

News Update

Editorial

CLIMATE SHOULD NOT BE A SCAPEGOAT

This summer, massive rainfall, heat waves and forest fires are the daily fate for many European countries. In the meantime, millions of Indians, Bengalese and Chinese are still affected by devastating and lethal flooding, and on the other side of the world, Central America is facing up to a devastating hurricane. For many experts, largely echoed in the media, the name of the culprit is "climate change".

Indisputably, the climate evolves. It has been doing so for centuries and will not stop now. However, we have no absolute knowledge on this subject, only strong assumptions, based on the last 100 years of observations. This is why we should stop making the climate the scapegoat for an absence or abundance of water.

The climate cannot continue to mask the errors committed by man over the course of decades. Uncontrolled demographic growth, the cramming in of the populations in megacities, unsupervised industrial and agriculture pollution are all veritable sanitary bombs, ready to explode.

To put them out, there are however solutions: the reuse of wastewater, extension of reservoirs, generalization of desalination, improvement of water delivery and promotion of alternative energy sources, amongst others. Thanks to man's genius, these technological evolutions will enable us to secure and better manage the resources. But beyond the technical problems, it is clear that the difficulties are mainly political: insufficient financing, mediocre governance and the absence of knowledge sharing.

Hence, together with our Turkish colleagues, we have decided to make the 5th Forum an event where the political question of water will be central to the debates. Together in Istanbul in March 2009, Heads of State, Ministers, Parliamentarians and Local Authorities will have to make concrete commitments in favour of water. Those who come will have done their duty. The others will not be able to say they were not aware. We will know that they just did not want to.

Loïc FAUCHON



At a glance

THE WORLD WATER WEEK

Once again Stockholm -- Venice of the North -- proved to be the perfect place for the annual World Water Week, organised by Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI). Warm weather and occasional glimpses of sun welcomed the 2000 participants to several workshops, seminars and other activities revolving around the important theme of "striving for sustainability in a changing world".

The World Water Council and the Turkish Secretariat of the 5th World Water Forum had the opportunity to present the upcoming event in Istanbul in 2009. Both the side event, where the Forum themes and preparation were introduced and the exhibition stand were successful in terms of raising awareness for the Forum.

This 27th edition of your newsletter is the occasion to present a few outcomes from this intense week.

Focus on: The World Water Week



3 questions to Anders Berntell, Executive Director, Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)

According to you, what would be the main outcomes of this year's World Water Week?

The first outcome is related to climate change. To reduce our dependency on fossil fuels, and thus contribute to a reduction in global warming, there will be an increased use of different types of biofuels in coming decades. Since some water normally going to agriculture for human consumption will instead be diverted to growing crops for biofuels, governments around the world will have to consider the broader biofuel/food/ecosystem implications. The second main outcome focused on that of human behaviour. Even in the face of enlightened policies, technological innovation and deepened scientific understanding, human behaviour and consumption patterns will ultimately drive forward or derail our efforts related to water for food, energy, sanitation and any other number of other issues. The third main outcome related to sanitation itself. The World Water Week's review of progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals sanitation target showed that we're not reaching the goal; indeed, there is even a stronger need for improved monitoring and reporting systems. In all these areas, there is progress, but there is still far too little action and now when climate change is upon us and we need to adapt even faster. None of us can say we are prepared but it's clear that poor people will again suffer the most. The question remains relevant: Why is water still not high enough on the political agenda?

The World Water Week also witnessed the launch of a number of new and groundbreaking studies, reports and initiatives, including, I'm happy to say, the First Announcement for the Fifth World Water Forum in Istanbul!

As compared to previous World Water Weeks, how have the format and participation evolved?

Though our intention is not to become a mega-conference in the truest sense, we are happy to report that attendance was an all-time high – over 2,400 registered participants compared with just under 2,000 in 2006. In addition, the balance between representatives from all stakeholders continues to improve, as does the North-South balance (nearly 40% from developing countries). This tells us that the Week is seen as an important, relevant and productive annual meeting place. Our goal is to be an important forum for capacity-building, partnership-building and follow-up on the implementation of international processes and programmes in water and development. We feel as if we are on track, too; next year the event will move to a more flexible, modern facility in Stockholm as part of the Week's continued growth, yet the intimacy and profile developed through the last 17 years will be maintained and further nurtured.

