

## Weekly News Update

### The Word of the President

#### A REAL PRIORITY FOR WATER

Amongst the subjects that can shake the big water family, the right to water is not the least passionate.

Too many people do not have this resource freely at their disposal. Too many, far too many, die from drinking polluted or infected water, when it's not droughts that kill their cattle and burn up their too meager harvests.

Faced with this situation, the right to water is a matter of common sense as much as it is a moral obligation, and over the last few years, significant progress has been made: positions taken by the United Nations, the right to water being included in State Constitutions, application of the Vienna Convention during armed conflicts, and other measures.

This is not enough, because what guarantee can the right to water give, when the access to it is not possible? Access to water represents the concrete and daily expression of a legal principle devoid of any meaning for a nomad from Darfour, a peasant from Rajasthan, a child from a shantytown. For them, the right to water is merely an incantation, without guaranteeing access to it.

The right to water, yes, but also access to it, everywhere, for a long time, and quickly. This is indeed the real challenge that the international community must face up to.

There are at least two conditions necessary for this: money and competence. Money is the assured financing for water and sanitation infrastructures to build, but also to manage. It is everybody's money for everybody.

The competence is the sum of power and knowledge. Bringing competences together, with responsibility as close as possible to the ground, in such a way that the citizen is associated with it through his or her representatives. It is stating with conviction the irreversible conviction of the role of local authorities and local governments. It is also the know-how and its transferal to share technological progress, through exchange and training.

From all this, a reality emerges and will stand out for a long time yet: priority must truly be given to water, a priority demanded by all, and which, alone, will guarantee both the right and access to it.

Loïc Fauchon

### Forum of Mexico

#### Mexican Week for the Council

Loïc Fauchon, Daniel Zimmer, Paul van Hofwegen and several governors (Mokhtar Bzioui, Thijs van Praag, Jerry Delli Priscoli and Charles-Louis de Maud'huy) returned to Mexico from February 23 to 25 to participate in various meetings organized in preparation for the 4th Forum. Received by the head of the Comisión Nacional del Agua, they participated first in "The Americas Day," then, in the meeting dedicated to the preparation process with the "beacons".

Loïc Fauchon also met Angel Gurria, former minister and member of the Camdessus panel, to confer about the organization of themes dedicated to water financing. He was then received by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Luis Ernesto Derbez, to discuss the involvement of Mexico in the upcoming ministerial conference.

Warmest thanks should be extended to our Mexican hosts for their efficient and cordial welcome.

#### Preparation of the civil society for Latin America

With the purpose to strengthen the articulations among networks which address water related issues in Latin America, as well as to prepare an effective participation of the civil society at the 4th Forum, a workshop called "Experiences of management and uses for Water in Latin America: from local to global action", was arranged on January 29th. It was an initiative of the Pantanal Network; FAN - Freshwater Action Network and FAN for Central America; GTA/FBOMS - Water working group from the Brazilian Forum of NGOs and Social Movements and the Pantanal Programme from the Environmental Ministry of Brazil. For proceedings and outcomes, please contact Rafaela Nicola [rnicola@riosvivos.org.br](mailto:rnicola@riosvivos.org.br)

Source: [www.riosvivos.org.br/](http://www.riosvivos.org.br/)

## What's new

### ■ Financing Water for All : The website is now on-line

Whether you are seeking recommendations from the Camdessus Panel, are looking to find out which actions are being developed in response to the "Financing Water for All" report, or are interested in discovering case studies in the domain of water infrastructure financing, you can now visit the « Financing Water for All » website, on-line since the 25th of February. (See our Weekly News Update from the week of February 14th). The website is currently hosted on the WWC's domain (accessible through its home page) but will soon have its own URL.

The site currently provides access to a number of documents and financial terms definitions. By continually referencing new documents and information available from various sources, the site will quickly grow.

A large section will also be dedicated to follow-up of the Panel's recommendations for various actors and will be added to the website in coming weeks.

**"Financing Water for All" Report - Recommendation #82:** *Micro-credit schemes available for financing community water projects should be supported by donors, MFIs and external NGOs through the provision of seed capital, initial reserves and guarantees.*

### ■ Reinforcing cooperation between the WWC and the AFD

During a meeting with the Director of the French Development Agency (AFD) in Paris on February 10, the President and the Executive Director of the WWC proposed the basis of a cooperation agreement between both the Council and the AFD. Among the potential subjects for partnership between both institutions, two possibilities in particular were highlighted:

- A collaboration with the Institute for Financial, Economic and Banking Studies (CEFE), the AFD branch in charge of training activities based in Marseilles. Two actions were mentioned: a water awareness week on the subject of "Water for Development" aimed at African executives, in preparation for the upcoming Forum, and a demonstration of innovative projects for which the participants would decide together the objectives of the project.
- Training for journalists on water issues.

