

News Update

Editorial

Building the village of water

One month ago, President Jacques Chirac held an international conference at the Palace of the Elysée in the aim of promoting the idea of environmental governance at the global level. The World Water Council was called upon to chair one of the committees established within this framework. Nearly one hundred countries were represented by their leaders, their ambassadors or their scientific delegations.

During those days, the questions linked to water were at the forefront of the debate. Whether it concern the effect of climate change on the availability of resources, the management of transboundary basins or the ability to finance infrastructures in the poorest countries, it is evident that the international community of decision-makers is, today, aware of these subjects and is expecting the family of water to bring forth concrete solutions.

We have, with each passing day, an increasing responsibility. At the moment when we will meet in Istanbul for the 5th Forum Kick-off Meeting, upon the invitation of our Turkish colleagues, reality strikes. The planet, the countries that compose it, cannot afford not to bring answers to the question that over two billion people are asking: When will we finally have access to water and sanitation? It is up to all of us, together, to build these answers, as if building a village. The village of the Forum.

Loïc FAUCHON



Rendez-vous

Kick-Off Meeting in Istanbul

We are now less than two weeks away from the Kick-Off Meeting to be held in Istanbul on 19 and 20 March. This meeting will officially launch the preparatory process for the 5th World Water Forum and will be the occasion for participants to specify themes, engender cooperation and, therefore, shape this Forum, making it a stepping stone on the road towards a water-secure world.

Since a few places are still available, please feel free to get in touch with the WWC Secretariat should you wish to participate in this Kick-Off meeting.

In this 22nd edition of your newsletter, we welcome a guest of honour, Kemal Derviş, head of UNDP. Through the 2006 Human Development Report, this UN agency has brought water into the spotlight as an essential element to enable development. As an expression of his support for the WWC vision of a world where all people have access to safe water, Mr. Derviş kindly accepted to answer a few short questions on Page 2.

This month's focus : The Forum Region

Biography

Kemal Derviř, UNDP Administrator

Kemal Derviř initiated his functions as the new head of the United Nations Development Programme on 15 August 2005. He also chairs the UN Development Group, a committee gathering together the heads of all UN funds, programmes and departments working on development issues.

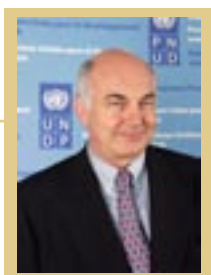
Prior to his appointment to UNDP, Mr. Derviř was a member of Turkish Parliament representing Istanbul from November 2002 to June 2005. From March 2001 to August 2002, he was the Turkish Minister for Economic Affairs and the Treasury without party affiliation, responsible for Turkey's recovery programme after the devastating financial crisis that hit the country in February 2001. In August of 2002, after the crisis was overcome, he resigned from his Ministerial post and was elected to Parliament in November of the same year.

Kemal Derviř also held various positions at the World Bank between 1977 and 2001, becoming in 1996 Vice-President of the Bank for the Middle East and North Africa Region, and, in 2000, Vice-President for Poverty Reduction and Economic Management, where he was responsible for the World Bank's global programmes and policies to fight poverty.

For a full biography of Kemal Derviř and to read his speeches and publications, visit the UNDP website: <http://www.undp.org/about/bio1.shtml>

The Human Development Report 2006

The 2006 Human Development Report, entitled « Beyond Scarcity: Power, Poverty and the Global Water Crisis », intends to propose a global plan to accelerate progress in water and sanitation. Its aims to investigate the underlying causes and consequences of a crisis that leaves 1.2 billion people without access to safe water and 2.6 billion without access to basic sanitation. It also argues for a concerted drive to provide water and sanitation for all through national strategies and a global plan of action. Finally, it examines the social and economic forces that are driving water shortages and marginalizing the poor in agriculture, while reviewing the scope of international cooperation to resolve cross-border tensions in water management. HDR website: <http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/>



3 questions for Kemal Derviř...

1/ The 2006 Human Development Report underscores the lack of political commitment for solving problems that are within reach.

What main lessons are to be learned from this?

Concerted international commitment is needed, starting with nationally owned strategies, but incorporating a global action plan. All national governments should protect the human right to water through legislation entitling all citizens to at least 20 litres of water daily, whether or not they can afford to pay.

2/ What recommendations are applicable to the water community in particular?

All governments should prepare national plans for accelerating progress in water and sanitation, based on the Millennium Development Goal targets. The plans should link ambitious benchmarks to financing provisions in Poverty

Reduction Strategy Papers and provide clear strategies for overcoming inequalities.

3/ In view of the 5th World Water Forum in Istanbul in 2009, do you have any recommendations for priority issues?

Priority issues should include involvement of the Group of Eight to move beyond pledges, to make water and sanitation a priority on their agenda and to develop a concrete global action plan.





“Water problems of Mediterranean countries”

**By Prof. Dr. Veysel Eroglu,
Director General of State Hydraulic Works (DSI),
Governor of the WWC and co-President of the International Steering Committee
of the 5th World Water Forum**

The Mediterranean basin is one of the areas with opposing demographic characteristics, contrasted levels of development and renewable water resources, as well as varying levels of sub-regional contribution to global warming.

