

World Water Council

Weekly News Update

The Word of the President

TIME TO MEET

The World Water Council will assemble its Board of Governors this upcoming 19-20 March in Rabat, Morocco. The Board will elect its new President, vote its budget, decide its work programmes and prepare the 4th Forum of Mexico. This is an important event in the still brief history of the Council. Since January 7, the date that I succeeded to Bill Cosgrove upon request of the Bureau, I have been taking inventory and listening to governors and members themselves. From Paris to Mexico, from Washington to Tokyo, via Geneva, London and Amsterdam, I have had the privilege, in eight short weeks, to meet the majority of the directors and more than a hundred member organizations. This is indeed a rare privilege to be able to monitor the pulse of our Council through meetings and interviews, always animated, reflective and exciting. I personally have the feeling that the World Water Council is at an important point of its history.

What are members saying today about the World Water Council?

First, if the Council should not speak on behalf of its members, it must be the voice of the water community towards political and economic decision-makers. Water experts' scientific messages, often academic, would benefit from being translated into laymen's terms, to be better understood especially by the media and the public at large. Next, to reach this goal, we must be able to elaborate and disseminate clear, concrete and enduring messages.

Finally, this will only happen if the Council's member organizations can come together and work together with more efficiency and in a climate of enhanced transparency, improved communication and full mutual respect. An important rendez-vous is waiting for us in twelve months, in March 2006, with our Mexican friends. Twelve months is short and long at the same time to create a successful Forum and to advance the cause of water, to which we are all attached. Money, rights, institutions, knowledge, so many topics on which we must together move forward with the feeling that our union gives us strength in spite our differences--a pacific strength in which I invite you to participate, while thanking you for your commitment and confidence.

Loïc FAUCHON

Meeting the Japanese members of the Council: Tokyo 9-12 March

By request of M. Hashimoto, President of the Japan Water Forum, Loïc Fauchon made a visit to Japan, aiming to strengthen the relationship between the Council and its Japanese members.

During several meetings, our Japanese colleagues have clearly expressed their wish for greater transparency of the Council's activities. They also requested to be more deeply involved in the 4th Forum preparation. M. Hashimoto confirmed to the Acting President that the Council could count on Japan's support in its efforts towards the preparation of the Forum.

L. Fauchon also met consecutively the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of the Environment and of Infrastructures and the Interior.

What's new

■ Council of Europe : Mobilisation of the Assembly of Local Authorities

Elisabeth Catton will be at the European Council in Strasbourg on March 17 to present the European preparatory process of the 4th World Water Forum. The objective of her visit is to mobilise the European Council's Assembly of local authorities, in which 46 European countries of Europe are represented, in view of the European Solidarity Week scheduled for October 17-21, 2005.

The organisers, including the International Secretariat for Water and the WWC, plan to hold a special session on the role of elected officials in the shared responsibility of water management. All water stakeholders from the Rhine Basin as well as the homologues from the new member states, from Central and oriental Europe countries and the Balkans will come together for the occasion.

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■ Water management: Continuing the debate

The "carrefours de la pensée" or "crossroads of thought" are organized every year in Le Mans by the French newspaper "Le Monde Diplomatique". The theme of this year was "Water: a source of life and a source of conflicts". The Executive Director of the World Water Council was amongst the guests at this debate, in particular alongside Ricardo Petrella and Vandana Shiva, fierce opponents of any involvement of the private sector in water management and of the Council.

In his presentation, Daniel Zimmer sought to promote the Council as a platform of exchange and debate on the options available as regards water resources and services management. He reiterated that the Council sees water as being under the primary and unique responsibility of local and national elected officials, who alone have the legitimacy to decide on the means of management.

Daniel Zimmer left this meeting convinced that debate is possible and must be continued. "Several members of the Council will take part in the Alternative Forum in Geneva from March 17th to 20th, 2005. May they continue to show that the Council is far from being the temple of uniform ideas", he declared.

→ President and Executive Director

March 16-20

Ministerial meetings and 21st Board of Governors meeting, Rabat, Morocco.

■ Forum preparation in Asia

The Japan Water Forum is the regional coordinator of the 4th World Water Forum for the region of Asia and the Pacific. The preparatory process towards the 4th World Water Forum started at the Kick Off Meeting held on the occasion of the International Conference on Integrated Water Resources Management in Tokyo in December 2004.

During the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development, to be held on March 27, 2005 in Seoul, Republic of Korea, the Japan Water Forum is organizing a special session on "Water Management for Food and the Environment (WFE)", one of the framework themes of the 4th World Water Forum. Partners in this session are the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), the beacon of this theme, and the Secretariat of the 4th World Water Forum.

The Japan Water Forum sees this event, in which environment ministers and other relevant stakeholders in the region will gather, as an excellent opportunity for the countries in the region to discuss how to utilize the 4th World Water Forum to enhance the regional efforts in tackling water problems.

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Hassan II Water Prize

■ Nomination period to start soon

The members of the Prize Committee of the King Hassan II Great World Water Prize will get together in Rabat under the presidency of the Ministry of Land, Water and the Environment, Mr. Mohamed EL YAZGHI, on Friday March 18th, the day before the Board of Governors meeting.

The objective of this meeting will be to discuss the composition of the international Panel of Judges, and it will mark the launch of the nomination period for the Prize, which should last until July 31st, 2005. More information:

www.worldwatercouncil.org/water_prize.shtml

Historic reminder:

In 2000, the World Water Council and the government of the Kingdom of Morocco became partners in the creation of the King Hassan II Great World Water Prize. The Prize is awarded on the special occasion of the World Water Forum and serves as a recognition of one or several outstanding initiatives conducted in favour of the preservation of water resources throughout the world.

Agenda

March 23

Euro-African conference on water & territories, UNESCO, Paris.

March 24

Water & solidarity day, UNESCO, Paris.

March 25

Conference on water right. Water Academy. Paris.