

News Update

Editorial

2006: A YEAR OF PROGRESS

For the World Water Council, like for the family of water, a page will have indisputably been turned in 2006.

The Forum of Mexico enabled our great family of water to gather and to deepen consensus. Consensus on the need to return to what is concrete, to base work at the local level. Consensus on the need to go beyond sterile debates to implementation, from ideas to action. The Right to Water, like Financing Water for All, previously subjects of debate and controversy, was at the centre of a respectful dialogue, including at the highest decision-making level.

It's the role and the responsibility of the World Water Council to make people accept the idea that water and sanitation are the main priorities for the decades to come, an idea that must be expressed through acts and no longer only by intentions and speeches. It is the role of the World Water Council to be the Voice for Water.

In an increasingly complex and interdependent global context, this role is not always easy to assume. But, the Council is growing and forever expanding: more countries, more ideas, more actions. The Council's General Assembly, which was held last March and which brought our members together, enabled us to define new priorities for the future. Around ten themes, ranging from strengthening local authorities to risk management, were selected among these priorities. To bring together is to be able to be listened to and respected in the future. And the future is upon us.

Best wishes for the year's end and for an excellent start to 2007.

Loïc Fauchon
President

Best wishes for the year's end!

The World Water Council Team joins its President, Loïc Fauchon, in wishing you very happy holidays.

At a glance

■ Stern report: climate change and economic arguments to act

The publication of the Stern Report (the report that Sir Nicholas Stern has just given to the British Cabinet) and the film by the American ex-Vice President, Mr. Al Gore, signify a significant evolution in the political world with regard to the question of global warming. The question is not so much to demonstrate the reality of global warming as it is to estimate its consequences and to compare them to the cost of prevention and adaptation.

The Stern report highlights one observation: the longer we wait, the worse the total impact on growth and opportunities offered by prevention and necessary adaptation will be.

It also insists on the essential role of water, both as an active element and one affected by phenomena associated with existing changes. Implicitly, this report calls on the water community to establish connections between those who possess knowledge on climate and those who must make decisions to accelerate our adaptation.

Click [here](#) to access the Stern Report.

Click [here](#) to access the film, "An inconvenient truth".

This month's focus

Risk management and climate change

Climate change and risk management issues have been in the spotlight in the recent months. This issue of our Newsletter explores some recent news of interest, such as the Stern report and the Nairobi conference, among others. The water community needs to be aware of these issues and to take appropriate action. Adaptation to the unavoidable consequences of global warming is a concern for water resources and water utilities managers throughout the world.

We would especially like to thank the Co-operative Programme on Water and Climate for its contribution in preparing this issue. www.waterandclimate.org



3 questions for

Henk van Schaik, Programme Coordinator, of the Co-operative Programme on Water and Climate (CPWC)

→ *According to you, what has been the impact of the 4th Forum regarding water and climate change issues?*

The World Water Council has been the first in bringing people together for a dialogue on Water and Climate change especially because of the advocacy of William Cosgrove and the exposure of the issue in successive Forums. The Forum of Mexico provided concrete recommendations on the importance of creating targets for flood risks because everybody indeed agreed that the Millennium Development Goals do not address risks issues. Also, by focusing on concrete local actions and cases, the Forum showed how climate information can be used to create exchanges of information and synergies between different actors. The Co-operative Programme on Water and Climate (CPWC) and the WWC have, today, a great role in gathering the different stakeholders working on water and climate change to make them exchange information and share experiences. The newly established IWA specialist group on climate change is strongly linked to the CPWC and will be part of this process.

→ *Developing countries will be among those the most impacted by future global warming trends. What action is required?*

Talking about climate change effects and vulnerability, all stakeholders have a role to play. What is crucial, today, is to put all these different stakeholders around the table, to exchange information about essential issues around water and climate change, to say strongly what we will probably have to face in the

near future. It is also important that they look at their vulnerabilities and formulate action plans to mitigate risks.

With this aim, the CPWC has prepared and disseminated various communications as books and a video, "The heat is on". They are now preparing different meetings, like the workshop that will be held by the end of 2007 in Indonesia, where different stakeholders (utilities, service providers, national and local governments) will be put together to discuss vulnerability to climate change and to prepare projects.

