

Weekly News Update

The word of the President

The Council's 21st Board of Governors meeting was held in Rabat last 19th and 20th March upon invitation from our Moroccan friends. I would like to thank those who participated and those who were associated with the event, in addition to our Moroccan friends whose hospitality was once again particularly warm.

In a studious and friendly atmosphere, the governors and their colleagues reviewed many of the most important subjects at hand. First, the By-Laws and various regulations were adopted following a great deal of work invested by Marteen Blokland, Arthur Askew and the members of the Commission on Legal and Financial Affairs.

Next, Council programmes such as Water for Development, Financing for Water, Right to Water, Monitoring, media awareness and other important subjects are taking form and will announce very positive messages for the next Forum.

The organization of Mexico 2006 was explained by Cesar Herrera and his team. The respective roles of the Forum Secretariat and the Council were discussed. An agreement will soon be presented to the Board.

Finally, the governors who were present and represented granted me unanimous confidence to succeed my friend, Bill Cosgrove. I am touched and honoured, and I wish to express my thanks to everyone.

Regardless, we are aware of the difficulty of the task. It will require everyone's active participation and faultless solidarity. For that, I'm counting on all our friends and partners, just as each of them can count on my commitment and determination,

Loïc FAUCHON

WWC Programs

Right to Water

"As the World Water Council, we cannot ignore such an important question, just as the Forum cannot exclude it from its agenda." Loïc Fauchon at the Euro-African Conference "Water and Territories" at UNESCO, March 23.

A round table illustrating many concrete cases of the application of the Right to Water in Europe, in Africa and in the Maghreb was organised on 25 March by the Water Academy and the European Council of Environmental Law. Of particular interest was the debate: "A rule that is neither in effect nor enforced is not a legal rule" (Corinne Lepage). Another interesting subject was the need to work on obligations at the national level and on individual rights and the manner in which legal and financial means are available at the international level, so that this right may be honoured. Underlying these questions were others relating to duties to protect and share resources, payment and subsidization of necessary solidarity between users, and the right for citizens to organize themselves.

The WWC committed itself to work to bring together various perceptions of what this right entails and to advance proposals to put it into effect. At the end of the session, a working meeting among WWC members participating in the "Right to Water" allowed them to define the main lines of thought to pursue: study in greater depth the legal mechanisms for defining rights, select and analyse concrete cases that illustrate the effective application of right to water, and organize mobilization of political decision-makers to support this initiative. As soon as the financing will be confirmed, the next step will be devoted to the identification of case studies and the definition of the methodology. Contact : e.catton@worldwatercouncil.org

→ The Rabat Board

Two main priorities came out of the discussions on the Mexican Forum: creating messages, keeping in mind the wish that the Forum have a true impact on political and economic decision-makers, and implementing the concept of local action.

→ Future meeting

Loïc Fauchon expressed the wish that the WWC Board of Governors meet over the summer, in order to spend time on essential questions. Governors will be consulted on date and location matters.

■ Commission on Sustainable Development – CSD-13

CSD-13 will take place in New York from 11 to 22 April 2005. It will serve as the “policy” session of the first two-year “implementation cycle,” focusing on water, sanitation and human settlements. The session is expected to make policy decisions on practical measures and options to expedite implementation.

Website:

www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd13/csd13.htm

→ Monitoring: one of the priorities at the CSD-13

The synthesis paper under preparation by CSD President, John Ashe, brings excellent attention to the theme of monitoring, mentioned several times in the project text. Focus is especially placed on the local level and public participation in monitoring activities. However, other levels are not forgotten: the text calls for a reinforcement of capacities at the national level and for the establishment of regional processes, which would have a dual role: one of assisting countries to put national processes in place, and one of linking international organisations. Many subjects that are directly connected to the side event are in preparation and co-organised by the World Water Council (see information at right).

One small regret remains, though: as of today, the text version does not clearly state that monitoring is valuable only if implemented together with a process of appropriation at the national and local levels of the Millennium Development Goals.