For the reasons mentioned above, it can be stated herewith that one of the most critical mid- and long-term threats to the developing countries in the Region is the potential adverse impacts of climate change on the quantity, quality and availability of freshwater, which implies that Mediterranean countries have to act together for their own common future, and the developed North and developing South must pay serious attention to causes and consequences of the global warming problem.

The Mediterranean water situation under potential climate change impacts calls for pro-active anticipatory water planning rather than waiting for serious possible water problems to arise. Therefore, water planners and managers should begin to re-examine engineering design criteria, operating rules and water allocation policies.

Given the geographic position of Turkey, combining different types of characteristics found in the Region, and its position between the North and the South, Turkey can be considered as representative of the whole region, which shows extreme levels of water shortages and climate variability.

In conclusion, international cooperation should be strengthened for all these studies to protect the common future of the basin.

“A challenging and exciting period for water resources in Turkey”

**From Olcay Unver,
Visiting Distinguished Professor, Water Resources Research Institute,
Kent State University**



Turkey stands among those countries that has not developed its water resources to the extent that many in the West, which it is aspiring to join, have. It is also among the countries that intend to do so. The fundamental issues of mismatch between quality, quantity and distribution in time and space is only further complicated by its needs, plans, aspirations, and by the externalities imposed by its location, politics and the broader issues that the country has on its agenda. (...)

(...) It is an opportune and exciting era for the water resources community in Turkey. The process leading to the 5th World Water Forum overlaps the early part of a path leading to an integration of water quality and quantity issues; a new, unifying water law; improved governance structures; completion of an unfinished rural water supply and sanitation campaign; innovative financing mechanisms; proper completion of its water-based development projects including GAP; greater transboundary cooperation and the emergence of the fast developing civil society and the business community in the decision-making and management processes as principal partners to the Government.

I am looking forward to a comprehensive account of the accomplishments in the above domains when we meet in Istanbul in two years' time.

Full article available on the Council's website: <http://www.worldwatercouncil.org/index.php?id=1967>

The NWB Fund: a result of the Gurria Task Force on Financing Water for All

The Nederlandse Waterschapsbank N.V. (NWB or Dutch Bank for Water Boards), in collaboration with the Dutch Water Boards and the Association of Water Boards, has created a fund of 25M€ for water management projects in developing countries. Its purpose is to finance international collaboration projects carried out by the Dutch water boards.

Mr Fon Koemans, chairman of the management board of the NWB, told the WWC that this initiative is a direct outcome of the recommendations issued by the Task Force on Financing Water for All, in which he is a member. This Task Force was formed at the end of 2005 and led by Angel Gurria, and provided a cross-cutting perspective on Innovative Financing Mechanisms for Local Actions for the Forum of Mexico. For more information on the Gurria Task Force, visit the Financing Water for All website: <http://www.financingwaterforall.org/index.php?id=1097>

Website of the NWB: <http://www.nwb.nl/en/home.aspx>

Thematic issues

The Right to Water in Kosovo

Despite foreign help, Kosovo today is a poor country, where more than 47% of the population lives in poverty, surviving on a mere US\$2 a day or less. Thirteen percent of the population lives in extreme poverty, lacking access to safe water and health services. Because of the lack of adequate sanitation systems, about 80% of rural population consumes contaminated water from domestic wells.

Access to drinking water: 44 % (7% in rural areas)

Access to sanitation: 28% (3% in rural areas)

Kosovo is a country in transition under the UNMIK administration, and the passing and implementation of national legislation related to water and sanitation services is ongoing. The Water Law was approved by the Parliament only in 2004, stipulating the competent authorities for Water Management. However, this law focuses mainly on the protection of water resources and pays little attention to access to water and sanitation as a human right. There is no institution nor organisation responsible for regular monitoring and implementation of the right to water.

The Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning (MESP) is responsible for determining and implementing policies for water development in Kosovo, managing water resources and drafting water strategy plans. According to the new Framework for Reform of Local Self-Government and Decentralisation, in the water sector, municipalities are responsible for the establishment and operation of public infrastructures and management of water sources at the local level. The decentralisation process in general is ongoing, and decentralisation in the water and sanitation sector is expected to start soon.

A National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) is also underway. The NEAP identifies the fact that an insufficient "capacity of public water suppliers in the cities and [a] lack in rural areas" represents both an initial problem and a first priority to be addressed. Since the water sanitation in rural

areas is worse than in urban areas, more has been invested in villages over the last five years. Most of the budget is spent on constructing small independent water supply systems, but a very small amount is spent on sanitation services.

Despite progress made in recent years, much remains to be done, particularly in the field of sanitation, in hopes of achieving the MDGs.

