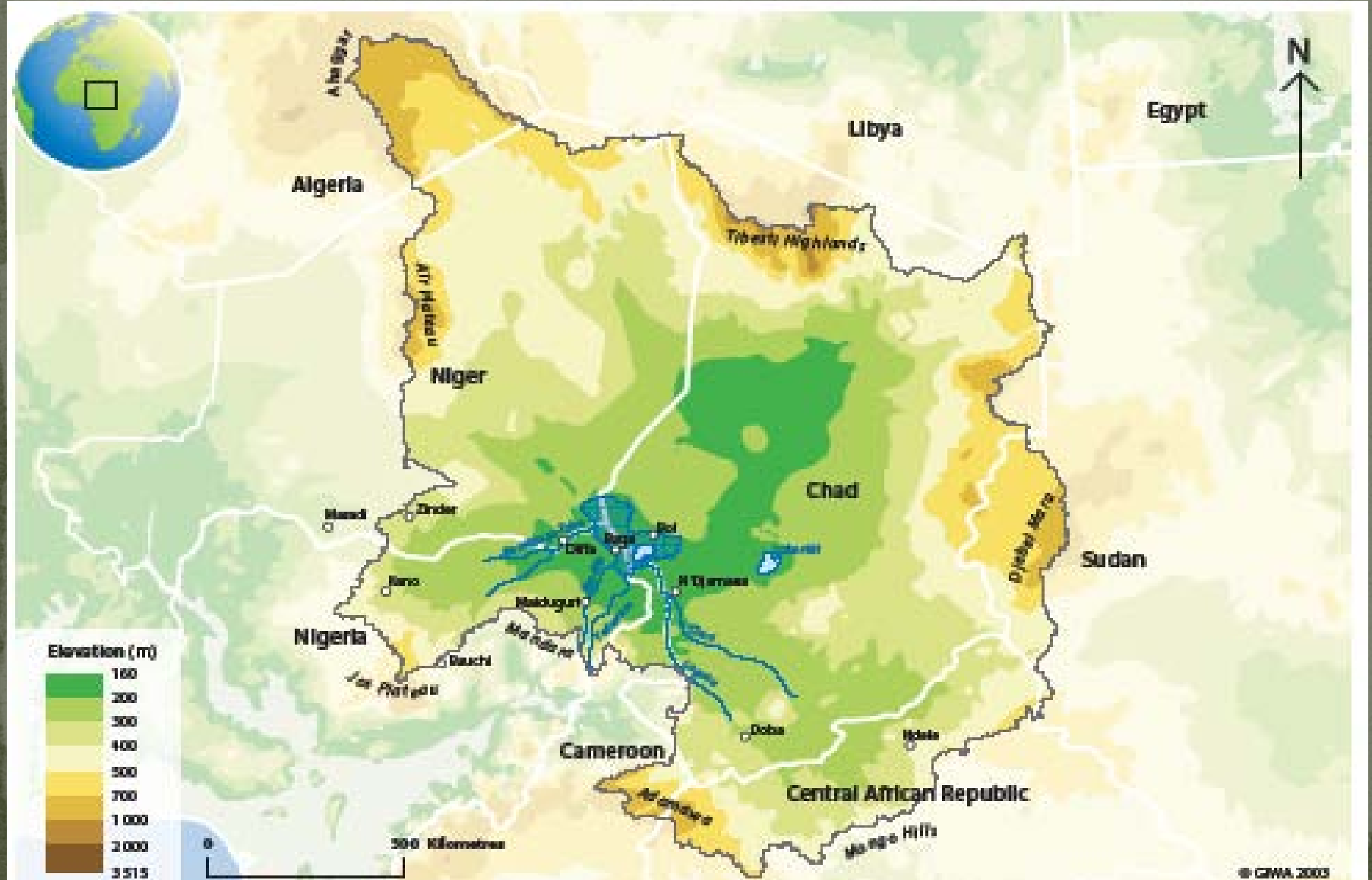
- The **IRONY** of water & other environmental problem solving!
 - We act as if it matters less
 - We talk as if it really matters
 - We open new “solution doors” when we explicitly recognize & accommodate hydro &/or enviro-politics

