

Weekly News Update

A Word from the President

A Greater Representation

The 322 World Water Council members come from 55 countries. This is many and few at the same time: many, for already a large part of the “water planet” is gathered; few because large nations and vast spaces are still too little or not at all represented.

To broaden our representation is one of the priorities of the Council and its leading authorities. To broaden is to bring countries big and small into our group, with their approaches, their preoccupations, their solutions and, in short, their water culture.

To broaden is also to extend the thematic field of the assembly to which we belong. Ranging from the resource and its protection to final treatments before the great water cycle begins once again, we need new capabilities, experiences and proposals.

Each of our members and partners should hence participate in this membership drive that we commence today.

It is thus. United, the Council will be respected. Respected, it will be heard.

Loïc FAUCHON

Join us!

The World Water Council is dedicated to strengthening the world water movement for an improved management of the world's water resources and water services. If you are interested in becoming a member, read more on our website:

www.worldwatercouncil.org/aboutmembership_brochure

Publications

Catalysing Change

The latest issue of the World Water Council's Water Policy Journal is a special edition dedicated to water reform. Six countries are examined in detail (Australia, Chile, Morocco, Namibia, South Africa and Sri Lanka), and an analytic framework based on economic theory is proposed.

This analytical framework opposes costs of inaction, called “opportunity costs” and political and social negotiation costs, called “transaction costs.” It also examines whether determinants of reform are endogenous (linked to the water situation) or exogenous (linked to the general context).

In the developing countries analysed, change is mostly exogenous in nature: water reform changes in relation to overall changes in governorship. In developed countries, on the other hand, water reform seems to answer more to the difficulties encountered in water management. Of particular note:

- The importance of the question of water use rights in several reforms;
- The general tendency towards decentralisation and the increase in user participation;
- Not surprisingly, it is also much more difficult to change the institutional framework than the management methods, which are more technical.

The Technical Committee of the Global Water Partnership (GWP) also recently published a special edition on the same theme: “Catalysing Change.” This document reviews the essential elements to take into consideration when establishing an implementation strategy for integrated water resource management. The document can be downloaded in English and in French from their Internet site: <http://www.gwpforum.org>.

To obtain a copy of the Water Policy Journal, please visit the IWA Publishing site: <http://www.iwapublishing.com>.

On the member side

■ WSSCC launches “Women Leaders for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for all”

Ministers of Norway and Uganda launched the “Women leaders for WASH” initiative

Ms. Hilde F. Johnson, Norwegian Minister for International Development and Ms. Maria Mutagamba, Ugandan Minister of State for Water and Chair of the African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW) launched a joint initiative entitled “Women Leaders for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for all (WASH)”, at the 13th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-13).

“Women Leaders for WASH” will lobby for greater priority and more budget allocations for sanitation and hygiene, which have not received as much attention as water from governments and the international community. Ms. Maria Mutagamba explained. “We won’t make it a secret campaign,” she added.

At the roundtable held in New York, participants raised a number of priority issues for action to be implemented, which related to:

- Alternative technologies,
- Decentralized financing,
- Greater involvement of women in latrine businesses,
- Monitoring activities,
- Reinforcement of attention given to sanitation.

This initiative is supported by the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC).

Detailed information is available on WSSCC’s website at www.wsscc.org

Did you know?

Sanitation and hygiene are the first line of defense against faecal-oral diseases. Diarrhea causes two million deaths per year and accounts for about a third of total child deaths under the age of five in developing countries. Over 90% of the health effects due to poor sanitation and hygiene are experienced by children under five, which translates into one child dying every fifteen seconds.

Source: The World Bank Group Website, News and Broadcast Feature Story, May 9, 2005

Subterranean waters have a new network called GROWNET

A new practical project called “Ground Water Network for Best Practices in Ground Water Management in Low Income Countries” (GROWNET) was recently approved by the Scientific Board of UNESCO-IUGS-IGCP. It aims to collect information on the best practices in ground water management, verify the effects through site visits and post the details on the Grownet website. Contact addresses for GROWNET are Dr. S.D. Limaye (India), limaye@vsnl.com, and Dr. A.J. Reedman (UK), antony@areedman.wanadoo.co.uk.

