

News Update

Editorial



Preparation of the 5th Forum is launched

A very important week has come to a close in Turkey. The highest authorities of this country, in partnership with the Council, have launched the preparatory process for the 5th World Water Forum.

The Turkish Prime Minister, Mr. Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN, honoured the International Conference on River Basin Management, organised in Antalya, with his presence. He expressed Turkey's desire to contribute actively to our work.

It is my duty here, in the name of the entire international water community, to renew my thanks to Turkey and to its Government for their warmth and hospitality and for the quality of the organisation that contributed to smooth functioning during these days.

We hold, together, the will to create a modern and open Forum in two years, regionalised and in line with the political stakes of water access.

The Council's Board of Governors also took advantage of this week to meet. It validated the work plan for the years to come. Many Governors and Alternates are now directly responsible for specific activities. All contributions are welcome to assist them in accomplishing their missions. Please feel free to contact them directly through the Headquarters. Thank you for your participation.

Loïc FAUCHON

At a glance

■ A successful kick-off Meeting!

The Kick-Off Meeting came to an end on Tuesday, 20 March, after two days of exchanges, roundtable discussions, workshops and brainstorming sessions, providing important indications for shaping the 5th World Water Forum. More than 300 participants from nearly 50 countries attended the meeting, which was organised with three main objectives: (i) get feedback on the 4th Forum and build upon its strengths, (ii) exchange about priority thematic issues for the 5th Forum and (iii) discuss the various processes to be put in place for preparing and executing the Forum.

Many thematic issues were highlighted and the challenge lying ahead will be to establish priorities in line with the opinion of most participants that the Forum should focus on a rather limited number of issues in order to have the greatest impact. It is already very clear that preparing for the impact of climate change on water security and water-related services is seen as one of the main issues for the next Forum.

A synthesis of the results of the brainstorming sessions and various roundtables - thematic, regional or specific for communication and political process - will be available soon on the Forum new website:

www.worldwaterforum5.org



Kick-Off Meeting in Istanbul

Professor Oktay Tabasaran, Secretary General of the 5th World Water Forum

Professor Dr. Oktay Tabasaran, a Turkish native, was appointed to the position of Secretary General of 5th World Water Forum at the beginning of March 2007.

Dr. Tabasaran holds a Civil Engineering degree and has accomplished a great deal of his career in environmental protection techniques. For many years he acted as the Managing Director of the Institute for Water, Sewage, Solid Waste and Air, and also as the Head of the Environmental Engineering Department of the University of Stuttgart in Germany.

In addition to his academic activities, Dr. Tabasaran has been involved in many expert activities for German, Turkish and international agencies. He has also founded consulting companies in his field of expertise.

Dr. Tabasaran's first task is to establish the 5th Forum Secretariat, which will comprise representatives of various Turkish institutions involved in the Forum preparation, i.e. the State Hydraulic Works (DSI), the Metropolitan Municipality of Istanbul and the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

We wish Dr. Tabasaran great success in his critical role for the preparation of the 5th World Water Forum.



LET'S COME TOGETHER FOR WATER IN ISTANBUL!

By Prof. Dr. Oktay Tabasaran, Secretary General of 5th World Water Forum

As Secretary General of the 5th World Water Forum, which will take place in Istanbul, where continents meet, in March 2009, I invite you all to take an active part in this prominent event by bringing your experience, by sharing your know-how and by contributing to the action of the international water community. I will be very honoured to work hand in hand with colleagues anywhere in the world.

I believe that the World Water Forum is the most important tool for dealing with the evolving challenges related to water in our globalised world. Through this powerful mechanism for dialogue and commitment, we must find strategies enabling us to preserve water as one of our most important public and economic assets. Therefore, we, as the world water community, are obliged to fulfil our commitments and to take more determined and solution-oriented actions for the future. For this purpose, I invite each and every one of you to be here, in Istanbul, a city of the world aspiring to be a bridge, joining people and regions, and to find shared solutions to our problems.

The theme of the 5th World Water Forum, "Bridging Divides for Water" is built around an acknowledgement of the fact that Istanbul is located at the geographical crossroads between Europe and Asia, the Middle East and Africa, North and South; among various water cultures; between rich and poor, between developed and developing regions of the world. Most importantly, this theme also calls upon the international water community to make concrete proposals so that better management of the resource may contribute to achieving the entirety of the Millennium Development Goals. We hope that the 5th World Water Forum will offer an excellent opportunity to strengthening cooperation among the world's people and to face the challenge of attaining sustainable water use.

