

# Analysis

of the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum

March 16-23, 2003 - Kyoto, Shiga & Osaka, Japan



World Water Council  
3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum

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## Preamble

Since its inception in 1997, the World Water Forum has become much more than just a place for reflection, dialogue and exchange of experiences. It succeeded in attracting attention on water worldwide beyond professional circles, serving as a platform for projects to be built, partnerships to be formed and commitments to be turned into concrete solutions.

Whilst the global water situation remains critical, the need to carry on organizing such a gathering is increasingly self-evident, and the expectations increasingly specific. This is why it is important to back up all the steps leading up to the Forum, as well as between Fora, with the thought process and analysis that must facilitate the continuity and increase their efficiency.

This Analysis of the 3rd World Water Forum was jointly prepared by the World Water Council and the Secretariat of the 3rd World Water Forum. The intention when making it was not to produce an exhaustive document, but rather to gather some reflexions that could serve as a guide in a constructive way, throughout the preparation of the next World Water Forum.

Special thanks go to the government of The Netherlands and UNESCO, who provided valuable support for the preparation of this document and to the members of the Council, who made some highly constructive contributions.



## Introduction

The 3rd World Water Forum was undoubtedly the largest meeting ever organised on water. More than 24,000 people attended the Forum, including about 6,000 non-Japanese. Around 1,300 official delegates representing 170 countries and 47 international organisations were present at the Ministerial Conference. More than 1,200 journalists participated as accredited media. The 3rd World Water Forum had a significant impact on the subsequent UN and other international water gatherings such as the G-8 and CSD meetings following the Forum. The Forum and its preparatory process enhanced global awareness on water issues, following-up on the UN Millennium Goals and WSSD targets.

This mobilization not only reflects the increased awareness through the unique, global preparatory process but also is a clear demonstration that water is perceived as one of the major issues of this century. It is also an indicator of success for the organizers and in particular for the host country, Japan, which devoted a lot of efforts and resources to the organisation of such a large event.

Beyond this first simplistic and quantitative analysis, it is important to analyse the whole Forum process (preparation, Forum itself, outcomes) in order to draw conclusions and recommendations for the future Forums.

The first three Forums have generated a water movement that is concerned with the different issues related to water. Much debate is going on and awareness is continuously being raised in different levels of society. The first three Forums have identified problems and many solutions have been presented. We are now at the stage where the Forum should focus on how to generate and establish the required action and resources to solve the problems on the appropriate levels. The Council as the founder of the Forum, and the hosts of the future World Water Forums, must therefore carefully examine the purpose and the way of organising the Forum and its preparatory process because such an event involves an important financial commitment of the host country and many contributing organizations.

This analysis document complements the Final Report

on the 3rd World Water Forum<sup>1)</sup> and is intended to generate a debate on the Forum and its future within the Water Community on how to improve the organisation of the Forum and to generate action for the benefit of all.

<sup>1</sup> Available from the Secretariat of the Forum, 1-8-1 Kojimachi, Chiyoda Ku, Tokyo 102-0083, Japan; email office@water-Forum3.com

## Acronyms

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ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFP	Agence France Presse
AMCOW	Africa Ministerial Conference on Water
AWTF	Africa Water Task Force
EUWI	European Union Water Initiative
GWP	Global Water Partnership
H&H	Hoffman & Hoffman
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GATS	General Agreement on Trade and Services
IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
MDG	Millenium Development Goal
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PSA	Public Service Announcement
PSI	Public Services International
PPP	Public Private Partnership
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
UN	United Nations
UN-CSD	UN Commission on Sustainable Development
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UN-ECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNEP-DDP	United Nations Environment Programme - Dams and Development Project
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VIP	Very Important People
VWF	Virtual Water Forum
WAU	Water Action Unit
WFD	Water Framework Directive
WEHAB	Water supply and sanitation, Energy, Health, Agriculture, Biodiversity and Ecosystems
WSSCC	Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg)
WWC	World Water Council
WWDR	World Water Development Report

# 1. The Forum Process

## Preparation

The preparation of the 3rd World Water Forum started immediately after the 2nd World Water Forum. The Secretariat of the 3rd World Water Forum was established as an independent NGO by the Japanese Government and promoted all over the world the three principles adopted for the Forum (i) open to all, (ii) created through participation by all and (iii) translating visions into concrete actions and commitments.

During the 36 months of preparation, several meetings were organized, including the kick-off meeting in Kyoto in June 2001, the thematic synthesis meeting in Kathmandu in February 2002, and the donor meeting in The Hague in 2002. Over a hundred other meetings were attended by the Secretariat of the Forum. The Water Action Unit established by the Council under the auspices of the Japanese Secretariat and the Dutch Government as well as several members of the Council participated in many events during this preparation phase.

Based on the three principles mentioned above, it was decided that the topics and related sessions would be open to any interested party, and that no restrictions to who may participate would be applied. It was thought essential to also simultaneously develop active discussions in the preparatory stages leading to the Forum.

While many preparatory activities took place<sup>2</sup> in which many people and organisations actively participated, we would like to highlight various tools, which were created to generate information on opinions, action and experiences. The Virtual Water Forum and the Water Voices project were created by the Secretariat of the 3rd World Water Forum, and the Water Action Unit, which was established by the Council and the Secretariat of the 3rd World Water Forum.

