

Weekly News Update

The Word of the President

WATER FOR DEVELOPMENT

“Water before rifles”, this slogan taken up in Kyoto has now gone around the planet and encountered real success.

But has it convinced the decision-makers? Those who choose. Those who dictate rules. Those who make laws. Those who can pass on their capabilities. Those who bring the know-how.

Not sufficiently. And that is the mission of the World Water Council, the mission of each of us, to prove that water is not just necessary, but absolutely essential for development.

There can be no economic growth, no social progress, no sanitary quality, no educational capacity, without water infrastructures reaching a minimum level.

To invest sustainably in water and manage it correctly is to defeat poverty, bring life, and help humanity move forward.

We should persuade all of the international community of this fact over and over again. Up until the Forum in Mexico 2006, we have to state this and repeat it: “more than ever the priority is for water, not for rifles. Don’t just say it, do it!”

Loïc FAUCHON

On the side of the law

A new French law for more solidarity between the North and the South

After a long maturing process, a new law aiming to encourage and facilitate decentralised cooperation for water has finally been approved by the French National Assembly. This law will permit willing Water Agencies and Local Authorities to assign up to 1% of their water and sanitation budgets to international actions allowing numerous communities and local authorities in developing countries to gain access to water and sanitation.

Several French members of the Council including the Programme Solidarité-Eau, the Ile de France Water Union and the Seine-Normandy Water Agency were the precursors of this system of solidarity. Known as “cent per cubic metre” it has allowed to launch many action programmes dedicated to water.

With the adoption of the law this possibility could be extended to all local authorities and basin agencies.

Report of the debates and description of the law: <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr>

Events

World Water Day (WWD) 2005, coordinated by UN-DESA (UN-Department of Economic and Social Affairs) on 22 March 2005, will be guided by the upcoming water decade's theme "Water for Life".

<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/index.html>

■ For a sustainable intensive agriculture

During the Conference on Water for Food and Eco-Systems, organized by FAO and the government of the Netherlands from January 31st to February 5th in Amsterdam, a Ministerial round-table chaired by HRH The Prince of Orange declared itself in favour of more integration, cooperation and investment.

By pleading for an integrated approach for water, agriculture and environment, the Ministers evoked the fact that the sectoral approach is not sustainable. They underlined the importance of a greater awareness of field work and local know-how, in order to preserve the rural areas and natural resources. They also insisted on the appropriateness of public-private partnerships, and concluded "To inverse the declining trend for investments in sustainable agriculture, more investment should be made in the sustainable intensification of agriculture".

The outcomes of this conference will be presented at the CSD in April in New York, and the results of the actions undertaken will be presented in Mexico in March 2006.

Conference http://www.fao.org/ag/wfe2005/index_fr.htm official website:

Europe defines the input it will bring to Mexico

After the launching of the preparatory process for the Americas (see above), key European representatives met in Paris on February 2nd to try to define their action plan for Mexico. Three main themes came out from this meeting:

- The European Union Water Framework Directive: its setting up locally, the articulation of geographical scales
- Solidarity:
 - within Europe (setting up of the right to water for all in Europe)
 - between Europe and the regions of the South (The European Initiative for Africa, the Mediterranean Countries and Eastern Europe and the Balkans, financial solidarity, etc.)
- Integrated Water Resources Management: methodologies developed in the framework of river basin twinning policies (International Office for Water, Dialogue for Water, Food and the Environment and the Global Water Partnership)

Strong recommendations were made aiming to guarantee an active participation of local stakeholders in the preparatory process and in the Forum itself, and to involve as possible to politicians in the Ministerial Declaration.

For more information, contact Elisabeth Catton e.catton@worldwatercouncil.org

What's new

■ Water for Agriculture – How to increase investments?

One of the main remarks on the Camdessus report was the fact that the question of financing water infrastructures and services for agriculture was not sufficiently dealt with.

By forming a working group on Financing Water for Agriculture, the WWC, GWP and the World Bank have set the objective of establishing a certain number of proposals aiming to facilitate access to financing for this sector.

The first meeting of the group was held on January 14th at the Headquarters of SNS Asset Management, in Amsterdam, with the participation of FAO and IWMI. On the agenda of this meeting was the work plan of the group, and the coordination with the regional committees of the 4th World Water Forum.

The next meeting is planned just after The World Bank Water Week, in Washington D.C., on March 4th. The group wishes to associate more farmers, representatives of the financing sector, and NGOs in its activities.

If you have developed or know of any innovative projects in terms of financial mechanisms, please contact us so that we may study them in our working group.
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In brief

→ The Americas: the preparatory process underway

The preparation of the 4th World Water Forum in Mexico City is being organized on a regional scale in each continent. For the Americas region, the preparatory process kicked off with the meeting held on November 30th – December 2nd 2004 in El Salvador, in the presence of César Herrera, Secretary General of the 4th World Water Forum. More than 300 participants were present at this meeting.

More information on the progress in the regional preparation of the Forum will be available in our next editions.

→ The Forum has now its own newsletter

If you were wondering what progress is being made in the organization of the Forum, you can now find out every month by reading the Forum's new newsletter. It is available electronically and may be found on the new version of the Forum's official website. So more excuse not to be up to date!

<http://www.worldwaterforum4.org.mx>

UN-HABITAT pushing for more assistance in Developing Countries

Mrs Anna Tibaijuka, head of the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) publicly announced her support to the British idea of a «Marshall Plan for Africa » and encouraged Tony Blair to take advantage of the G8 and European Union presidency, as he promised, to speed up the commitment of the International Community in aid of Africa.

<http://www.unhabitat.org/>

→ Emergency Day in Geneva

The Council has an important network of members, whose capacities could be used in emergency situations. During the meetings held in Geneva on February 8th with the representatives of UNHCR and OCHA, Loïc Fauchon and Daniel Zimmer considered the idea of making experts available to help in the assessment, coordination and rehabilitation in situations of natural disaster or conflicts.

Contact : Stephanie Porro s.porro@worldwatercouncil.org

→ Euro-African Conference

The Euro-African Conference on the relationship between water management and the management of rural territories, organized by the French Water Academy, will be held in Paris, at the Headquarters of UNESCO, on March 22nd and 23rd. This event is part of the European Union Water Framework Directive and its conclusions will be presented to the 4th World Water Forum. It will be held under the patronage of the President of France, Jacques Chirac and of Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO.

Agendas

President – Executive Director

14 February

Meeting with the French members, Paris

15 February

WWC Bureau Teleconference

16-18 February

Participation in the UN Water Meeting, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris

17 February

Meeting with General Strock, Chief of the US Army Corps of Engineers, Washington
Meetings at the World Bank with Mrs Sierra and Mr Johnson, Vice-Presidents, Washington

18 February

Meeting at the Inter-American Development Bank, Washington

24-25 February

Beacons Meeting (Preparatory meetings with Mexican organisers of the 4th Forum), Mexico

Côté membres

The latest publications of IWA Publishing

The Price of Water

Author: Stephen Merrett

Biological Wastewater

Treatment in Warm

Climate Regions

Author(s): M Von Sperling, CA de Lemos
Chernicharo, CV Andreoli, F Fernandes

Competition and Economic Regulation in Water

Author(s): T Ballance, A Tavlör

Diffuse Pollution

An Introduction to the Problems and Solutions

Book & DVD

Editor(s): N. Campbell, B. D'Arcy, A. Frost, V. Novotny, A. Sansom

Information:

<http://www.iwapublishing.com/>

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