How can the interrelation between the World Water Week and the Fifth World Water Forum be enhanced concretely?

Relationships exist to be built upon. We at the Stockholm International Water Institute, and by association the World Water Week in Stockholm, are proud of the very fine relationship that we have had with the Council, the Forum and the Council's members – many of whom are close collaborators with us – through the years. The World Water Week has welcomed pre- and post-reporting and promotion of the Forum in Stockholm. This can be built upon in 2009, of course. As the events are similar – global, multi-disciplinary events – yet different – an annual World Water Week vs. every third year for the World Water Forum; different size scales; and narrower vs. broader focus – there is a very synergetic relationship which exists and can be capitalised upon even further. There are even operational fronts, such as communications and marketing, where there can be greater collaboration. Knowledge transfer also offers opportunities. The types of trends identified in the yearly Water Weeks can and should be represented thematically at the Forum, and vice versa.

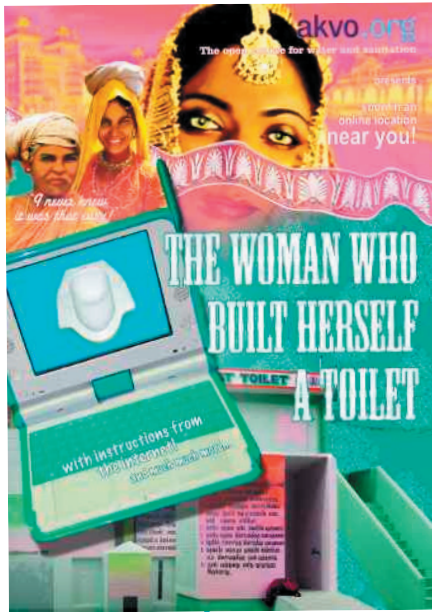
Please visit the WWC website to read the full article:
www.worldwatercouncil.org



Water Communicators Network

Water Communicators met for a second time since the Water Forum Kick-off meeting in Istanbul in March. During the 2-hour long brainstorming session, new members were introduced and work plans and initiatives shared. Aside from the World Water Forum Communications' Committee, an informal Water Media Network will be set up to jointly discuss communication plans and initiatives in an open online platform forum. For more information on this network, please contact claire.warmenbol@iucn.org or m.giard@worldwatercouncil.org

Focus on: The World Water Week



Akvo - The Water Wiki

“Akvo” is the word for “water” in Esperanto, and the organisation with the same name has been the talk of the town at the World Water Week. Akvo is an ambitious project to transform the way water and sanitation development is organised in the poorest parts of the world. Launched with a blitz of Bollywood and African-movie themed marketing, it aims to become the definitive, Internet-based, global online water and sanitation resource and collaborative platform. According to founder Thomas Bjelkeman, a Swedish social entrepreneur with a background in computer technology, Akvo’s goal is “to provide free and open working knowledge, a collaborative community, micro-finance solutions and a marketplace for the water and sanitation community.” Akvo’s plenary debate on Tuesday 14 August, moderated by Financial Times environment correspondent, Fiona Harvey, drew widespread and upbeat feedback on the need for such a system in the water sector.

The team is working actively to recruit new finance and implementation partners. More at www.akvo.org

Preparing a Final Action Plan for the International Year of Sanitation (IYS) 2008

“Every dollar spent on sanitation is equivalent to another dollar spent on 5 other MDGs.” This statement of HRH Willem-Alexander Prince of Orange set the tone for the UN-Water Seminar held on Wednesday 15 August during the World Water Week. In view of establishing an Action Plan, this meeting gathered initiatives and activities from other agencies in preparation for the IYS 2008. Sanitation is of great importance for economic and social development, but the world is not on track to reach the MDGs: Achieving the sanitation target requires the provision of access to sanitation for 2 billion more people by 2015. The International Year of Sanitation will be officially launched on 29 November 2007 in New York, and local, regional and national launches will also be organised throughout the world.