## Virtual Water Forum

The Virtual Water Forum provided a unique opportunity for those people who were willing to advance their discussion before the Forum in

Kyoto<sup>3</sup>. The Virtual Water Forum consisted of about 166 sessions classified into 28 themes and 4 regional topics. About 5,500 participants from some 160 countries exchanged their views and discussed various aspects of water issues through interactions on the Internet on the specially created website. The Virtual Water Forum also provided for people who are interested in water issues but could not physically attend the Forum meetings, an opportunity to actively participate in the discussions.

The challenge of electronic conferences like the Virtual Water Forum is to ensure the involvement of the wide spectrum of stakeholders and public at large and by doing so, to obtain meaningful conclusions that can be used as an input in the Forum debate itself. It became clear that any newly introduced e-conference system sets hurdles to users, i.e. they have to learn how to get access and how to use the e-conference system which effectively prevents non-core participants from entering discussion. The 3rd Forum Secretariat attempted to enhance active participation by providing the higher profile for the Forum.

The Secretariat was aware that participation in the Virtual Water Forum would only be by those who had easy access to the Internet. This became apparent as among the top 10 countries of participants over 90% originates from “the west” indicating the problems of access to the Internet and awareness of the existence of the virtual Forum. The recognition of these advantages and disadvantages of the Virtual Water Forum led to the Water Voice Project.

The management of Virtual Water Forum sessions was entrusted to the conveners of the Forum sessions. The procedures and output of the sessions varied according to the conveners’ main objectives. Some sessions were used to publicise achievements and reporting of (previous) discussions. Some intended to have open-end discussions to seek wider perspectives on a subject. Only 25% of the sessions

*“Only 25% of the sessions produced an end product and delivered a session report, and 75% did not.”*

<sup>2</sup> The elaboration of the analysis of the other activities is awaiting the responses and comments of these participating organisations.

<sup>3</sup> The Virtual Water Forum. Final Report available at the Secretariat of the Forum. Email [vwf@water-Forum3.com](mailto:vwf@water-Forum3.com)

produced an end product and delivered a session report, but 75% did not.

A virtual Forum can be a good mass-involvement tool if designed carefully and supported by supplementary measures such as media campaigns and incentive schemes for participation. To make efficient use of virtual Forums careful design is necessary. This should include clear setting of objectives, output formulation and follow-up planning. If the future Forum organizers wish to achieve more organised output-oriented discussion, having better facilitated sessions is an option. But they also have to be aware that Virtual Water Forum loses part of its value if this facilitation affects participation and free discussion. It is important that the participants have a clear view on how their input will be utilised by the organisers of the session and more generally how these results fit into the “real” Forum.

*“More than 3,000 actions were collected in this effort, documenting numerous water success stories and suggesting many elements of the water future.”*

#### **Water Voices Project**

Acknowledging the fact that many people do not have access to the Internet, a collection of Water Voices from the concrete witnesses of the water crisis was organised. Over 2,000 ‘Water voice messengers’<sup>(4)</sup> volunteered from all over the world to collect voices from ordinary people, especially

those living in remote areas without adequate means of communication, and to reflect those voices in the Forum. Almost 170 organisations participated as ‘Water Voice Partners’ and managed to collect some 27,000 water voices from 142 countries. It was the first time in history that such a large number of opinions of ordinary citizens have been collected for a conference.

The challenge of the Water Voices Project was to collect a representative sample of water experiences while assuring “quality” of these collected voices. Media such as CNN were used to raise awareness about the Water Voice Project. Incentives were given through the “water voice messenger award” scheme to promote quality and significance of collected voices. The collected voices were analysed and the results were presented in the Water Voices report.

Though the number reached its “critical mass”, a more balanced distribution of the voices would have been desirable. There are selected voices, which are compiled into “Water Voices” which help people to understand the seriousness and cross-cutting nature of water problems experienced at the grass roots level. The importance of the water messengers is evident as they are the direct witnesses of the water crisis in many parts of the world. The Water Voices Project was not intended for any concrete conclusion by its nature. The time and situation specific experiences expressed in the 27,000 voices made generic analysis a difficult task. However, a better incorporation of their messages into the debate and Forum processes will help to achieve one of the major goals of the Forum, i.e., reflecting citizens’ opinions on global water discussions. Collection and analysis methodologies as well as mechanisms to reflect collected voices in Forum discussions should be improved to enhance their voice.

The water voices also proved to be an important complementary element to the World Water Actions as they were the voices of those who witnessed the changes in the water sector. These complementarities should be better exploited in getting the overall picture of problems and actions.

#### **World Water Actions**

Among the commitments made at the 2nd World Water Forum in March 2000 was the setting-up of a monitoring system on actions to bring the World Water Vision to reality. This initial commitment became reality through the setting-up of a Water Action Unit in the WWC Headquarters during the summer of 2001. The Water Action Unit was jointly created and supported by the WWC, the Forum Secretariat with additional support from the Government of the Netherlands. The mission of the Unit was to provide a complete report on World Water Actions to the 3rd World Water Forum, through a comprehensive tracking, gathering, analysis and synthesis of water-related actions during the period March 2000 – March 2003, so as to demonstrate progress and areas where more effort was needed.

More than 3,000 actions were collected in this effort, documenting numerous water success stories and suggesting many elements of the water future.