Why it Matters: PNW Water Uses/Stakes

- Diverse patterns of water use, reflecting differences in:
 - Climate
 - Population distribution
 - Socioeconomic conditions
 - Development & land use
 - Livelihood strategies
- Uses
 - Municipal & Industrial uses
 - Hydropower: 70% of electricity; unusual
 - WA state has second lowest electricity prices in US
 - Agriculture
 - Flood control
 - Navigation
 - Instream/ecological, e.g., salmon
 - Recreation

It Matters in PNW: Climate Impacts

- Climate Impacts Group, 2001
- Decreased mountain snow-covered area
- Earlier spring peak flows
 - Increased lag between snowmelt & fall rains
- Decreased summer stream flow
- Columbia River Basin
 - Reduced reservoir system capacity to meet minimum stream flow requirements for fish
 - Reduced power production
- More unreliable municipal water supply
- Intensified conflict among uses/users
 - Institutional arrangements/disintegrated
- But, if we act as if it matters!



Lake Chad: Some Facts

- Africa's fourth largest Lake
 - Africa's second largest wetland complex
- Shallow; Hydrologic Variability
- Nesting ground for migrating bird species
- Supports livelihoods of millions of local people
 - Agriculture, Fishing, Livestock Breeding

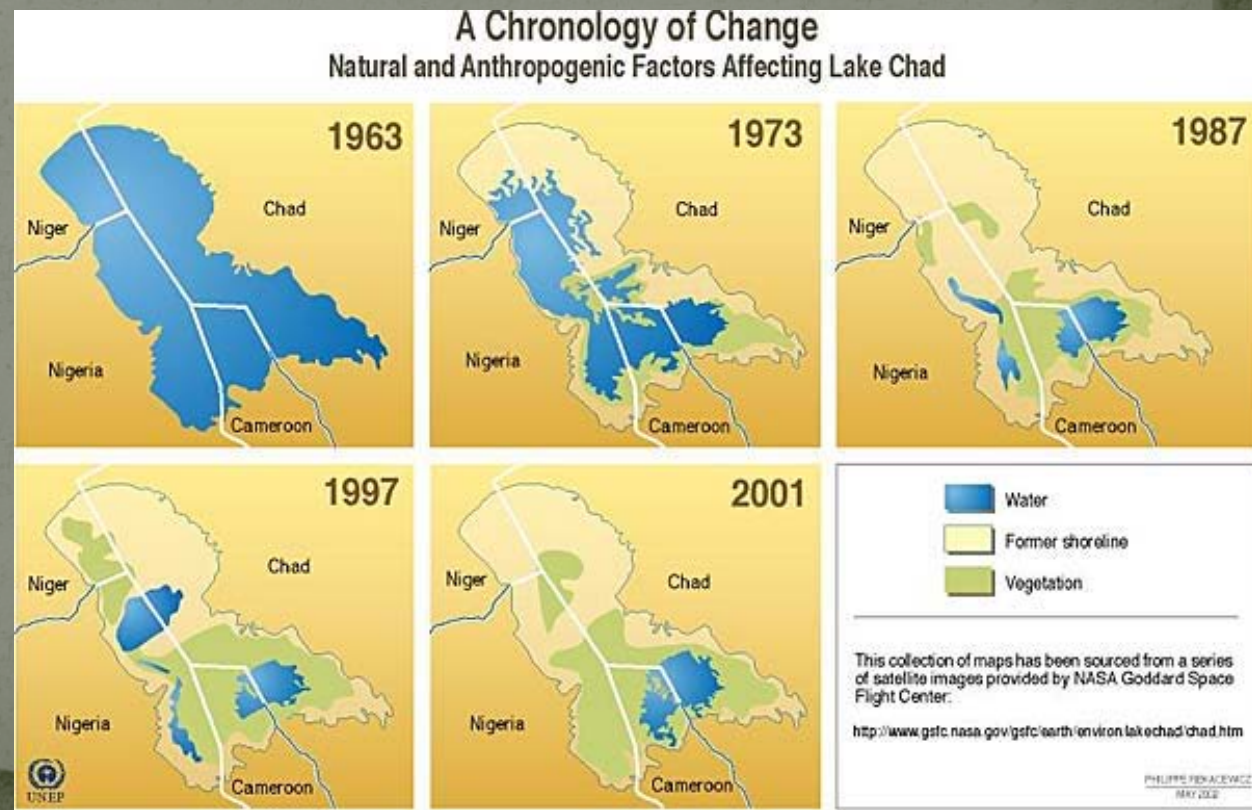


Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC)