Let us start working together from now on. Let us take joint actions for the people of the world to lead better lives, have greater access to water, and use it efficiently.

Board of Governors meeting creates momentum

The 28th Board of Governors meeting was graciously hosted by our Turkish colleagues in Belek, Turkey on 21-22 March, in conjunction with the International Congress on River Basin Management organised by the Turkish General Directorate of State Hydraulic Works (DSI). A vast majority of the Governors were present and participated actively in the rich discussions centred principally on the 5th Forum kick-off meeting and preparatory process and the Council's future initiatives. The President outlined several priorities for the remainder of the mandate, including the role of the Council in influencing political processes, the growing importance of regional processes in the 5th Forum preparation and the need for greater communication efforts. In addition, a number of Governors volunteered to take the lead with regard to particular areas of interest.

Other administrative issues were also addressed, such as a proposed method for analytical cost accounting, approval of the 2007 provisional budget, initial discussion of the selection process for the 6th World Water Forum and frameworks for institutional partnerships, including with ICID, the African Water Association and the SIC-ICWC.

In addition the Board received many distinguished visitors, including Mexican members of Parliament, a representative from the Agency of Water Resources from the Federation of Russian States and the Iraqi Minister of Water Resources. All expressed their desire to become more involved in the Council and in the 5th Forum preparatory process. Following the Board meeting, the President also received the Chinese Ministry of Water Resources and announced a future visit to the Turkish Prime Minister in Ankara.

Water Communicators come together



Robert Lamb, Moderator

During the 5th World Water Forum kick-off meeting in Istanbul, communicators from leading water organizations and institutions met to discuss the importance of creating clear messages for the 5th Forum, in line with the 2009 Forum concept of "Bridging Divides or Water." A brainstorming session was held to come up with new ideas for improving the outreach potential of the World Water Forum. Following the formation of a consultative working group, concrete cooperation between the various communication professionals would be initiated in an aim to communicate water messages in a strategic manner and to strengthen, rather than duplicate, communication efforts within various organizations. The next step will be staged at the Stockholm World Water Week, where the group will start its concrete activities and define its support relationship to the Communication Committee of the 5th Forum.



International Congress on River Basin Management

The International Congress on River Basin Management (http://www.dsi.gov.tr/english/nehir_havza_e.htm) was held from 22 to 24 March, 2007 in Antalya, Turkey. Organized by the General Directorate of State Hydraulic Works (DSI), its main purpose was to contribute to the regional preparatory activities for the 5th World Water Forum that will be held in Istanbul, Turkey in March 2009.

This International Congress has been considered as an opportunity to bring together professionals affiliated with international organizations, river basin management experts, academicians, public and private sector representatives from the region where Turkey is located, to exchange experiences and information on methodologies and techniques used in the river basin management. The governmental personalities at the highest level attended to the opening ceremony of the Congress: The Prime Minister of Republic of Turkey; Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, the Minister of Environment and Forestry.

Read full article on the 5th Forum website: <http://www.worldwaterforum5.org/index.php?id=1908>

This month's focus: Right to Water

The Right to Water: From Mexico to Istanbul

The 4th World Water Forum succeeded in bringing the right to water debate to the forefront. The existence of a human right to water was acknowledged by all stakeholders and discussed for the first time during the Ministerial Conference.

Since Mexico, new results have been achieved. In May 2006, Ministers from 116 developing countries (Non-Aligned Movement) officially acknowledged the right to water for all. In November 2006, the new Human Rights Council requested that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights conduct a detailed study on the scope and content of the relevant human rights obligations related to equitable access to safe drinking water and sanitation. In response to the launch of the UN's latest Human Development Report (Nov. 2006), the British Government officially recognized the human right to water. Since December 2006, the right to water is officially a part of French legislation.

But recognition of the human right to water is only the first step towards implementation. How can this right be translated into reality? This was one of the issues debated during the first meeting of the parties to the Protocol on Water and Health in January 2007. The right to water issue is, thus, is more in the spotlight than ever before, but efforts must continue to make it a reality on the ground.