<sup>4</sup> “Water Voice” Project Report, March 2003, available at the Secretariat of the Forum. Email [office@water-forum3.com](mailto:office@water-forum3.com)

The Water Action Unit accomplished this work by participating in numerous meetings and establishing contact with thousands of water actors. Through the Internet and web based activities, the Water Action Unit could monitor the discussions of the Virtual Water Forum and utilize the messages sent through the Water Voice project, for incorporation in the water actions database.

To ensure that the outcomes reflected public opinion, feedback were encouraged through a participatory process and the publication of successive drafts. The fourth draft was presented at the 3rd Forum and served as a basis for discussions and interactions both during the Forum and at the Ministerial Conference. The final version of the report *World Water Actions : Making Water Flow for All* incorporates inputs from the Forum and could therefore be seen as a major output of the Forum.

The value of the exercise was generally recognized and enhancement of the analysis of why certain actions are successful or not and strengthening of monitoring efforts is recommended, especially in the context of achieving the MDGs.

The main role of the Water Action Unit was, like the Water Voice Project, to develop an inventory of water actions and best practices at the field level. It may have been able to bridge the grass roots actions with the Forum discussion better if it had been designed and operated for that purpose.

#### **Other preparatory activities of the Council**

The Council's communication tools such as the newsletter and Internet pages served as outlets for the dissemination of the information and the promotion of Forum activities. The WWC was particularly active in preparatory activities being the theme coordinator for the following themes: Financing Water Infrastructure in partnership with GWP, Dams and Sustainable Development with UNEP-DDP, Public-Private Partnership with the Council of Canadians, for the Regional day of the Middle East and the Mediterranean in partnership with GWP and the World Bank and finally, the session on Virtual Water Trade.

#### **Conclusions**

The concept of complementary actions in the preparation stage of the Forum as applied for Kyoto through the Virtual Water Forum, Water Voices and

World Water Actions have played a decisive role in making the Forum seen as a citizens' event. They kept balls of water discussion rolling by attracting people to various water issues and actions. Though their outputs could have been more fully utilized by systematically linking them with the Forum programming process, their respective outputs have become symbols of the Forum's three principles.

Preparatory activities like these will importantly determine the profile and nature of future Forums. For example, a limited number of focussed and well-facilitated sessions may generate outputs in terms of problem statements, approaches to resolving these problems and an analysis and verification of these actions and experiences. Therefore, comprehensive discussion on Forum programming and preparatory activities will be extremely useful. From the onset of the Forum preparation a clear strategy and methodology is needed to synthesize the inputs provided in these preparatory activities and to enable effective incorporation of the results into the Forum debates and the Ministerial Conference. Trying to decide key issues and activities too early on may carry the risk of losing flexibility for adapting to changing expectations and outcomes of other related processes. Deciding too late will not however allow sufficient time for a thorough preparatory process to come up with concrete outputs. Setting fundamental principles in time and taking actions flexibly according to these guiding principles is pivotal to the success of future Forums.



## Structure

The Forum programme contained 351 sessions under 38 themes. The debate in many sessions was good and open. There had never previously been a possibility to have such a large debate and in most of the cases in a rather constructive way. The fact that everybody could propose a session and be accepted played an important role. As pointed out by several participants, if co-ordinators had had the possibility to select or regroup sessions, this would have raised objections among concerned organising institutions. However, having so many sessions rendered even more difficult the task of producing synthesis and scaling up statements and recommendations conducive to decisions and new action. The coordinators of the various themes were given the role to accommodate the various sessions proposed in the best possible way. Some coordinators comment that this resulted in many difficulties to find coherence and complementarities among the sessions and to prioritise the actions and activities while some others did not find it difficult as they had prepared for the programme well in advance, through

virtual discussion and preliminary meetings.

The role of session convenors was important in the preparatory phase and at the Forum itself. The open nature of the Forum allowed session convenors to select the theme in which their session would best fit and even new themes were created to accommodate their desires. The Secretariat therefore created a larger number of themes to cope with demand. There were sessions of which the convenors thought that they should be 'independent'. They were then classified as belonging to "others" even in the case when there seemed to have been suitable themes for the session. In principle, the purpose of the themes and the task of their coordinators should be for the debate to be all inclusive and for all stakeholders present to be able to participate.

The 10 to 30 sessions under one theme and the voluntary nature of putting sessions under certain themes posed challenge in some cases for the coordinators to have the debate focused on the issues. Coordination and synthesis of sessions under certain themes was managed well while that of some others was more challenging as it depended on not only the number of sessions but also on the focus of the discussion, shared view among session

### List of Themes, Regional Days, Professional Panels and Specific Programmes

#### Themes

- Water and Climate
- Water and Cultural Diversity
- Water and Energy
- Water Supply, Sanitation, Hygiene and Water Pollution
- Water, Food and Environment
- Water, Nature and Environment
- Water and Transport
- Floods
- Groundwater
- Public Private Partnership
- Water and Cities
- Water and Governance
- Water and Information
- Agriculture, Food and Water
- Water and Poverty
- Water, Life and Medicine
- Dams and Sustainable Development
- Financing Water Infrastructure
- Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and Basin Management [IWRM]
- Water, Education, and Capacity Building
- Water and Peace
- Water and Parliamentarian
- Children's World Water Forum
- Youth World Water Forum

#### Regional Days

- Day of Africa
- Day of Asia and Pacific
- Day of the Americas
- Day of the Middle East and the Mediterranean
- Day of Europe

#### Professional Panels

- Gender Panel
- Water Journalist Panel
- CEO Panel
- Union Panel
- Science, Technology and Management Panel
- Water Development Partners Panel

#### Specific Programmes

- World Water Actions
- World Water Assessment Programme

participants, etc. Improvements in the synthesis and formulation of session statements needs further attention in the future. Such statements should accommodate the balancing of the views to assure correct representation of the remaining differences and the agreements reached.