WSSCC and SIWI Co-Sponsor for 2008 WASH Media Award

The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) and SIWI are co-sponsoring the second edition of the WASH Media Award competition, to be held between July 2007 and April 2008.

This competition is open to journalists in developing countries who publish or broadcast original investigative reports on issues related to water supply, sanitation or hygiene in their countries. The entry form and instructions are available at <http://www.wsscc.org/en/media/wash-media-awards> or <http://www.siwi.org/> (source: SIWI)

WWAP Discusses WWDR3 at UN-Water Meeting

During the World Water Week, the new World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) coordinator and former Treasurer of the World Water Council, Mr. Olcay Unver, presented a proposal to UN Water members for the new structure of the Third World Water Development Report (WWDR3) in a closed meeting on 11 and 12 August. After thorough discussion, the new table of contents and work plan have been endorsed by the UN Water members. The third edition of the report will be presented in 2009 during the 5th World Water Forum in Istanbul.

Water-Cleaning Eggs Win Mexican Teens Stockholm Junior Water Prize

Adriana Alcántara Ruiz, Dalia Graciela Díaz Gómez and Carlos Hernández Mejía from Mexico are the 2007 winners of the Stockholm Junior Water Prize, awarded on Tuesday, 14 August, during an official ceremony in the presence of H.R.H. Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden. The Mexican team’s project, “The Elimination of Pb(II) From Water Via BIO-Adsorption Using Eggshell”, showed an innovative approach to absorbing lead in industrial wastewater with eggshells, which is a locally abundant bio-organic waste material. Visit the Water Week website for more information: <http://www.worldwaterweek.org/>



Towards the 5th World Water Forum

5th Forum Organizers Take Another Step Forward in the Political Process

The International Steering Committee of the 5th World Water Forum gathered on Sunday, 12 August, for a fruitful meeting that addressed specifically thematic, programmatic, political and communications issues related to the organization of the 5th Forum. In particular, the upcoming Forum will include a preparatory process that emphasizes increased political impact by gathering Parliamentarians, Local Authorities and Governments around the table and involving Ministers from different sectors as well as Heads of State. Through a “one subject, one statement” approach it is hoped that the political message of increased priority for water issues will be more concentrated. Water is a political subject, not to mention a public one, and the World Water Council wishes to draw attention to the political dimension that has been too often neglected in the the past decades, contributing to the current crisis in the water sector. Local Governments are key in water development and management, and bridges must be forged through dialogues between local, national and even supranational authorities in order to ensure a productive interaction between water users, experts and politicians.

First Announcement of the 5th World Water Forum released

The First Announcement of the 5th World Water Forum was released in Stockholm on Monday, 14 August, during an overflowing Side Event at the World Water Week. Approximately 250 people attended the presentation of the thematic, regional and political processes of the 5th Forum in an interactive session aspiring to answer participants’ questions and receive comments. Please contact the Forum Secretariat to receive a copy of the 1st announcement: info@worldwaterforum5.org
The First Announcement will also soon be available online at www.worldwaterforum5.org



A 5-minute Film Says More Than a 100-page Report

The International Water and Film Event, Istanbul 2009 was officially launched during a Side Event at the Stockholm Water Week on Thursday 16 August. It was presented by Pradip Saha, Director of the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) and producer of “Faecal Attraction – Political Economy of Defecation”, an awareness-raising documentary on the sanitation situation in India (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUikOLLa31s>). Organised as a Side Event of the 5th Forum, the IWFE uses cinema as a tool for creating impact for water issues among the public at large, from children to seniors in order to involve all non water experts who are usually the first to be affected by water issues.