For further information, a full document can be found here: http://www.worldwatercouncil.org/fileadmin/wwc/Programs/Right_to_Water/Pdf_doct/Story_RTW_CD_March07.pdf



Marc Ringle,
Chairman of the Commission
des Barreaux de la Mediterranee

A Mediterranean Convention on drinking water to be created

The development of a Mediterranean Convention affirming the right to water for all was proposed during the meeting of the Mediterranean Bar Association of Lawyers, which took place on 23 and 24 March 2007 in Marrakech around the theme "The Right to Water and Water Law." Approximately 200 participants, including not only lawyers, but engineers, architects and politicians from Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Italy, Spain and France, discussed existing legislation for water and sanitation as linked to various water management methods. The Mediterranean Bar also proposed the creation of a website dedicated to the right to water and water law, as well as a series of conferences organised on the right to water in 2008 by each member of the Mediterranean Bar. Mrs Houria Tazi Sadeq, WWC Governor and member of the Synthesis Committee of the meeting, called upon the Moroccan Government to include the Right to Water in its legislation. The Mediterranean Bar Association is counting on the World Water Council's support, which is already involved in the preparation of these meetings, to bring their actions forward to the 5th Forum of Istanbul in 2009.

IMPLEMENTING THE RIGHT TO WATER

By Bertrand Charrier, Vice President of Green Cross International, Governor of the World Water Council

Civil society is strongly mobilized, all around the world, to promote the recognition of the Human Right to water and basic sanitation. More and more countries have made the step by formally recognizing the Right to water either in their constitutions or by passing laws. In Mexico, during the 4th World Water Forum, several local authorities and governments officially decided to join the movement, acknowledging it is, in the end, their full responsibility to fulfil their people's basic water needs. Governments and officials in charge of water services have to determine which amount of water should be made available to their people and take adequate measures. The same process should be followed about quality and rightful allocation, when water is scarce and finance limited.

These challenges and dilemmas exist in developing and developed countries. A group of French NGOs (ADEDE, 4D, Green Cross France, France Libertés, Secours Catholique, Solidarité Eau Europe), have decided, with the support of the City of Paris and the Association of Mayors of Large Cities, to identify existing and potential good practices that can contribute to provide water to the poor or to deprived populations. The study will focus on France and Europe first, with a possible extension to Africa. This list of good practices will cover tariffs (solidarity, free of charge for a minimum of water, subsidies, etc), distribution (cut-offs, collective water fountains, minimum of water flow, etc), and enumerate the concerned populations (gypsies, tramps, poor workers, etc).

This study is a contribution to the World Water Council programme of the Right to Water and International Law which aims, among other objectives, to identify bottlenecks in the enforcement of the fundamental and basic Human Right to water.

2007 World Water Day

The theme of this year's World Water Day, celebrated every March 22nd since 1993, was "Coping with Water Scarcity." From Africa to Asia, and passing through Europe, Australia or America, it instilled the desire to create and celebrate, using culture and entertainment as a tool for raising awareness for this rare and threatened resource.

Among a plethora of actions, the photo expo "Agua y Ambiente" in Bogota, Columbia (www.geocities.jp/aguayambiente_es/) and "Dia del agua" in Zaragoza, Spain (www.tierra.org) are of particular note, as are the shows and conferences in Villefort, Pont St Esprit, and Aubenas, France (www.ardeche-eau.fr).

Cinema and music were also very present during this World Water Day, with a film festival in Stockholm, Sweden (www.sivi.org , www.swedishwaterhouse.se , and www.vattendag.org) and a concert in Florida in the US (www.globalhealing.net/id/worldwaterday).

Finally, other more recreational activities also took place, such as a junior tennis tournament organised in Greece.

Find all the news and events organised around World Water Day on this Internet site:

<http://www.unwater.org/wwd07/events.html>



The right to water, an inevitable issue during World Water Day

World Water Day gave rise to many declarations and promises for action in favour of the Right to Water.

- Pope Benedict XVI, in a message addressed to the Director of the FAO, recalled that the right to water is a universal and inalienable right.
- The Encyclopaedia of Sustainable Development (from the 4D Association) published an article on the Right to Water (Read more here: http://www.association4d.org/article.php3?id_article=418).
- The French Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Development (MEDD) organised a debate on "The Right to Water and How to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals", in which Mrs. Nelly Olin, Minister of Ecology and Sustainable Development, participated.
- Helvetas, a large Swiss development assistance organisation, launched "PourBoire 2007" (22-29 March). This action collected tips from restaurants, cafés and bars throughout Switzerland to support drinking water projects that Helvetas is leading in Mozambique, Africa. (www.pourboire.ch/fr/helvetas)
- The right to water was also one of the main themes of the World Assembly of Elected Officials and Citizens for Water (AMECE), which was held at the European Parliament in Brussels. The participants set the objective of gaining recognition for this right at the international level. The Assembly is preparing a letter to the attention of Heads of State and the UN, to convince them to recognize this new "human right."
- Alliance Sud, a coalition of 6 Swiss NGOs, called for an international treaty guaranteeing access to water as a universal public good. "An international convention on water would supply populations with a weighty instrument to request the right to drinking water access on the national and local levels," explains Rosemarie Bär, responsible for water issues at Alliance Sud. "It would also involve them democratically in decisions concerning water policies."