Most of the output was generated through the session reports prepared by the session convenors. The process of reporting was well explained to them every evening before the session. Standard computerised procedures to facilitate reporting and synthesis were issued during these sessions. Most of the session convenors prepared their reports, and submitted these to the desk where the reports were posted on the web.

As the former three Forums have had different approaches regarding the number of sessions, the organizers of the next Forums (Council and Host Country) should weigh up the pros and cons of each approach, explore the expectations of global society for the next Forum and decide in due course on the best possible programme and agenda in the context of the Forum's objectives.

## Location

The Forum was organised in three locations: Kyoto, Shiga and Osaka, which share the same basin of Yodo River and Lake Biwa. This is based on the concept that water issues should be discussed in a basin wide manner. The organisers had organised the required transport to facilitate movement between the sites quite well. Many participants put high marks on the organisers' support in facilitating smooth transportation. However, many participants also felt that moving reduced the flexibility in attending programme components. Taking into account the number of sessions, the 3rd World Water Forum was possible only because three hosting cities provided abundant capacity to accommodate such large number of participants. Capacity of hosting venue and city including a number of venues will be a key factor in organising future Forums.

## Link between the Ministerial Conference and the Forum

Often the image of the Forum in the media is related to the success of the Ministerial Conference. For the outside world the difference between the Forum and Ministerial Conference often does not exist and the success or failure of the Forum is therefore sometimes measured by the success or failure of the Ministerial Conference. By doing so, insufficient credit is given to the great positive attention that has been given to the non-Ministerial Conference activities. However, media attention on various subjects like the report on Financing Water Infrastructure, and private sector involvement clearly indicates a wider interest and success than the Ministerial Conference.

One of the challenges of the organization was to establish a firm link between the Ministerial Conference and the Forum. In order to ensure that the outcome of the Forum was fed into the Ministerial Conference discussions, all the thematic statements of the Forum were submitted to the Ministerial Conference as discussion material.

Also, one of the unique features of the Forum that allowed linkage between the Ministerial Conference and the Forum was the Dialogue between Forum Participants and Ministers held during the Forum. It allowed nearly 200 water ministers and senior officials to sit down with another 300 Forum participants, and was appreciated by both the Forum and the Ministerial Conference participants. Further, during the preparatory stages of the Forum, the Japanese government organised several dialogue meetings with NGOs, which enabled the civil society groups to express their opinions directly to the Ministerial Conference organisers, and in turn allowed the Ministerial Conference organisers to take account of the opinions of the civil society groups.

It is important that the preparation of the Forum and of the Ministerial Conference go hand in hand. One of the difficulties of linking the Forum to the Ministerial Conference might be having separate organisations in charge of the Forum and of the Ministerial Conference. Furthermore, the Ministerial Conference itself was difficult because of differences among the



*“Future Forum organisers must consider the best ways to have the recommendations of the Forum translated into concrete political action.”*

countries on positions to be adopted. In order to allow exchange between the Forum and the Ministerial Conference from the preparatory processes of the Forum, several meetings were held. However, it would have been better to have more time allocated in the preparatory stage for the political processes to accommodate the findings and recommendations of the preparatory processes of the Forum. More and timely exchanges between these processes could have been provided to enable a substantial step ahead supported by the Ministerial Conference.

In order to ensure that the governments participating in the Ministerial Conference would make such a commitment, the Japanese government created the Portfolio of Water Actions, which at the end included more than 500 concrete actions submitted by the participating governments. Monitoring of

the implementation of these commitments will become an essential element in the continuous development of the water action agenda. After the Forum, the Japanese government launched an online inventory of the Portfolio of Water Actions, which allows monitoring of these commitments. It is important for obtaining relevant, effective,

substantial and implementable commitments, that the processes of linking the Forum and the Ministerial Conference, which are necessary to generate these commitments, start early and allow for the local and international political processes to take place properly.

Through the last three Forums, it has been recognised that the political processes are important element of the World Water Forums. This in turn means that there are expectations for the Ministerial Conference to produce concrete political commitments. The future organisers of the Forum must ensure that the Ministerial Conference have a clear purpose. In the case of the 3rd Forum the purpose was to get commitments for action.

Future Forum organisers must consider the best ways to have the recommendations of the Forum translated into concrete political action. Here

innovation is needed remembering the relative short term mandates of Ministers compared to the issues at stake in water resources management which go far beyond their terms. They are also bound by many national and international political interests, which do not allow them to be very drastic in the change of their positions. That is why the political processes should be a permanent element of the Forum preparation and implementation activities. Without timely and continuous involvement Ministerial Declarations may remain vague and non-committal.

Three complementary approaches could be explored:

1. make use of other Ministerial Conferences to promote the results of the Forum; this seems in any case necessary
2. try to design another process whereby the policy component would be treated more informally but would involve governments, politicians and political parties, parliamentarians and local authorities<sup>5</sup>. By using such an approach we could progressively build a political approach with institutions that deal with local action and strongly influence and implement policies. It is likely that there would also be a need to make use of other events to promote our recommendations.
3. investigate whether the Ministers and Ministries addressed are the only ones that should be involved: the role of Ministries of health, environment, finance and many others, could give a new look and fresh insight on the discussions and commitments.

