

Weekly News Update

Editorial

AFRICA ON THE ROAD TO THE 4TH FORUM

The preparatory process for Africa has been launched.

Representatives from African countries and organizations recently participated in a two-day meeting in Tunis to lay the groundwork for the messages that the African continent will bring to the next Forum.

With an annual population growth of 2.7 %, Africa is faced with a dual problem. In some places, drought is worsening and provoking famines, of which the most tragic examples are visible in Niger and Darfour. Elsewhere, pollution of resources is increasing, and the continent's large cities cannot deal with the costs of water pollution. Water-related diseases wreak havoc, and mortality due to water is today ten times greater than that caused by all conflicts.

Participants in the Tunis meetings all agreed on one issue: it is time to stop theorizing and immediately set up simple and direct mechanisms that will quickly lead to implementation of concrete and realistic actions.

Realistic actions are first based on the ability to adapt equipment to actual situations in the field.

Similarly, research and development must be African, and priority must be given to maintaining installations. Capacity-building and initiatives will, therefore, be at the heart of all actions undertaken.

It is a matter of urgency, and the water community is joining in the effort to bring realistic proposals to Mexico.

Loïc Fauchon, President

Focus

■ World Water Week : hard or soft solutions?

This year's World Water Week in Stockholm focused on getting the right balance between infrastructure and policy development (a topic that had been addressed at the World Bank Water Week back in March)

Discussions on infrastructure development in developing countries are becoming more and more present in international debates. Such infrastructures are often a prerequisite for social and economic growth and development. However, decision-making related to large infrastructures remains difficult and requires proper consideration of social and environmental contexts so as to minimize negative impacts and maximize social acceptability.

While it's nothing really new, it goes without saying that clear explanations from African ministers on why their countries need such infrastructure adds a lot to the quality of the debate.

The theme for next year's World Water Week in Stockholm will be quite complementary to this year's. It will focus on sharing benefits of water, a topic that should already receive extensive attention at the Forum in Mexico.

Meeting

➔ WWC General Assembly postponed

The World Water Council General Assembly, originally scheduled for November 14th through 16th in Marseilles, has been **rescheduled for the month of March 2006**. It will take place in Mexico, a few days before the 4th World Water Forum starts. This decision was made at the last Board of Governors meeting held in Stockholm. Members of the Council will certainly appreciate the savings implied, both at the financial and logistic levels!

■ The European preparatory process gains momentum

The European water community is actively coordinating its participation in the World Water Forum in Mexico. Jeroen van der Sommen, director of the Netherlands Water Partnership (NWP), has offered his services in conducting the European preparatory process.

A regional committee composed of NGO's, women groups, local authorities, professional unions and associations, academic institutions, professionals, national Forum preparatory committees, intergovernmental institutions and private firms, has been established. This committee is responsible for organizing 5 sessions in Mexico, during which participants will share experiences, compare them to experiences in other regions of the world and stimulate cooperation in order to create new synergies.

Working groups have also been set up and will be in charge of drafting the regional position paper and preparing input to the ministerial conference, based on the main challenges encountered in the European region in the fields that have been identified as a priority. The objective is to draw lessons from actions and programmes that are implemented in the field to face these challenges, and to propose concrete measures in favor of good water management. The regional document should be ready by November 15th and the document regarding the ministerial conference, by December 15th.

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➔ Priority themes for the European region

- Participation of the public and water users in integrated water resources management (as related to the European Framework Directive).
- Solidarity in access to water and sanitation for all (among stakeholders from the same local authority, from various regions of Europe, from the North and the South)
- Implementation of innovative technologies at the local level
- Risk management linked to climate change
- Sanitation

➔ Registered meetings for the European preparatory process:

- EURO-RIOB 2005, international meeting on the implementation of the European Framework Directive on water: September 29 - October 1st, Namur (Wallony). www.riob.org/euro-riob/namur
- European Solidarity Week for Water: October 15 - 21, Strasbourg. www.s-e-e.org/fraSSEE.pdf
- Water Supply and Sanitation Technology Platform Meeting, Budapest, October 17th, 2005.

■ African preparation process underway

After an initial meeting in Addis Ababa last June, a technical meeting for the Forum preparation will be held in Tunis on September 28th and 29th at the African Development Bank. The ADB has, indeed, been designated by AMCOW to play a coordination role in the preparation of the Forum.