Calendar of Events for the next 6 months

To inform us of an event to be considered for the 5th Forum preparatory process, please contact the WWC Secretariat: m.giard@worldwatercouncil.org

	<i>Week 1</i>	<i>Week 2</i>	<i>Week 3</i>	<i>Week 4</i>
<i>APRIL</i>		11-12 april Workshop on IWRNS General water Authority GWP-Med Lybia	23-24 april ADB's Meeting on Water Utility Partnership Water operators Network Islamabad - Pakistan	
<i>MAY</i>	May 2007 Water Management Plans Workshop WWF - Turkey	2-5 may 4th Asian Regional Conference on Irrigation & Participatory Management Tehran - Iran	15-19 may Environmental & Water Resources Institute (EWRI) Water Congress Tampa - Florida	23-24 may International Joint Workshop Water & Climate Jakarta - Indonesia
	May 2007 6th African Minister of Water - African meeting Brazaville Republic of Congo	3-5 may Euro-Mediterranean meeting of Parliamentarians Corfu - Greece	16-18 may SADC Multi-Stakeholders Water Dialog Maputo - Mozambique	27-28 may Regional meeting of ICWC Central Asia Alma Aty
				29-31 may Sustainable Hydropower Development World Congress Antalya - Turkey
<i>JUNE</i>	June 2007 European Water Summit EWP & Friends of Europe Brussels - Belgium			
<i>JULY</i>		2-3 july International Union of Geodesy & Seophysics XXIII Assembly Perugia - Italy	8-13 july Thimun Youth Assembly Committee on Water & Youth The Hague - Netherlands	
<i>AUGUST</i>		12-18 august World Water Week 2007 By SIWI Stockholm, Sweden		
<i>SEPT.</i>	September 2007 Hydrological component workshop Thyphoon Committee Yellow River Forum Dongyin - China			30 sept. - 5 october ICID & USCID IEC Conference Sacramento - USA

CAPTION:



Global



Africa



Europe



Americas



Asia



MENA

Publications

Water Law and Policy Series from IWA Publishing

The role of law in the development and management of the world's water resources is often overlooked by water resource experts. This series aims to make «water law» - international, national and transnational - more accessible to the global water community.

<http://www.iwap.co.uk/template.cfm?name=search>

African Water journal

Published twice a year, African Water Journal is a joint flagship publication of the major stakeholders of the African Water Sector.

Link: <https://unp.un.org/details.aspx?entry=E04009&title=African+Water+Journal>

Events

First MEDA Water Partners Conference

15-16 April

Amman, Jordan

Organized by:

MEDA Water RMSU

Information: <http://www.medawater-rmsu.org/>

Conference on Desalination & the Environment

22-25 April

Halkidiki, Greece

Organized by:

European Desalination Society (EDS); Centre for Research, Technology Hellas (CERTH)

information: <http://www.desline.com/congress/Greece2007/home.shtml>

1st Post Tsunami Living Lakes Conference:

23-26 April

Bentota, Sri Lanka

Organized by:

Global Nature Fund - EMACE Foundation of Sri Lanka

www.globalnature.org/Sri-Lanka

A few acronyms

ICID

International Commission for Irrigation and Drainage

DSI

General Directorate for State Hydraulic Works in Turkey

UNDP

United Nations Development Programme

SIC-ICWC

Scientific Information Center Interstate Water Coordination Commission of Central Asia

Useful links

World Water Council web pages on Right to water
<http://www.worldwatercouncil.org/index.php?id=1748>

COHRE Webpage on Right to water
http://www.cohre.org/view_page.php?page_id=187

Euro-Mediterranean Information System
on the know-how in the Water sector
<http://www.emwis.net/topics/WaterRight>

French Water Academy
http://www.academie-eau.org/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=25



ATTENTION!

The abbreviation «WWF» is a trademark of the World Wildlife Fund and should never be used in reference to the World Water Forum.

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