The exposure to the media of the Forum and its ideas is of utmost importance to get the messages across, to raise awareness and to place water higher on the political agenda. The presence of politicians, ministries and public figures is essential for the media. Media coverage is on the other hand again important for politicians and ministers. From this perspective the desirability of a Ministerial Conference has to be evaluated as well.

<sup>5</sup> here we could work with the Inter Parliamentary Union and with the United Global Federation of Local Authorities which will be created in 2004.

## 2. Communications

### Press Relations

Overall media relations and press relations of the 3rd World Water Forum were organised by the Forum Secretariat in Tokyo and the World Water Council's Communication Team in Marseilles. Furthermore, the Forum Secretariat subcontracted several (PR) agencies to carry out the work:

- Hoffman & Hoffman Worldwide (Washington DC, USA) was responsible for global media relations and PR, the editing of official press releases during the Forum and the collection of press clippings on a global level
- Kyodo PR (Tokyo, Japan) was responsible for specific media relations and PR within Japan
- QUEST media (Istanbul, Turkey) was responsible for the production of a daily English-Japanese Forum newspaper – “The Water Forum Shimbun” in co-operation with the “Kyoto Shimbun”, the main newspaper of Kyoto, Japan
- The reporting service “International Institute for Sustainable Development IISD” (Montreal, Canada) was responsible for daily reporting on selected sessions
- Convention Linkage, Inc. (Tokyo, Japan) was responsible for the accreditation of (inter)national journalists and daily handling of the media centre including co-ordination of press conferences

The WWC additionally subcontracted “Michel Aublanc Conseils” (Paris, France):

- Michel Aublanc Conseils (Paris, France) was responsible for specific media relations with French-speaking media from France, Belgium, Switzerland, Francophone Africa and Quebec (Canada), translation of the official press releases into French and the collection of French press clippings

An important programme of activities for journalists had been launched during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, September 2002) in partnership with the World Bank Institute and the World Water Council, the “Water Media Network”. Funding was provided from the

governments of The Netherlands and Japan. The Water Media Network organised an international journalist competition (in English, Spanish and French) and more than 50 international journalists, the winners of the competition, received funding to attend and cover the Forum in Japan.

In addition, approximately 10 to 15 Asian journalists received funding from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in order to cover the Forum specifically in media based in Asia. The Secretariat of the 3rd World Water Forum also invited 10 journalists from developing countries. They ensured that journalists from non OECD countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia could make their way to Japan and produce articles, radio features and/or even TV pieces on water issues for the audiences in their home countries.

## Contributions from Hoffman & Hoffman (H&H) and Michel Aublanc Conseils

Already several months before the Forum H&H launched under the auspices of the Forum Secretariat a very successful public service announcement (PSA) on global water issues and the Forum on CNN International (212 countries and territories with 136 million households) and other CNN networks. The PSA helped to announce the Forum on a global level and to raise awareness on water issues.

Furthermore, H&H staff organised several major press briefings for foreign press before the Forum in Tokyo.

More than 1,200 journalists, TV, Radio, PR officers in total registered for the Forum. The main worldwide

wire services - Associated Press, Agence France Presse, Kyodo News Service, and Reuters - filed two to four stories per day. H&H estimates that at least 10,000 water stories were printed globally during the Forum. The agency

has collected more than 5,000 stories in ten countries with national clipping services.

In order to ensure maximum coverage of water issues and the Forum, the Forum Secretariat produced Japanese and English press kits and they were made available on the Internet. Also, in early March, a press briefing was organised for the Japanese media, which was attended by more than 100 journalists, and for international media, which was attended by about 40 international journalists residing in Japan. Also, in order to ensure coverage specifically in Francophone media, Michel Aublanc Conseils organised press briefings in late February 2003 between WWC scientists and specialised journalists, sent 200 press kits to French and Francophone media, posted the press kit on its website and organised a Press Conference in Paris to launch the "World Water Actions" report, which was attended by more than 50 journalists. During the 3rd World Water Forum itself, Michel Aublanc liaised from Paris with WWC staff in order to ensure smooth collaboration with Francophone journalists, who could not attend the Forum.

According to the analysis of the Forum's media

coverage, the international television and radio networks set out their broadcasts to practically every nation on earth. In addition, the international wire news services such as Associated Press, Kyoto News and EFE sent their stories to newspapers, radio and television stations, in their entirety, to nearly every nation as well. At least 10,000 articles were published worldwide on Forum activities, in addition to several thousand television and radio broadcasts (including both local and national stations).

Furthermore, according to Michel Aublanc "media coverage of the Forum in French media was very large and encouraging for the future despite the attention of the world's media on the political situation in Iraq. There were more than 350 articles published in French journals, 120 papers from Agence France Presse (AFP), almost 130 radio and TV stories, out of which 43% included interviews with members of the WWC."

*"At least 10,000 articles were published worldwide on Forum activities."*

### Main themes covered by press

Water and sanitation and the Millennium Development Goals were the main theme covered by the press according to an analysis by Hoffman & Hoffman. The chart below shows these and other main themes covered by the press.

