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1. Itaipu Project and its Execution

For many years, engineers in Brazil, as well as in Paraguay, have been keenly aware of the enormous hydroelectric potential of the reach of the Paraná River along the frontier between the two countries. Several years ago, some studies of a general nature were conducted for the development of this resource. However, in order that more detailed studies of such development could be carried out, an agreement between the Brazilian and the Paraguayan Government was required.

On June 22, 1966, the two countries signed a joint statement that became known as "Ata de Iguaçu", by means of which they proclaimed their willingness to carry out, by common consent, the study and survey of the hydrological resources belonging to Brazil and Paraguay, on a condominium basis, from and including the Salto Grande das Sete Quedas or Salto del Guairá to the mouth of the Iguaçu River. The Ata de Iguaçu also established that the electric power which could be produced through the utilization of the head existing in the above mentioned reach of the Paraná River would be equally divided between the two countries.

Soon after, on February 12, 1967, the Governments of Brazil and Paraguay set up the Brazilian-Paraguayan Joint Technical Commission for implementation of the Ata de Iguaçu with respect to the studies for the development of the hydrological resources of the reach concerned.

After an extensive study of the binational reach of the Paraná River which included analyses of a large number of sites and alternatives, it was concluded that the best solution for the optimum development of the entire hydroelectric potential of the Paraná River from Salto das Sete Quedas or Salto del Guairá to the mouth of Iguaçu River would be the construction of a single dam at the site called Itaipu, which is near the downstream end of the reach.

Having accepted and approved the recommended solution, the Governments of Brazil and Paraguay decided to proceed immediately with the measures required for a joint execution by both countries of the proposed project.

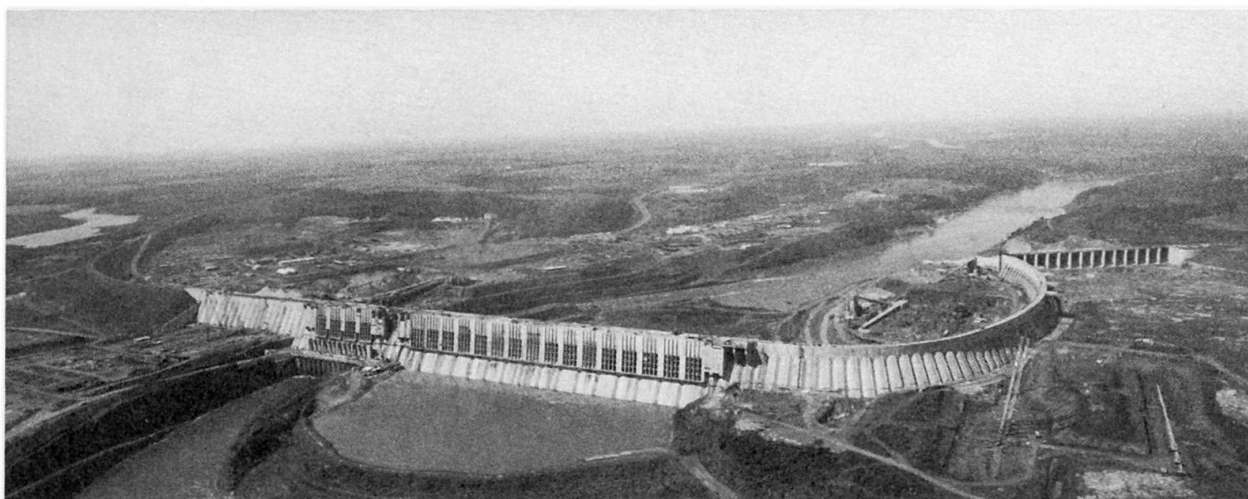
On April 26, 1973, a treaty was signed between Brazil and Paraguay for the joint development of the hydroelectric resources of the Paraná River from and including the Salto Grande de Sete Quedas or Salto del Guairá to the confluence of the Iguaçu River.

In the treaty, Brazil and Paraguay agreed to carry out, jointly and in condominium, the development of these resources, and for this purpose created on May 17, 1974, a binational entity called Itaipu, which is now known as Itaipu Binacional, with headquarters in Brasília and Asunción, the capitals of the two countries. The project involved the construction of a high dam, which has only recently been completed and the technical aspects of which are described in this publication.

The completion of this task became possible due to the useful collaboration of the Executive Directorate of this important Company, which deserves our best acknowledgements.

We are particularly grateful to General José Costa Cavalcanti, Chairman-of-the-board of Itaipu Binational Company, who managed the construction of this monumental dam since the beginning of the works, with rare competence and high efficiency and who put at our disposition all the means we needed to achieve our goal.

Sergio Marques de Souza
Chairman, Brazilian Group, IABSE
Member of IABSE Executive Committee



General view of Itaipu dam in final construction phase



General location map



General view of Itaipu dam in final construction phase