About forty organisations representing various stakeholders were invited and will be asked to communicate the conclusions of this two-day workshop within their networks. The objective of this meeting is to exchange on the various African contributions to the Forum currently being prepared, the way to involve local stakeholders and the types of local actions that Africa wishes to bring to the Forum, all of which will be organized around the Forum's central theme of reinforcing local actions.

Please don't hesitate to contact Daniel Zimmer d.zimmer@worldwatercouncil.org for more information or visit our website: www.worldwatercouncil.org

In brief

Torrential rains that continue to fall on Senegal have provoked the displacement of 6.000 people, 2.500 of which are in great difficulty. The rains have also caused a great deal of damage. Source : AFP, September 15, 2005

→ How to contribute to the regional preparatory processes for the Forum

Several regional events that will serve as input to the preparatory processes for the Forum will be organized between now and the end of the year. There are several ways to contribute in cooperation with your regional Committee. You may wish to:

- Inform the Committee of events and meetings you are organizing, which could contribute to the preparatory process;
- Forward to the Committee some technical sheets on actions that your organization or local authority has conducted and whose experiences you would like to share;
- Submit a session proposal to the Committee and the Forum organisation with partners or organizations from your region or other regions;
- Join the Committee to contribute to its reflection and actions.

For additional information, please visit the World Water Council website at:
www.worldwatercouncil.org

Point of view

→ World Water Forum : How to make a difference in Mexico

An opinion piece from Jacques Labre, Governor of the World Water Council

For the “water community” and for the media, the two previous Fora were both dedicated to specific events. The Hague was a platform for the World Water Vision; in Kyoto, the Camdessus Panel’s report “Financing Water for All” was released.

To date, no particularly notable report is planned for presentation in Mexico. Neither, should the Forum duplicate the 13th CSD session, which took place in New York last April. What, then, will make Mexico unique?

This time, the answer must be found within the main theme of the Forum: local actions for a global challenge. Mexico will make a difference if stakeholders in the field (elected officials, professionals in charge of managing local services, NGO’s working with user groups) make the event theirs, if they contribute to its preparation, if they speak up louder so that their voices may be supported by renowned figures.

At six months from the launch of the Forum, greater efforts must be made to expand the circle of stakeholders involved.

Regional committees

List of Regional Coordinators

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→ Extended deadline for registration of sessions

In order to hear the voices of all stakeholders interested in the Forum, and due to the great expression of interest, the Secretariat of the 4th World Water Forum extended the deadline for registering potential topic-sessions for the Forum until September 30th, 2005. After this deadline, sessions will be examined and selected through November 15th, at which time the final list of around 150 topic-sessions will be made known.

→ Second announcement released

The second announcement for the Forum in Mexico was released during the World Water Week in Stockholm. It provides an outline of the daily programme and, among other things, information about the Ministerial conference and the Expo.

An e-version is available through the Forum’s website, www.worldwaterforum4.org, and the Council’s website, www.worldwatercouncil.org. Printed versions may also be requested from the Forum Secretariat by writing to: feedback@worldwaterforum4.org

MDG's

■ Vietnam : a good start towards the achievements of the MDGs

According to the Vietnamese information agency, Vietnam has achieved the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) in terms of environment, ten years ahead of the deadline, with 62% of the rural population having access to clean water. After a 5-year implementation of the Clean Water and Environmental Hygiene National Programme, about 700,000 waterworks have been built, enabling access to millions of families in remote regions suffering from water scarcity.

Environmental protection activities have been implemented together with socio-economic development. The national government has allotted 1% of its budget to activities relating to preservation of water sources. Private actors are encouraged to invest in environmentally related services. In addition, the government is applying a policy of assistance in terms of funding, tax privileges and pricing for activities relating to environmental protection. Furthermore, the government has increased the rate of official development aid that is invested in the environment.

Source: www.vnnet.vn

Programs

■ Financing Water for All

The World Water Council, the Global Water Partnership and the secretariat of the 4th World Water Forum in Mexico have jointly established the Task Force on Financing Water for All under the chairmanship of Angel Gurria, former Minister of Finance of Mexico and member of the Camdessus Panel. The objective of the Task Force is mainly to ensure that the financing issues related to water receive the continuous attention they deserve.