## In focus



The UN General Assembly designated 2005 as the International Year of Microcredit. Governments, the United Nations system, concerned non-governmental organizations and others from civil society, the private sector and the media are invited to join together in raising the profile and building the capacity of the microcredit and microfinance sectors.

*Micro-credit is a scheme permitting to extend loans to small businesses, farmers and other borrowers who cannot get access to normal bank loans.*

Source: [http://www.worldwatercouncil.org/Water\\_financing/financing\\_concepts.shtml](http://www.worldwatercouncil.org/Water_financing/financing_concepts.shtml)

*Micro-credit began to gain momentum in the mid-1970s as a serious tool for development. By the end of 2001, micro-credit was provided to 26.8 million poor people.*

More information on: <http://www.yearofmicrocredit.org>.

The AFD wishes to be associated with the preparation of the Forum in Mexico, involved in the preparation of water-related actions for development and implicated in financing local actions.

On this matter, Jean-Michel Severino, AFD Director, highlighted the importance of AFD actions in overseas departments and territories and more specifically towards local authorities. "This activity plays an important role especially with regard to biodiversity, France being the owner of 10% of the world's coral reefs," he explained.

The water field represents one fourth of the Agency's activities, with actions centered on the following regions:

- Sub-Saharan Africa: Kenya and South Africa
- Mediterranean coast: strong priority for Turkey and Middle-East countries
- Asia: China, India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka
- Latin America: Brazil

The terms of this cooperation agreement between both institutions will be more concretely defined during a future meeting.

## In brief

### → Arab Water Council constituent committee met in Dubai

The Arab Water Council constituent committee was convened for the first time in Dubai on January 3-5 under the chairmanship of the Minister of Water Resources and head of the Council Dr. Mahmoud Abu Zeid. The three-day meeting addressed mechanisms and ways of activating the Council's role in contributing to economic, social and sustainable development of water resources in the Arab region. The Council also called for rationalizing water consumption and provided advice for both the operation and maintenance of water systems.

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

Source: EMWIS - SEMIDE

### Did you know?

Chronic lack of clean water and sanitation in the developing world kills as many people every month as last year's Indian Ocean tsunami.

Source: the International Red Cross

## Publications

### Celebrating Water for Life: The International Decade for Action 2005-2015

A new advocacy guide aiming to mark and celebrate the Water for Life Decade on World Water Day, 22 March 2005. Currently available in English and only in electronic format. Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish versions will later be available as well. More information: <http://www.who.int/>

### Water for food and ecosystems: challenging the mainstream

This booklet (and CD Rom) presents the results of the working group on water, food and ecosystems, built on a program managed by the Wageningen University in Holland.

More information: [www.waterfoodecosystems.nl](http://www.waterfoodecosystems.nl)

### Water as an economic good in irrigated agriculture: theory and practice

This report describes the results of the water Valuation and pricing (WVP) project, one of the projects of the water for food and ecosystems programme coordinated by Wageningen University in Holland. Order email: [publicatie.lei@wur.nl](mailto:publicatie.lei@wur.nl)

Please feel free to send your press releases, publication & event, etc. to be published in this Weekly News Update to : Stéphanie Porro  
+33 (0)4 91 99 41 00 – [s.porro@worldwatercouncil.org](mailto:s.porro@worldwatercouncil.org)

## Events

### 8th International Riversymposium 2005 – “Water and food security – Rivers in the Global Context” and the International (\$150,000) and National (\$50,000) Thies Riverprize

Brisbane Convention Centre, Australia

6-9 September

The First Announcement is now available on-line, including the Call for Papers and the Call for International and National Thies Riverprize Nominations [www.riverfestival.com.au/symposium](http://www.riverfestival.com.au/symposium)

### → European meeting on water and solidarity

The Water Solidarity Europe meeting organized by Programme Solidarité-Eau will be held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March. This meeting is a follow-up to the Euro-African conference. Its objective is to highlight the various existing models of solidarity in the field of water cooperation in Europe. It should create the opportunity to build a common strategy in view of launching a worldwide initiative on the occasion of the Forum of Mexico.

The Council is a partner of this initiative.

Plus d'information : <http://www.pseau.org>

## Agendas

### President – Executive Director

#### March 1– 3

Daniel Zimmer attends the World Bank Water Week

#### March 7

Bureau teleconference

#### March 9

Daniel Zimmer gives a presentation at the Second “Assises de l’eau industrielle”, Roanne, France