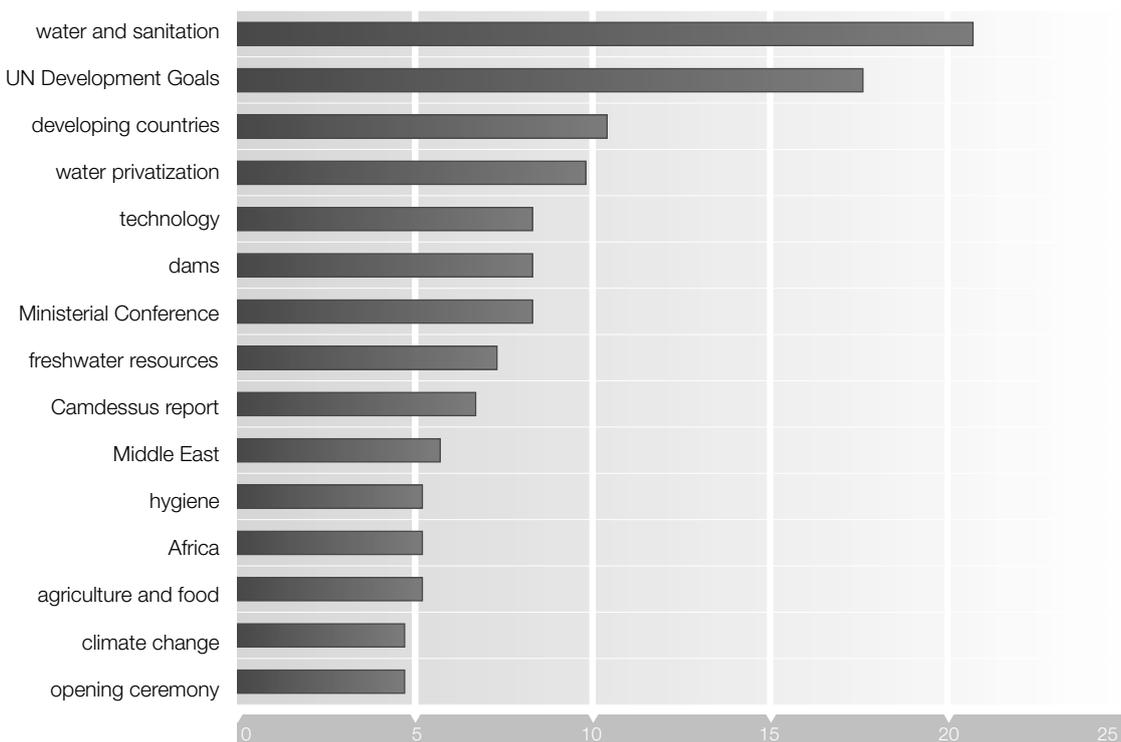
Of the major Forum reports mentioned in the 193 articles reviewed, 11.4% reported on World Water Actions, 11.9% reported on World Water Development Report, 11.9% on Financing Water for All (Camdessus Report), 0.5% on the Water and Climate Report.

### Main messages during and after the Forum

In terms of opinions and messages reported in the media, the following results were reported by H&H (results above 10%):

- 27% reported that the international community must take action.
- 17% reported that water is a human need.
- 13% reported on water conservation.
- 11.4% reported that water is a human right.
- 11% reported that new technologies and approaches are needed to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

Main themes covered by the press [% of articles published – Source Hoffman & Hoffman]



## Relations between media and participants during the Forum

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During the Forum, the large numbers of journalists could only make contact with “normal” Forum participants through informal channels. It would have been desirable for a draft list of participants to have been produced before the Forum, as it would have allowed participants and journalists to know who was present and could have helped journalists to identify potential interviewees of their country or region. However, due to the extraordinary number of participants attending the Forum, it was not possible to produce such a list.

In order to ensure maximum interaction between media and participants during the Forum, extensive press conference facilities and interview rooms were made available. During the Forum 136 press conferences were held. These provided the journalists the opportunity to contact the participants that they wished to interview. Additionally, each evening key Forum principals held a press briefing to brief the journalists on the major events of the day and the things to look out for the following day. As the Forum was held in multiple venues, the briefings were transmitted live to the press conference rooms in all the venues. In addition, breakfast meetings were arranged each morning for small group of journalists so that they could meet some key Forum principals and ask questions in a more off-the record atmosphere.

There were, however, comments made by journalists that it was difficult for them to establish contact with ministers and/or VIPs present at the Ministerial Conference. The journalists often had to use informal channels to interview ministers or other VIPs from their country.

## Relevance of daily reports and newspaper

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The Forum was covered for participants on-site by the reporting service IISD and journalists from Quest media, who produced a daily newspaper (English and Japanese) in co-operation with the “Kyoto Shimbun”, the main newspaper of Kyoto. While IISD’s reports were available both as print and web editions, the daily “Water Forum Shimbun” was distributed in big hotels of Kyoto and at the conference venue.

The Forum coverage through the special daily newspaper “Water Forum Shimbun” was a very good initiative and idea to be recommended for future Forums. The coverage (of the English section) could have been more investigative and cover new stories instead of reproducing many (old) stories.

IISD covers all major UN conferences; their work is very professional and gives an objective overview on session proceedings. IISD offered to establish a “Water-L” list-serve to allow all Forum participants and others to start communicating before the Forum. Unfortunately, this offer was only accepted as late as on the day before the Forum. “Water-L” has now existed since the Forum subscription is free of charge and subscriptions are on the increase.