- 1964: Fort Lamy Convention
 - Nigeria
 - Cameroon
 - Niger
 - Chad
- 1994
 - Central African Republic
- 2000
 - Sudan awaiting ratification
- 2007
 - Libya

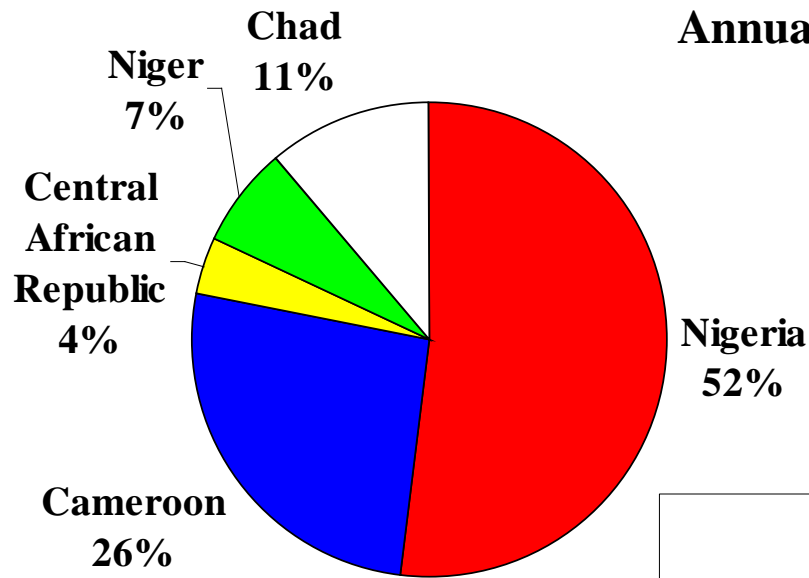
The Problem

- ~5% of 1963 size
- 70s-80s
 - Dams for large-scale irrigation
- Species lost & Human migration
- Conflict among local uses/users