→ *What is the message you would like to deliver to our readers?*

Climate change has obtained international recognition. It is now time to get prepared for this change. It means to meet an increasing demand for data and information on climate, vulnerability assessments, decision support systems and investment planning for adaptive measures.

Get prepared. It is still time to act, but we have to act now!



Risk management at the 4th World Water Forum

Never have Risk management issues been as addressed as during the 4th Forum.

- More than 30 sessions, in addition to the Thematic Report on Risk Management, were dedicated to this issue. Most sessions dealt with natural hazards and a few were related to other risks such as those of conflicts over water
- “Voices of the Forum” questionnaires collected from participants called for action at every level: monitoring, better information sharing, fostering a “culture of risk”, adapting infrastructures and non-structural measures, integrating climate change and ecosystem approaches into risk management, improving responses to emergency situations and preventing conflicts.
- In the Ministerial Declaration, 148 participating Ministerial delegations agreed on the importance “to mitigate water-related disasters including prevention, preparedness, risk assessment, community awareness, resilience and response.
- One hundred and eighteen local actions on this theme were submitted, highlighting the key roles of local stakeholders. Three innovative local actions include:
 1. Kenya sand dams (Local action LA0385)
 2. Micro-insurance schemes (Local action LA1825)
 3. Freude am Fluss (Local action LA0576)

Learn more about risks management at the Forum: <http://www.worldwatercouncil.org/index.php?id=1406&L>

Click on the following link to access the 4th Forum Local Actions database:

http://www.worldwaterforum4.org.mx/home/results_la.asp?lan=

Kyoto Prize

■ Top 10 local actions: Gana Unnayan Sangstha, creating environmental awareness in Bangladesh

In the south-west coastal region of Bangladesh people are dying for drinking water. Due to unplanned shrimp farming and climate change, salinity has increased and the total drinking water source has become damaged, forcing people to cover distances of five or six kilometres to reach a new source. Coastal community-based organisations have created an Eco-club movement, a network of 30 clubs, to raise awareness amongst the community of the water crisis and the alternatives in water technology that are available. These clubs have organised 580 meetings in 180 villages (reaching about 26,000 people), distributed leaflets and written to the Prime Minister to advance solutions to drinking water problems.

Contact: [Mohon Mondal](#)

More information on our website:

<http://www.worldwatercouncil.org/index.php?id=1385&L=0>



Among the main messages, lessons learnt and key recommendations of the 4th Forum on Risk management...

- Build a “new risk culture” by creating awareness that life can never be totally risk-free
- Consider climate change in water sector development and management plans and in strategies to achieve the MDGs
- Improve information and experience sharing to reduce the effects of natural disasters is one of the main lessons learnt from emergency situations such as Hurricane Katrina and the Tsunami
- Build the resilience of local communities and reduce vulnerability to water-related hazards
- Protect buffer functions to mitigate floods and droughts not just to mitigate risks, but also to provide emergency sources of water during situations of natural disasters
- Move from the concept of flood protection to flood management
- Raise the profile of drought prevention measures, provide coping mechanisms and make appropriate technology to lessen their impact
- Set targets for disaster risk reduction as a means of motivating the change in the collective mindset from reaction to prevention

In focus

■ Nairobi conference: Helping developing countries to adapt to climate change

From 6 to 17 November, in Nairobi, the United Nations climate change conference brought together the 189 Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 166 Parties to the Convention's Kyoto Protocol.

The conference resulted in a series of decisions and new initiatives to support developing countries, which are the most vulnerable to climate change. Negotiators took an important step towards building up the Kyoto Protocol's Adaptation Fund for these countries, which could eventually be worth 300 million euros or more, by reaching agreement on its governance structure and on overarching principles for its operation. Parties to the Kyoto Protocol reached agreement on making the Convention's Special Climate Change Fund fully operational. The parties also agreed to step up efforts to help build relevant capacities in African regions. These decisions are in line with "the Nairobi Framework", a UN capacity-building initiative announced at the conference by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. These measures will help developing nations to adapt to climate change, thus reducing its adverse impacts and will also encourage more clean technology projects in Africa and other poorer regions.

Parties to the Kyoto Protocol also agreed on a comprehensive work plan for discussions on further commitments to be undertaken by developed country Parties after 2012, which was an important success. Under the work plan, the potential for reducing emissions will be analysed, the necessary policies for achieving this will be assessed and, eventually, a share-out of emission reductions will be decided. The work will draw on expertise from external sources, including the influential Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which will publish its fourth assessment report next year. The conference carried out a first review of the Protocol and agreed to undertake a second review in 2008.