### 3. Outcomes of the Forum

The Second World Water Forum in The Hague in 2000 generated a lot of debate on the Water Vision for the Future and the associated Framework for Action, dealing with the state and ownership of water resources, their development potential, management and financing models, and their impact on poverty, social cultural and economic development and the environment. The Ministerial Declaration identified meeting basic water needs, securing food supply, protecting ecosystems, sharing water resources, managing risks, valuing water and governing water wisely as the key challenges for our direct future.

The 3rd World Water Forum took the debate a step further also within the context of the new commitments of meeting the goals set forth at the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in New York (2000), the International Freshwater Conference in Bonn (2001) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (2002). The large number of participants ensured that a variety of stakeholders and opinions were represented aiming at accepting differences and finding a common way forward.

The purpose of this document is to take stock of the debates and the progress made on the understanding of water issues and the identification of new issues. Where do we stand after Kyoto, what are the outstanding issues where no consensus could be obtained and what are the issues that emerged and require more debate, investigation and research.

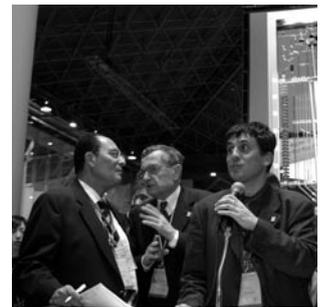
The structure of the chapter is as follows. First, an overview will be given of the status of issues and debates after the 2nd Forum. Then, an overview will be given of what activities and issues have been addressed in the period between The Hague and Kyoto followed by the issues debated and their outcomes during the 3rd Forum. The document concludes with the outstanding issues and what activities are proposed to resolve these or to continue their debate.

#### Where did we leave The Hague?

The key issues the 2nd Forum participants raised were privatisation, charging the full cost price for water services, rights to access and participation. (HRH Prince of Orange, F. Rijsberman, 2000). The aspects of globalisation and trade could be considered as emerging issues from The Hague.

#### Privatisation

The 2nd Forum made the notion that water is everybody's business accepted by the whole spectrum of participants and that it is not the exclusive business of governments and water professionals. Much less agreement was obtained on the model that should replace this government monopoly. What was clear is that nobody proposed that the government monopoly should be replaced by either a private monopoly, or that water resources should be privatised. Quite on the contrary, the Vision proposed and participants endorsed that water resources are a common heritage and should be treated as a common property resource.



#### Charging the full cost price for water services

That water resources are a common property resource does not imply that water services should be free of charge. The Vision emphasized the needs of users, through managers accountable to users or managed directly by the users themselves and that users should in fact be charged the full cost of the service – with appropriate subsidies made available to the poor and with recognition of the resources the poor do have: their labour. Many, though certainly not all, supported this recommendation of the Vision.

#### Right of access to water

The need to recognize explicitly access to drinking water and sanitation as a basic human right was crucial to most of the participants because water is not only considered essential for human health, it is also desperately needed by millions of poor women and men in rural areas for productive reasons: to

grow the family's food or to generate income. Rights to land and use of water are key determinants for people's potential to break out of the poverty trap. When rights are redistributed or new rights are assigned, this must be done on an equitable basis, recognizing the rights of women and men.

### Participation

Users not only have the right to have access to water services, but should also participate in decision-making on the management of resources. User participation has become an accepted principle but this should include the sharing of power: democratic participation of citizens in elaborating and implementing water policies and projects and in managing water resources. This should include the right of communities to develop their own projects

if they can do so without government intervention and without doing harm to up- or downstream communities and environment.

### Globalisation and private sector involvement

The concerns on globalisation and the true nature of private sector involvement were issues

that came up regularly in The Hague. A careful evaluation was proposed of all options, ranging from public, to public private partnership to privatised service provision should determine which option is most attractive given the local circumstances. Considerations should include participatory and transparent management and an appropriate representation of local communities.

*"In 2002 water has internationally been recognized as a human right through the United Nations Economic and Social Commission."*

## What happened after The Hague and towards Kyoto?

### International recognition of water as priority Issue and Water as Human Right

The Habitat Agenda (1996), the Millennium Summit (2000) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002) have underscored the importance of water for development and have set goals and targets for priority action. In 2002 water has internationally been recognized as a human right through the United Nations Economic and Social Commission. Though very much seen as a major step in the water and sustainable development agenda, it is surprising that this event has not received much attention nor generated much enthusiasm in the water community and during the Forum.

The UN General Assembly agreed in 2000 on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a set of eight goals for development and poverty eradication by 2015. Water related targets are to halve the proportion of people without access to sustainable drinking water (United Nations 2002) and halving the proportion of people who are hungry. The MDGs appeared a very powerful instrument for more positive and result-oriented international discussions and the development of policies.

### Building to improve Governance

In addressing the challenge of balancing increasing human requirements for adequate water supplies and improved sanitation with food production, energy and environmental needs, most countries will require more effective governance, improved capacity and adequate financing. Community level public participation is fundamental to achieving these goals.

The governance issue has become firmly established within the water community The Bonn Conference and World Summit in Johannesburg provided increased political awareness of water governance issues, and many partnerships have since been established or strengthened (involving public, private and civil society stakeholders). Dialogues on water governance have been held in over 30 countries. New national policies, strategies and laws for water resources development and management are being developed in a large number of countries, most often following

the principles of IWRM related to decentralization, integration and cost recovery. This has often led to restructuring of the institutional framework, including river and lake basin organisations, and empowered communities and water users associations.