(Source: "Case Study on Right to Water and Sanitation in Kosovo" Bardha Korca, University of Prishtina)

To know more about this case study, consult our database at: <http://www.worldwatercouncil.org/index.php?id=1538&L=1%20title%3D>

A Regional Observation Mechanism for Water in preparation in the Mediterranean Region

The concept of creating a water observation mechanism in the Mediterranean region was first introduced to the Steering Committee of EMWIS in June 2005. During their conference in November 2005, Euro-Mediterranean Water Directors asked EMWIS to study the objectives and the feasibility of building up within EMWIS such a mechanism to monitor achievements towards the MDGs as related to water and sanitation.

Beneficiary countries include Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Palestine, Portugal, Spain, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey.

The feasibility study is in progress. Phase 1, aiming to define key orientations of the mechanism, was completed in four pilot countries in 2006 (Spain, France, Jordan and Tunisia), concluding that a strong general demand exists for a regional mechanism (See Phase 1 Report). Phase 2, which consists of defining detailed proposals for implementing what may be called the "Mediterranean Water Information Partnership" (MedWIP), is planned for 2007.

On the members' side

Publication

“Bridges Over Water: Understanding Transboundary Water Conflict, Negotiation and Cooperation”

This new publication by Ariel Dinar (the World Bank) will be issued in May 2007 and made available worldwide by 30 July 2007. It corresponds perfectly to the theme of the 5th World Water Forum: “Bridging Divides for Water.”

This new book aims at providing the answers or, if not the answers, the means to finding the answers to crucial questions like whether water scarcity must lead to conflict; can it not lead to cooperation instead? How can conflict be avoided and how can cooperation be promoted?

For more information: www.worldscibooks.com/economics/6184.html



In Brief...

World Water Day 2007

As World Water Day is fast approaching, we invite all of you to visit the WWD2007 website: <http://www.unwater.org/wwd07/flashindex.html>. “Coping with Water Scarcity” is the theme for this year’s World Water Day, celebrated annually on 22 March. This year’s theme highlights the increasing significance of water scarcity worldwide and the need for increased integration and cooperation to ensure sustainable, efficient and equitable management of scarce water resources, both at international and local levels.

Meetings of the African Water Association

Tangiers, Morocco, was the host of last month’s AfWA meetings on the theme of “Counting and control of water production and distribution: Which approach for water companies in Africa?”

Over 100 delegates from 22 African countries attended the event, including several WWC Members and partners: Mr. Ali Fassi Fihri (ONEP), Mr. Bedoumra (ADB), Mr. Le Jalle (PS-Eau), Mr. Jean-Louis Millo (OiEau), and many more. A message from our President, Loïc Fauchon, was delivered by our Governor and Treasurer, Mokhtar Bzioui, who also spoke on behalf of the WWC.

Like many other regions, Africa faces enormous waste and water pollution challenges. While the continent does not really lack water per se, it suffers from poor sharing of the resource, and there is a crucial need for investments in distribution facilities, treatment plants and sanitation services--many subjects to be developed during the 5th World Water Forum in Istanbul.



Publications

Australia's Water Resources: From Use to Management CSIRO Publishing



This publication by John Pigram, former WWC Governor, seeks to explore the circumstances underpinning the profound reorientation of attitudes and relationships to water that has taken place in Australia in recent decades. It is a timely issue in Australia, with massive flooding in the North and ongoing droughts in the Southeast and the Southwest of the country, where most Australians live and where economic activity is concentrated.

Link: <http://www.publish.csiro.au/pid/5366.htm>

Guidelines for Improved Local Water Governance EMPOWERS Partnership

These Guidelines consolidate experience gained over the past 4 years in developing and testing a range of participatory planning tools for local water development. They have been developed through action research with a wide range of stakeholders in Egypt, Palestine, and Jordan.

The Guidelines in English:

www.empowers.info/page/2850/

The Guidelines in Arabic:

www.ar.empowers.info/page/2875

Where to meet...

11-14 March

Biovision – 5th World Life Science Forum

Lyon, France

Daniel Zimmer

19-20 March

Kick Off Meeting for the 5th World Water Forum

Istanbul, Turkey

All WWC Staff

23-24 March

International Congress on River Basin Management

Antalya, Turkey

All WWC Staff

23-24 March

Les Assises des Barreaux de la Méditerranée

Marrakech, Maroc

Céline Dubreuil

A few acronyms

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

GAP: Southern Anatolia Project, Turkey

EMWIS: Euro-Mediterranean Information System on the know-how in the Water sector

ONEP: National Office for Drinking Water, Morocco

ADB: African Development Bank

OIEau: International Office for Water

PsEau: Partner network for access to water in developing countries

Other Events

Nile Basin Capacity-Building Network for River Engineering Seminar

5-7 March

Cairo, Egypt

More information: <http://www.nbcbn.com/workshop>

Variations climatiques et hydrologie 29èmes Journées de l'Hydraulique

27-28 March

Lyon, France

Organized by: Société Hydrotechnique de France

More information: <http://www.shf.asso.fr/index2.htm>

3rd Annual Australian Water Summit

2-3 April

Sydney, Australia

More information: <http://www.acevents.com.au/water2007/>

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

Mélanie Giard, Communication

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

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

E-mail: newsletter@worldwatercouncil.org