More information can be found on the [official website of the UNFCC](#)



Quotes from Kofi Annan in Nairobi:

"Climate change is not just an environmental issue, as too many people still believe. It is an all-encompassing threat."

"While the Kyoto Protocol is a crucial step forward, that step is far too small. And as we consider how to go further still, there remains a frightening lack of leadership"

■ Cities and climate change

Cities have a pivotal role in climate changes issues: they are responsible for 80% of all CO₂ emissions and for significant amounts of other greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, they are the main actors in reducing the impact of climate change on human lives and lost livelihood. Today, three-quarters of the world's urban population lives in low- and moderate-income Nations, however the air quality of urban areas in high-income Nations represents the greatest threat. Floods, storms and rising sea levels in coastal cities jeopardize not only water tables, groundwater sources and building foundations, but also tourism activities. In addition, drought impacts the economical development of cities due to decreased agricultural production.

Various types of actions may be implemented to cope with these issues: develop early warning systems, communicate effectively and accurately between national and local levels, implement sustainable risk protection plans, invest in low-carbon technologies, change regulatory frameworks, etc. Climate change effects must be taken into account in water sector development and management plans and in strategies to achieve the MDGs. Expenditures will not be any higher: indeed, many measures contribute to reducing other risks and protecting health.

Finally, cities can influence the development of global policy by sharing their experience at national and intergovernmental levels.

Learn more:

<http://www.iied.org/pubs/pdf/full/11055IIED.pdf>

EU COST Action 22 on urban flood management: <http://www.waterland.net/C22>

[Local Governments for Sustainability Website](#)

On the members side

→ The International Water Association specialist group on climate change

The International Water Association (IWA) has recently created a specialist group on climate change and adaptation, with the aim of impacting policy and practice with respect to meteorological trends. Holding the belief that climate change can no longer be stopped, IWA recognises the need for the water sector to cope with these impacts through the numerous activities of its specialist group, which include identifying, increasing awareness for and stimulating adaptive actions with regard to climate-related impacts and risks in water utility operations and water resources management, while involving the different communities implicated in climate change research. On 25-27 September 2006 in Amsterdam, a very successful international conference entitled "Innovations in coping with water and climate related risks" was held in the presence of scientists, water managers and administrators who deal with risks related to water and climate change, emphasising technological innovations and the dissemination of tools and lessons from coping actions. A number of other activities and events are in preparation, and various issues related to these themes can be found on the group's webpage [here](#).

For more information about this group, or to become an active member, please contact the Chair, [Mr. R.R. Kruize](#), and/or the Secretary [Gertjan Zwolsman](#).

→ Two key organisations work to implement Integrated Flood Management (IFM) in the field

The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and the Global Water Partnership (GWP) have been jointly promoting an integrated approach to flood management as a subset of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). Launched in 2001, Phase I of this Associated Programme on Flood Management (APFM), now complete, consisted of establishing principles for integrated flood management, identifying some "best practices" and developing supporting tools.

The concepts developed under Phase I of the programme will now be put into practice through field demonstration under Phase II (2006-2010), started last August. As such, the Phase II strategy of APFM is focused on implementation of the IFM concept in the field.

More information can be found at <http://www.apfm.info/>

Did you know? ... Drought and rainstorms are contributing to decreasing water quality. These conditions create new bacteria, which will necessitate finding new treatments for drinking water. So, the question remains: Will climate change also have an impact on the cost of water? Water utilities often participate in alerting decision-makers about contamination. They could play a key role in climate information and alerts.

Contact [Gertjan Zwolsman](#), Director for Water and Climate Change at KIWA and Secretary of the IWA Specialist Group.