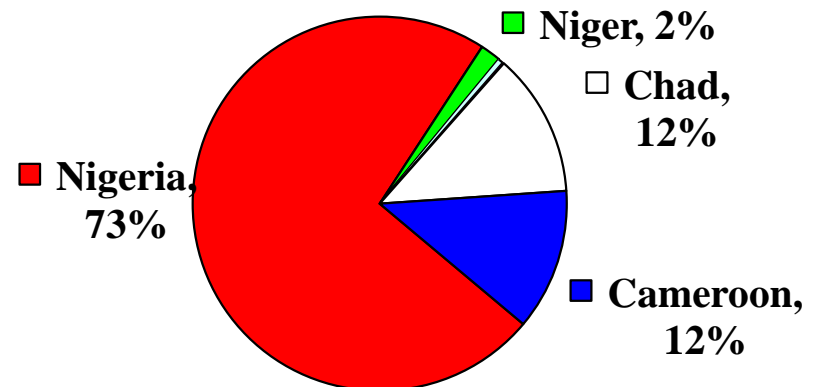


Resource Use & Allocation

Annual Operating Budget



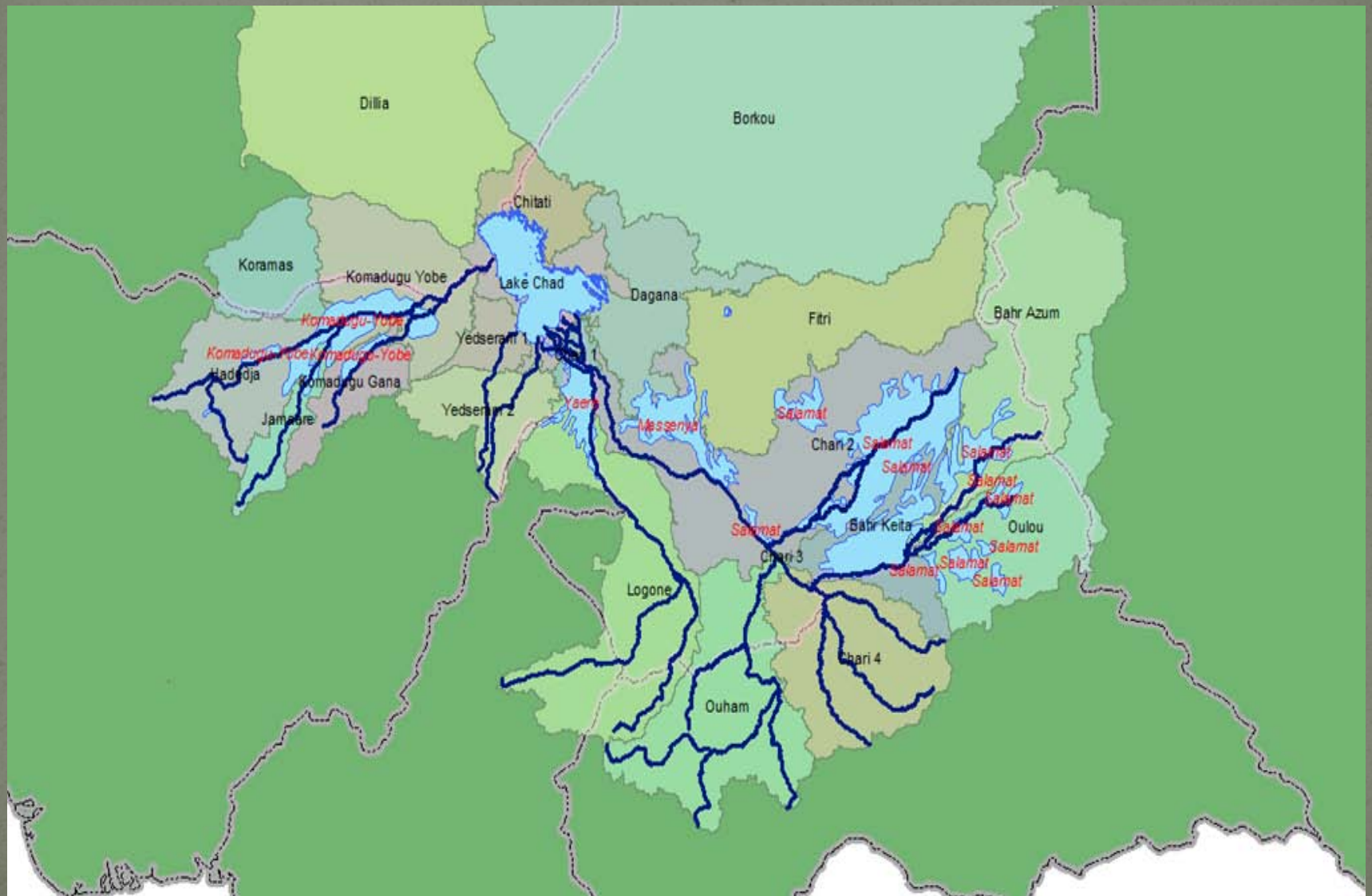
Proportion of Irrigated Area



Nigeria as Lead State

- Knowledge
 - 3X as many institutions of higher learning
 - Long control of the executive secretariat
- Economy
 - 52% of LCBC operating budget
 - Highest exporter of gas/petroleum
 - 4X the GDP of all other states
- Military Might & Interstate Relations
 - ~4X troops/paramilitary personnel
 - Occupied oil-rich Bakassi Peninsula in Cameroon

Geography as Power



Fort Lamy Convention & Statutes: An Economic Values Manifesto!