The Task Force will focus on three main components: Assessment of the follow-up to the recommendations that had been made by the Panel on Financing Water Infrastructure (or the Camdessus Panel), financing of water and local governments and financing water for agriculture, for each of which a working group is being formed.

The official launch of the Task Force will take place during its inaugural meeting, which will be held in Marseilles in November, 2005, to discuss the scope of work and the approaches taken by the working groups.

During the 4th World Water Forum in Mexico, the Task Force will present its findings for debate. The outcomes of this debate will be formulated in a Forum statement and incorporated into the final version of the Task Force document.

For more information, please contact Paul van Hofwegen p.vanhofwegen@worldwatercouncil.org

United States

→ Hurricane Katrina: where to direct relief assistance

Utilities, manufacturers, consultants and individuals who wish to offer professional expertise and personnel or donate water-related equipment, supplies or other resources are invited to register their offers of assistance in an online federal database that matches resources with needs. The database is hosted on the website of the National Emergency Resource Registry (NERR), at <https://www.seern.gov>. Monetary donations may be directed to a number of relief agencies, many of which are listed at www.fema.gov/press/2005/katrinadonations.shtm.

→ The UN contribution

Following the United States' acceptance of the UN's offer of assistance on September 3, the UN is organizing its coordination and logistics efforts as follows:

An inter-agency liaison team is now based at the Hurricane Katrina Operations Center of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Arlington, Virginia. Other teams will be deployed to support USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), and the Regional Coordination Centers of the United States Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in Texas and Georgia. These teams are comprised of representatives from the World Food Programme (WFP), UNHCR, WHO, and UNICEF, as well as support teams from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) network. An inter-agency task force was also assembled, which is chaired by OCHA, and composed of UNICEF, WHO, WFP, UNHCR, UN-HABITAT, and FAO.

ERRATUM :

In WWC Weekly News Update #11, it was improperly stated that ANEW, the African Network of Civil Society Organizations on Water, was the African NGO federation created by AMCOW. ANEW was launched in December, 2003, during the African Ministerial Council on Water's Pan-African Implementation and Partnership Conference on Water in Addis Ababa, following the inception meeting in October 2003 that was organized by [Freshwater Action Network](http://www.freshwateraction.net) (FAN) and [Environmental Liaison Centre International](http://www.freshwateraction.net) (ELCI). More on ANEW's website: <http://www.freshwateraction.net/aneu/index.asp>

Focus

■ Do we practice IWRM in the North?

We realise that much of the discussion on water management and provision of water services is focussed on developing countries in the South. However, industrialised countries in the North also face many water problems and challenges. The recent floods and droughts in Europe and the water-related problems resulting from Hurricane Katrina in the USA are just a few examples.

During the Stockholm Water Week, NOWNET (Northern Water Network) organised a session addressing this question with presentations from the European Commission, Denmark, The Netherlands, Sweden, the USA and Japan.

None of the presenters could answer the session's question, "Do we have an IWRM plan in line with the MDG's?" with a firm "yes", which surprised many representatives from the South who participated in the seminar. It is, however, important to observe what happens in the North, to learn lessons from those experiences and to share them.

Of Note: the UN Assembly held an MDG's review meeting in September 2005, where progress in achieving the 2005 goal on IWRM action plans according to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation was evaluated.

About NOWNET

NoWNet (www.northernwater.net), a partnership for water in the North, is a network of industrialized countries with the aim of sharing experiences encountered specifically by countries in the North with countries from the South.

The member countries to date are: Japan, The Netherlands, Denmark, Australia, South Korea, Sweden and France.

This partnership was launched during the 3rd World Water Forum by the World Water Council, the Global Water Partnership and the Steering Committee of the 3rd World Water Forum in Japan. The Japan Water Forum hosts its secretariat www.japanwaterforum.org

NoWNet is participating in the preparatory process in Europe (through the Danish Water Forum, the Netherlands Water Partnership, and the Swedish Water House) and Asia (through the Japan Water Forum and Australian Water Partnership). During the Forum, it will study questions related to water in industrialized countries.