→ Poverty Reduction is Vital to Managing Climate Change Risks

Mark Smith, IUCN-The World Conservation Union

At the forefront of the challenges created by climate change are potentially severe water-related risks. Flood frequency, drought, river basin management, infrastructure planning and design, and water allocation between uses will all be – or are being – impacted by climate change to varying degrees in different parts of the world. New risks are emerging in the water supply, energy, agricultural and health sectors, accentuating threats to natural ecosystems already under stress because of human impacts. Both mitigation and adaptation to climate change are needed to manage these risks, to reduce the eventual severity of climate change impacts and our vulnerability to them. Adaptation must give priority to the most vulnerable people and ecosystems, which are overwhelmingly in developing countries. Poverty reduction itself is therefore vital to managing climate risks. Sustainably managing water resources and environmental services can help to make poor people better off. They therefore need to be understood as critical elements of risk management for climate change.

Analysis of the links between poverty, climate change and sustainable development can be found in *Just One Planet: Poverty, Justice and Climate Change*, by D. Mark Smith, Practical Action Publishing, 2006 (ISBN 1-85339-643-5).

IUCN – The World Conservation Union – Climate Change Initiative: <http://www.iucn.org/themes/climate/>

Useful links

- The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change: http://unfccc.int/essential_background/convention/items/2627.php
- Groupe intergouvernemental sur l'évolution du climat : <http://www.ipcc.ch/>
- World Meteorological Organisation: <http://www.wmo.ch/index-fr.html>
- Climate Voice (Network of NGOs): <http://www.climatevoice.org/>
- Climate Action Network: <http://www.climatenetwork.org/>
- XML feed on climate change: http://www.pheedo.com/f/newscientist_climate-change
- UN-Habitat: <http://www.unhabitat.com>

Point of view

In brief

➔ The new International Alliance for the Millennium Development Goals (AIODM), created on September 16, 2006 in Geneva organises a meeting on December 15 to think about the role of the different stakeholders to achieve the MDGs and propose a roadmap. Website (under construction): www.aiodm.org - Contact: info@aiodm.org

➔ Action Against Hunger is distributing food to 15,600 people affected by Typhoon Durian in the Philippines – More than 2,500 homeless families in the province of Camarines Sur will receive packages of rice, sardines and noodles while they rebuild their houses. Website: www.actioncontrelafaim.org/

■ Reliving the wave – after the Asian tsunami

By Athukorala Kusum, Chair, Sri Lanka Water Partnership

Quite the greatest natural disaster to ever strike Sri Lanka - the Asian tsunami hit the coastline of Sri Lanka, Thailand, India and Indonesia on Dec 26th 2004 creating a global funeral house. Totally unprepared to meet such a disaster, unaware even of the word tsunami the ordinary citizens of Sri Lanka scrambled in what was their finest hour to provide succor to the bewildered survivors and to bury the dead . Outpourings of world wide generosity overwhelmed the NGOs. And the post tsunami world settled to rehabilitate the victims. Many of the worst hit areas in the North and East of Sri Lanka are now inaccessible due to an ongoing civil conflict, which continues to drain the country's resources. Some of the tsunami affected are now on the move once more as internally displaced persons hit by a second tsunami of violence.

Not all the promised houses have come up even for the second anniversary; the affected groups still live in temporary shelters with poor facilities but many organizations national and international still flourish on "tsunami funds".

Email: kusum@itmin.net

Events

Aquaterra 2007: World Forum on Delta & Coastal Development Managing Risks and Creating Opportunities

February 7-9, 2007

Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Organized by: Amsterdam RAI

More information: <http://www.aquaterraforum.com>

Contact: aquaterra@rai.nl

International Climate Change and Vulnerability Conference

February 12-14, 2007

Peace Palace, The Hague, The Netherlands

Organized by: University for Peace

More information: www.upeace.org

Contact: info@allianceforpeace.nl

Time to Adapt - Climate Change and the European Water Dimension' Conference

February 12-14, 2007

Berlin, Germany

Organized by: Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany

More information: <http://www.climate-water-adaptation-berlin2007.org/index.htm>

E-mail: Carolin Wolf, info@climate-water-adaptation-berlin2007.org

International Symposium on Flood Defence (ISFD4)

May 14-16, 2007

Toronto, Canada

Organized by: Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction, Canada

More information: <http://www.flood2008.org/>

Contact: Ms. Tracy Waddington, twaddington@iclr.org

Please feel free to send your press releases, publication & event announcements, etc. to be published in the *WWC News Update* to:

Sonia Briki or Mélanie Giard, Communication

Tel.: +33 (0)4 91 99 41 00

Fax: +33 (0)4 91 99 41 01

E-mail: newsletter@worldwatercouncil.org