WWC News

Members’ Meeting in Stockholm

The Council seized the opportunity of the gathering of the water community at the Stockholm WWW to organise a members meeting. About 55 member representatives were present and had the chance to exchange ideas and expectations with the Council’s Bureau, Governors, other members and staff, following a brief presentation of the Council’s diverse activities by the President, Executive Director and Bureau members. Several ideas, mainly centred on fostering interaction between members and the WWC, such as supporting members in their World Water Day activities, emerged from the discussion and will be helpful to the Council HQ to implement future actions to better satisfy its members. The success of this meeting has led to the conviction that the Council HQ should organize member meetings as often as possible during other major water events. For those who wish to know more about this meeting, please feel free to contact the WWC membership officer, Ms. Sabrina André at s.andre@worldwatercouncil.org.

WWC News

In Favor of Water Diplomacy

Water is not only a question of priority or urgency, but rather a precondition for all life on earth. But how can we make the permanent relationship between man and water evolve? Loïc Fauchon, President of the World Water Council, discusses this problem in an article published in the famous Spanish magazine, "Politica Exterior", entitled "In Favor of Water Diplomacy" which covers today's cultural and political problems related to water. Read article: http://www.worldwatercouncil.org/fileadmin/wwc/News/WWC_News/News_2007/_For__a_water_diplomacy.pdf

Placing Water at the Centre of the Political Debate in Asia and the Pacific

Such was the perspective in which the Asia-Pacific Water Forum (APWF), created in 2006 on the occasion of the 4th World Water Forum in Mexico, decided to organize the Asia-Pacific Water Summit. This Summit's first edition will be held in the Oita prefecture in Japan on December 3rd-4th, 2007, with the aim of mobilizing the decision makers and the political players of the 49 Asia-Pacific states around the region's priority themes: financing, how to manage water-related disasters, water for development and ecosystems.

The World Water Council is actively participating in the preparation of this ambitious and fundamental event. On August 6th, Loïc Fauchon traveled to Tokyo to participate in the second Steering Committee meeting of this summit. The Steering

Committee members, including Mr. Han Seung-Soo, Special Envoy on Climate Change to the United Nations Secretary General, gathered to exchange their views and their concrete proposals. Loïc Fauchon pleaded in favor of a true international coordination to guarantee access to water in emergency situations such as natural disasters.

Let us not forget that, despite the rapid economic growth of many Asian countries, the continent still suffers from a lack of access to water and sanitation services and water-related natural disasters. This has reiterated by the recent flooding in India, China and Bangladesh.

The APWF is a new network that was created to increase the region's access to improved water supplies and sanitation, protect and restore river basins and reduce vulnerability to water-related disasters. More information: www.apwf.org



The 2nd Steering Committee Meeting of the 1st Asia-Pacific Water Summit in Tokyo on 6 August 2007

Collaborating on Water Issues : WWC & Arab Water Council

During the Arab Water Council's Board of Governors' meeting held last month in Alexandria, Egypt, the Board approved the proposed Memorandum of Understanding to be signed between the both Councils (WWC & AWC) for "Collaboration on promotion of awareness and information exchange on water issues". The MoU had been previously approved by the WWC Board of Governors in June. In view of the forthcoming 5th Forum, this MoU aims to enhance regional participation from the Middle East and Northern Africa countries.



News from Members and Partners



New Chair for GWP

Letitia A. Obeng is the new Chair of the Global Water Partnership (GWP), succeeding Mrs.

Margaret Catley-Carlson, a long-time partner of the World Water Council who has always been involved in Forum preparatory processes. Dr. Obeng has held increasingly important positions since joining the World Bank in 1982, most recently as Director for Environment, Water Resources, Rural and Social Development in the Middle East and the North Africa Region. When accepting this chair position, Dr. Obeng stated, "The work of the Partnership in supporting the development of sustainable water resource management is vital and much needed. I am truly honored to contribute in this way and look forward to working with the members of the GWP family." She will assume her duties as Chair of the GWP at the end of the year.

The IOWater Day

The International Office for Water (National Training Centre for Water Professions) is organising "A Day of IOWater" on 13 November 2007 in Paris under the theme of "Using Rainwater". Questions to be discussed include the regulatory, technical, sanitation and financial boundaries linked to using rainwater. Further discussions will revolve around what impacts this approach could have on local water and sanitation authorities. This thematic day will also evoke possible solutions for water and sanitation management.