Prizes and Awards

The Kyoto Prize honours contributions from grassroots organisations in the water sector

In March 2003, during the 3rd World Water Forum in Japan, Kyoto City, “Soroptimist International of Kyoto” and the World Water Council announced the establishment of the “Kyoto World Water Grand Prize” to be presented every three years at the World Water Forum, starting with the 4th World Water Forum in March 2006.

The Prize aims to honour a distinguished individual or organization whose grassroots-level activities work towards addressing critical water needs of communities and regions. The value of the Prize is 5 million Japanese Yen (around US\$50,000) to be used to continue the recipient’s activities in line with the object of the Prize or related purposes.

The theme of the first edition of the Prize corresponds to the general theme of the Forum, to honour local actions. As such, candidates will be identified throughout the Forum’s preparatory process, and the best actions will be invited to make presentations at sessions during the Forum. In addition, a call for candidatures for the first edition of the prize will be issued shortly, and will remain open until November 2005.

More information:

www.worldwatercouncil.org/kyoto_prize/index.shtml

Contact: Kyoto_prize@worldwaterforum4.org.mx

In brief

■ Uruguay : The Right to Water included in Constitution, Privatisation Defeated.

Last November, Uruguayan voters approved a constitutional reform by 60%, which states that “water is a natural resource essential to life.” The only one of its kind in the world, this referendum declares that access to water and sanitation are “fundamental human rights.” It also ensures participation of civil society in managing water resources, which is worrisome to some private Spanish companies already providing water services there. The newly-elected Parliament with a left-wing majority will subsequently propose legislation to implement reform, setting a precedent for the region, if not the world. The referendum is the latest chapter in a trend of progressive policies emerging from several South American countries.

■ Water crisis looms in Himalayas

WWF warns that the glaciers of the Himalayas are retreating at an accelerating rate as global warming increases. This will eventually result in water shortages for hundreds of millions of people who rely on glacier-dependent rivers. Himalayan glaciers feed into seven of Asia's greatest rivers ensuring a year-round water supply to millions in China, India and Nepal.

Read more:

http://www.panda.org/news_facts/newsroom/other_news/news.cfm?uNewsID=19111

■ Carol Bellamy leaves UNICEF after 10 years

UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy just completed her ten-year tenure with UNICEF. Bellamy was instrumental in putting issues of child exploitation on the global agenda. She spoke out for the rights and protection of the most marginalized and vulnerable children--child victims of sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking, children without families, children affected by conflict and children in prison. She broke taboos on speaking about issues like child sex tourism, child labour and the trafficking of children to industrialized countries.

“Leading UNICEF has been an honor and a privilege,” said Bellamy, who often called her position “the best job in the world.” “I can think of no work that is more vital to humanity than working to ensure that children everywhere survive their early years and grow up with health, dignity and peace.”

Bellamy's successor as UNICEF Executive Director is Ann M. Veneman, who, prior to joining UNICEF, was the United States Secretary of Agriculture.

Source: UNICEF www.unicef.org/media/media_26200.html

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■ Investing in water has positive effects on health and on economic results

An additional investment of some US \$11,3 billion per year in the water and sanitation sector could improve economic results by an annual amount equivalent to US \$84 billion. These are the estimations from the latest report presented by the OMS at the CSD-13 in New York. The economic advantage would be between US \$3 and US \$34 for every dollar invested, in function of the region. Additional reductions in exposure to contaminated drinking water, for example by disinfecting households, would produce saving between US \$5 and US \$60 for every dollar invested, still according to the report.

For more information, contact Mr. Gregory Hartl, hartlg@who.int.

■ A new administrator of the UNDP

A UN development program administrator, the third-highest UN official after the secretary general and his deputy, has been nominated. Kemal Dervis, from Turkey, is currently a member of Parliament. Dervis left the World Bank, where he had served for 22 years, to become Turkey's finance minister. Dervis is the first administrator from a country that has been on the receiving end of development aid.

Please feel free to send your press releases, publication & event announcements, etc. to be published in the Weekly News Update to : Stéphanie Porro
Ph.: +33 (0)4 91 99 41 00 - Fax: +33 (0)4 91 99 41 01
s.porro@worldwatercouncil.org

Agenda

Executive Director

May 17 - 19

Working meeting with the Secretariat of the 4th World Water Forum, Mexico City.

May 23-25

10th GWP Consulting Partners Meeting & Regional Water Meeting, Antigua, Guatemala.