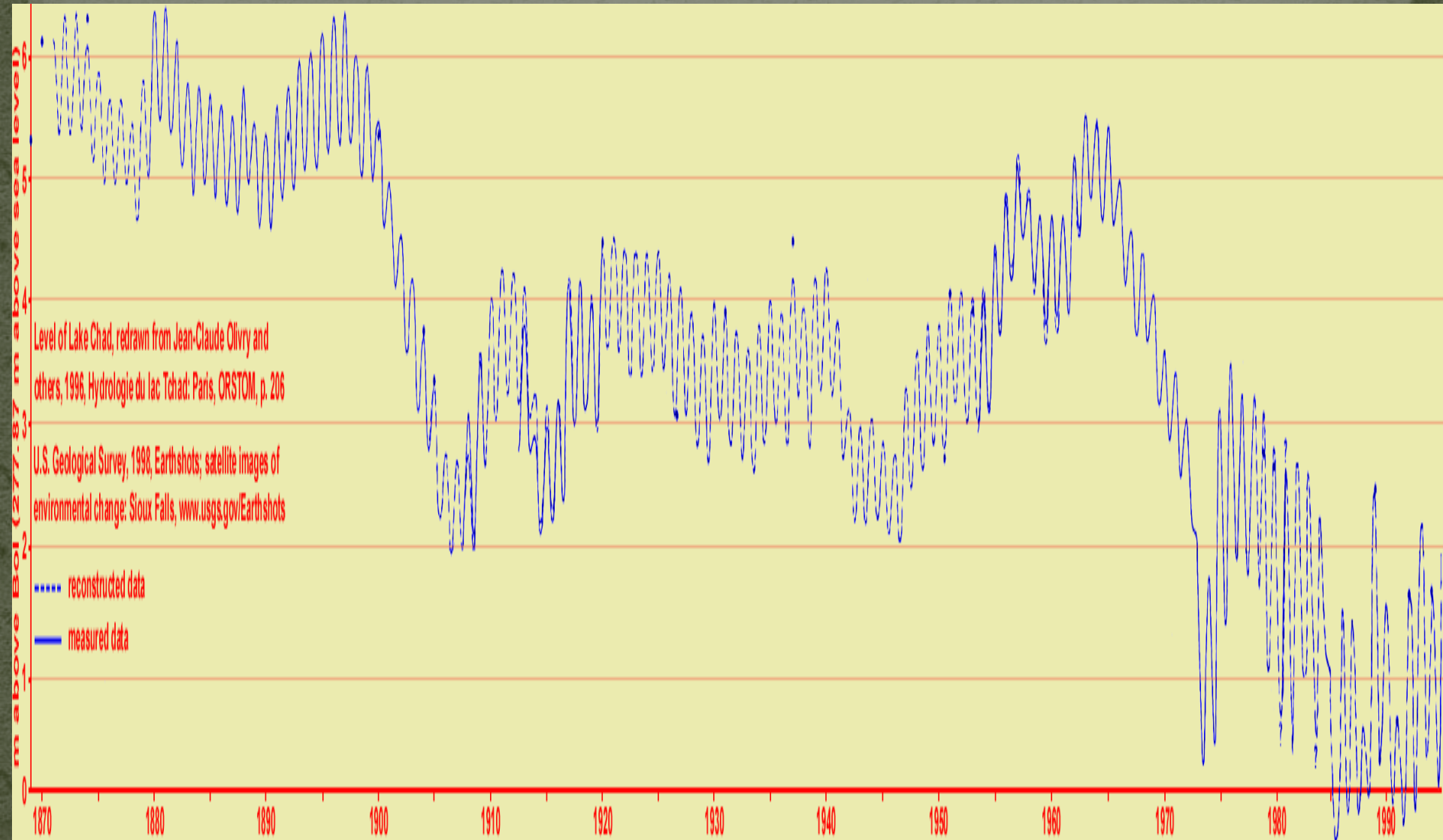
- Recognizes sovereign rights of states
 - Plan projects with prior consultation of LCBC
 - Forbids unilateral exploitation with negative effects on other member states' interests
 - Normal water conditions
- Exploitation Vs. Conservation
 - Very Present: Utilization, development, navigation, economic ends etc.
 - Almost Absent: Efficient use, conservation, sustainability etc.

Discourse: Legitimacy & Contestation

- LCBC/Nigeria
 - Komadugu-Yobe
 - 5% of inflow (LCBC: Nigeria)
 - Global warming
 - “The west creates the greenhouse gases & we suffer the effect via lost of local livelihoods”
 - Local poverty
- Other/international Discourses
 - Komadugu-Yobe
 - 10% of inflow (WWF/MRW)
 - Poor water management practices
 - State owned-managed irrigation systems
 - Local negative externalities



Hydrograph: Legitimacy & Contestation



Climate Change is the Problem??