<http://www.oieau.fr/anglais/index.htm>

Blue News

Water Cut in Drought-hit Ankara

The water level in reservoirs supplying the Turkish capital has dropped to less than 5% of the capacity, as the country suffers one of its driest years on record. Municipal staff are to be sent on a two-month holiday to ease the demand, and television broadcasts and sermons in mosques have urged people to cut water consumption. Ankara, a city of 4 million inhabitants, has been divided into two sections, and water cuts are to be implemented every other day on a rotating basis. To read full article: http://www.boston.com/news/world/europe/articles/2007/08/02/turkey_grapples_with_water_shortages/

Singing the Message Home

In the Singida District of Tanzania, children are exploring new ways of learning about the dangers of unsafe water and inadequate sanitation. They meet in sanitation clubs after school and have fun while singing, playing games and acting out sanitation-themed dramas. For more information visit: http://www.wateraid.org/uk/what_we_do/where_we_work/tanzania/5619.asp?EmMailerKeywords=Singing-the-message-home



Credit: WaterAid / Marco Betti



Blue news

Grassroots Initiatives to Solve Safe Water Crisis

Water, Water everywhere, but not a drop to drink! Excessive salinity, iron and other impurities in the water make it unsafe to drink in Dacope Upazilla district in the Southwest Coastal region of Bangladesh. Hence, the majority of the people in the area are subjected to endless difficulties. To tackle the problem, AOSED has launched a project entitled "Grassroots Initiatives to Solve Safe Water Crisis in Dacope". The project aims to motivate the local communities to identify and rehabilitate damaged safe water resources; identify potential new sources and develop them for free access as well as manage the safe water sources in a sustainable manner. The project is being implemented with the active participation of people from all classes and occupations. More information: www.aosed.org



A few acronyms

- SIWI:** Stockholm International Water Institute
- IYS:** International Year of Sanitation
- WSSCC:** Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council
- WWAP:** World Water Assessment Programme
- IOWater:** International Office for Water
- IWFE:** International Water and Film Events
- APWF:** Asia-Pacific Water Forum
- AOSED:** An Organisation for Socio-Economic Development

Where to meet...

UNESCO International Symposium: "New Directions in Urban Water Management"
12-14 September 2007, UNESCO Headquarters Paris
Information: http://typo38.unesco.org/index.php?urban_water_07
Loïc Fauchon

Job opportunities

The African Minister's Council on Water (AMCOW) seeks an Executive Secretary for its Secretariat in Abuja, Nigeria.
For further information: <http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/Employment/Vacancies.htm>

The World Water Council Headquarters seeks an Executive Assistant for its office in Marseilles, France. 90% of the work is in English. For further information: <http://www.worldwatercouncil.org/index.php?id=2032>

Other Events

22nd European Regional Conference
2-6 September 2007 - Pavia, Italy
Theme: Water Resources Management and Irrigation and Drainage Systems Development in the European Environment.
Organizer: ITAL-ICID
Information: <http://www.italicid.org/erc2007>

58th IEC Meeting and USCID's 4th International Conference on Irrigation and Drainage
30 September - 6 October 2007 - Sacramento, USA.
Theme: The Role of Irrigation and Drainage in a Sustainable Future
Organizer: U.S. National Committee on Irrigation and Drainage (USCID)
Information: <http://www.icid2007.org>,
<http://www.uscid.org>.

10th International River symposium and Environmental Flow Conference
3-6 September 2007 - Brisbane, Australia
Organizer: River Symposium; The Nature Conservancy
Information: www.riversymposium.com

Please feel free to send your press releases, publication & event announcements, etc. to be published in the WWC News Update to:
Mélanie Giard, Communications
Tel.: +33 (0)4 91 99 41 00
Fax: +33 (0)4 91 99 41 01
E-mail: newsletter@worldwatercouncil.org