In brief

→ New on the Internet

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) launched a new online searchable database of global water quality data and statistics called GEMStat, dedicated to providing environmental water quality data and information of the highest integrity, accessibility and interoperability. These data serve to strengthen the scientific basis for global and regional water assessments, indicators and early warning. GEMStat is designed to share surface and ground water quality data sets collected from the GEMS/Water Global Network, including over 1,500 stations, two million records, and over 100 parameters. GEMStat is accessible at www.gemstat.org

Invitation

→ Participate in the side event: « Monitoring: a booster to achieve the water and sanitation objectives »

The AMCOW, the European Union, France, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the African Development Bank and the World Water Council will hold a side event on the theme of monitoring, to be held in the context of the CSD-13 in New-York on 20 April 2005 from 1:15 to 2:45 pm in room n°6.

The event, which is titled “Monitoring: a booster to achieve the water and sanitation objectives”, will bring together keynote speakers such as Maria Mutagamba, President of the African Ministers Council for Water and Ugandan Minister of State for Water; Serge Lepeltier, French Minister of Ecology and Sustainable Development; as well as Tamsir N’Diaye, Director of the Environment Observatory of the Senegal River Organisation.

The same day, the Council will launch, together with its partners, the “Water Monitoring Alliance” website, a unique initiative aiming to bring together information on the many different monitoring activities operating in the sector of water and sanitation.

For more information: www.worldwatercouncil.org/side-event_monitoring_csd13.shtml

Contact: m.lagier@worldwatercouncil.org

A word on the background for the CSD

The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was created following the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to ensure effective follow-up and to monitor and report on implementation of the Earth Summit agreements at the local, national, regional and international levels. The CSD is a functional commission of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), with 53 members.

On the member side

→ For universal recognition of the Right to Water

On 22 March, Council member Green Cross International launched an international campaign for the right to water. This campaign has two main objectives: to find a solution to the universal problem of access to water and sanitation through protection of sustainable resources and to stimulate governments to include rights and obligations of the main authorities for national and international water management through a legal instrument to enforce this right.

A petition in support of the establishment of the framework convention is on line at: www.watertreaty.org

→ US Army Corps of Engineers

During the last Board meeting, WWC governor Fred Caver, from the US Army Corps of Engineers, announced his retirement starting on June 3rd. His successor will be Steve Stockton up to the next elections.

"USACE was one of the first organizations to join the WWC when there were more questions than answers, and has contributed to putting the WWC on the map especially in the US" said Aly Shady.

We wish Fred and his family the best, and welcome Steve on board.

→ Change of presidency

At the Mediterranean Water Institute

On 17 March, Mohammed Ben Blidia, former Minister of water and urban planning of Tunisia, succeeded to Mohamed Ennabli, who was at the head of the IME since 1996.

... at the IAHS

Congratulations to our governor Arthur Askew, for his nomination to head the International Association of Hydrologic Sciences (IAHS).

... and in international organisations

In addition to the World Bank and the WTO, three other international organizations will have a new president this year: the UNDP, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB).

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

Stéphanie Porro
+33 (0)4 91 99 41 00 –

s.porro@worldwatercouncil.org

Welcome to three new member organisations of the Council

- Asociacion Nacional de Empresas de Agua y Saneamiento de Mexico (ANEAS), Mexico (College 4: Civil society and water users associations)
- Entebbe District Wildlife Association (EDWA), Uganda (College 4: Civil society and water users associations)
- Water and Sanitation Association of Zambia (WAZA), Zambia (College 5: Professional associations and academic institutions)

Event

STOCKHOLM WATER SYMPOSIUM

August 21-27, 2005

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

This year, the 2005 Stockholm Water Prize will be awarded to the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) in New Delhi, an influential Indian non-governmental organisation led by Ms. Sunita Narain

<http://www.cseindia.org>

Did you know?

There is the same amount of water on Earth as there was when the Earth was formed. The water from your faucet could contain molecules that dinosaurs drank.

Source : U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Agenda

President and Executive Director

April 1

International conference for achieving the Millennium Goal on Water supply and sanitation in rural Africa

April 4

Meeting of the EUWI-secretariat, Brussels

April 7

Teleconference of the Bureau