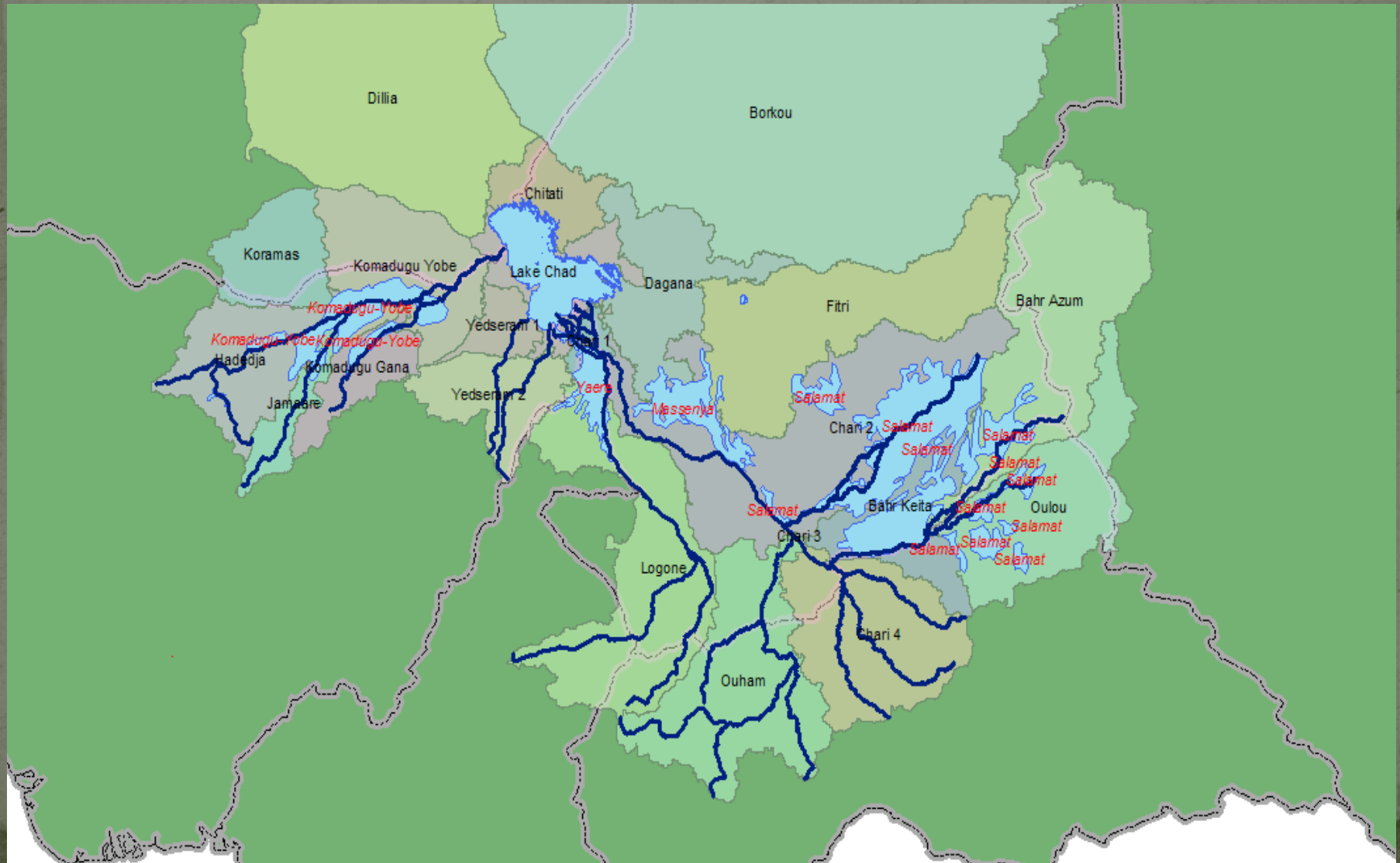
HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON WATER FOR
AGRICULTURE AND ENERGY IN AFRICA: THE
CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE

SIRTE, LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA

15 – 17 DECEMBER 2008.

Climate Change is the Problem!

Solution? Largest Inter-Basin water transfer in African history



Makings of a Hydro-Security Complex: Water Wars or Cooperation?

- Other member states will catch up
 - Democracy/stability; Knowledge
 - Development needs
 - Increased water demands
- Will to re-negotiate water claims and uses?
 - Existing infrastructure?
 - Investment?
 - Productivity?
- Attention to hydro-politics is key!
 - Regional stability and development