→ World Water Week in Stockholm

The World Water Week in Stockholm, a greatly renowned annual event, took place from August 21st to 27th in the Swedish capital. Daily summaries, abstracts and press releases can be found on their website. Remember also to note the dates for the next World Water Week in Stockholm: August 20th to 26th, 2006—and look for the first programme announcement in December.

More information: www.worldwaterweek.org

■ Rusumo Falls hydroelectric project provides a hopeful example for energy-starved African countries

Is investment in hydraulic infrastructure necessary for economic growth? This question was central to a seminar organized by the World Water Council, the World Bank and the Stockholm International Water Institute and Swedish Development Agency during the Stockholm World Water Week. The response from the audience of experts, policy-makers, and public and private water managers was a resounding "yes."

The centerpiece of the discussion was the planned Rusumo Falls hydroelectric project on the Kagera River, a cooperative effort by Burundi, Rwanda, and Tanzania.

Once operational, the hydro-station at Rusumo Falls would supply 60 megawatts of low-cost power to an area where only 6% of households have access to electricity today. With a estimated cost of US\$150 million, this project is very attractive to the energy-strapped countries that will share its benefits. Financing for the project remains to be finalized. The World Bank has agreed to jointly support the preparation phase of the project. The countries are currently exploring different options including public-private partnerships.

On the member side

→ Publications

Integrated River Basin Governance Learning from International Experience

Author: Bruce Hooper

This publication focuses on the social, economic, organizational and institutional arrangements of river basin management. It includes a range of tools for river basin governance methods, derived from real life experiences in both developed and developing countries. Successes and failures of river basin management are discussed, and lessons learned from both are presented.

IWA Members Price: £56.25 / US\$112.50 / €84.75

Non Members Price: £75.00 / US\$150.00 / €113.00

For more information on this book or to buy online, please visit:

www.iwapublishing.com

Events

■ **First International Water and Film Encounter**

Feature films, documentaries, awareness-raising spots strongly contribute to building awareness and mobilizing all stakeholders to solve major water problems throughout the world. With its first edition to be launched at the 4th World Water Forum, the International Water and Film Encounter was established in order to create a greater appreciation for audiovisual artwork from all countries on the theme of water and to encourage the creation of a water movie culture. The Water Academy, the Mexican National Water Commission, the World Water Council, UNESCO, the International Secretariat for Water and UNDP are partners in the project.

Four categories of artwork will constitute the programme of the event:

- Feature films and fiction
- Documentaries
- Awareness-raising short films
- Awareness-raising spots

Only the last two categories will give rise to a contest in which an international jury, made up of personalities from the movie industry and from the communication and water sectors, will award prizes.

Viewings will take place at the Banamex Center, where the World Water Forum will be held, as well as at the Mexican National Cineteca, and in various other locations including outdoors. More detailed information is available on the website of the International Secretariat for Water, at www.s-i-e.org. You can also write to Salvador Aguirre salvador.aguirre@worldwaterforum4.org.mx

→ **Launch of La Plata Basin Dialogues**

Green Cross International, in association with the FAO/UN Water for Peace programme, is launching La Plata Basin Dialogues. The main objective of this initiative is to prepare a strategy for the sustainable development of water resources in each territory (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay) in line with an agreed agenda aimed at promoting cooperation on various water-related issues.

This strategy will take into consideration the opinion and participation of communities, civil society, governments, universities and financial institutions by drawing on technical, scientific and strategic documents, as well as successful practical experiences.

The initial phase will take place from September 12th to 14th, the final phase and high-level segment being from November 23rd to 25th. A presentation of this work will also be presented at the 4th World Water Forum.

More information: www.greencrossinternational.net and www.greencrossbrasil.org.br

→ **ICID 19th Congress held in Beijing**

The International Committee on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID) held its week-long 19th Congress in Beijing, starting on September 10th.

Discussions focused on the urgency of promoting greater attention on water management impacts on food security and environmental sustainability. A number of topics were highlighted, such as meeting the food needs of an estimated eight hundred million underfed people by 2025. Keen on continuing the dialogue on these issues, ICID also reinforced its commitment to participating in the 4th World Water Forum in Mexico.

Agenda

Président et Directeur exécutif

September 29-30 : Meetings Moroccan members of the WWC and with the Mayor of Casablanca.

October 15-21 : European Solidarity Week for Water, Strasbourg, France.