Agreements have recently been reached on several shared rivers (Ganges, Incomati), and broader regional agreements further promote basin cooperation (SADC Water Protocol, EU Water Framework Directive). These and other long-standing structures illustrate how water can serve as a source for peace rather than conflict. In several of the world's most important basins, the international community is providing financial assistance and expertise to stimulate cooperation, such as the Nile Basin Initiative. However, many longstanding water related disputes still remain unresolved and the growing demand for finite freshwater resources heightens the risk of future conflicts developing.

### Building Bridges through Dialogues

Ecosystems are not only water users, but also and equally importantly water service providers. Environmental flows, with consideration to quantity, quality and timing, are an essential component of the catchment management approach. While the Second Forum acknowledged the conflict between environmental and human demands for water, the 3rd Forum debate became more accurate thanks to the production of studies on ecosystem water needs by IUCN, IWMI and Kassel University. The estimates of environmental water requirements in river basin range from 20 to 50% of the total renewable water resources. On average, at least 30% of the world's water resources have to be kept in the environment to maintain a fair condition of freshwater ecosystems worldwide. However, at least 1.4 billion people live in basins where current water use is already heavily drawing on the environmental water requirements. As the sum of environment and human needs are greater than the resources available, the need for a multi-stakeholder approach to make necessary choices on water allocation priorities is pressing.

Programmes such as the Dialogue on Water, Food and Environment and CGIAR's Challenge Programme on Water and Food have been established to develop and understand dialogue processes among stakeholders to bridge the gap between especially the food and environment sectors and to develop

mechanisms to increase the productivity of water for food and livelihoods in a manner that is environmentally sustainable and socially acceptable. Continuation of these programs is essential to initiate discussions, create dialogues and help making choices on water allocation.

The lake community reacted to its low profile in the 2nd World Water Forum and prepared actively for the 3rd Forum. The World Lake Vision was launched to provide a framework to address the management challenges facing lakes. The greatest challenge at hand is to translate vision into action at the individual lake level: this is the *raison d'être* of the Lake Basin Management Initiative.

### Generate more and better information and lessons

The discussions in The Hague were to a large extent based on broad consultations, theoretical exercises and incidental case studies. This generated the desire to develop more and better information of water availability and demands, best water management practices and their impacts on economy, society and environment. Various initiatives were taken or continued like the World Water Assessment Program, the GWP Toolbox, the knowledge base of the different Dialogues, Challenge Programme and the Assessment Programmes. Also the actions and state of development in different sectors were monitored and documented like the WSSCC monitoring programme and the World Water Actions Programme.

*“The estimates of environmental water requirements in river basin range from 20 to 50% of the total renewable water resources.”*

## What happened in Kyoto?

### Water as a Human Right

Water for basic needs is now officially a human right since the Economic and Social Council of the UN has agreed upon this (2002). But what does this mean in practice?

As long as countries do not integrate this into their constitutions, their legal frameworks and their policies, it does not affect or benefit people, especially the poorest. It was to the frustration of many participants that no agreement was found to incorporate this statement in the Ministerial Declaration. This issue was not greatly discussed in the Forum itself where it was more or less admitted that responsibility is now in the hands of politicians. However, the water

community should try to make proposals to the policy makers on how to implement this principle. This may be a task to take up towards the next Forum.

### Financing water infrastructure

*Panel on Financing Water Infrastructure*

Despite the link between water security, development and poverty alleviation, overall investment in water resources management has been seriously neglected. According to the Vision and other estimates, developing and transitional countries will require \$180 billion annually in order to produce global water security over the next 25 years. This will require greater efficiency, better financial management, and the creation of new models for combining public, donor, NGO and private funding. Just achieving the Millennium Development Goals on water supply and sanitation already requires connecting 400,000 people a day for the next 12 years. Such an effort can only be achieved if the full range of options, and foremost the local, low-cost ones, are to be used.

This topic was one of the hottest of the Forum, probably because there is an overall agreement on the need for a substantial increase in the resources allocated to water if we want to reach the MDGs. But also because the work of the Panel on Financing Water Infrastructures had been given a lot of exposure

and its results were to be announced during the Forum.

According to the Panel on Financing Water Infrastructure, the required increase in annual investment in the water sector is an impossible feat for governments alone. The development of other resources including through involvement of the private sector would be needed to fill the gaps. To enable enhanced water sector financing, the improvement of governance is a priority, as in many countries the sector is so exposed to "political and monetary risks" such as changes in legislation, currency fluctuations and sometimes unilateral, cancellation of contracts. The Panel made an impressive list of proposals addressing its recommendations to all actors. The panel recognized that there was still a clear lack of commitments from several actors in particular at state level. The panel clearly did not support the creation of new specific water funds but recommended that existing structures play their role.

Also reforms need to be made to the policies and operating practices of the Multilateral Financial Institutions such as the World Bank, regional development banks, and the institutions of the European Union in order to increase their support for water, in particular a response to decentralisation and associated consequences for public finance.

While the attention of the world is understandably on reducing deficits in household water and sanitation, which concern the poorest among us, the water sector is broader than this and has many other needs. Meeting the MDGs for poverty, hunger, health, etc will call for large additional financial flows in such areas as irrigation, water resources management, wastewater treatment, etc.

Critics of the report say that it should be more focused on the financial priorities for reaching the poor as a minute part of overall funding go to low-cost, water and sanitation projects and services focused on the poorest in rural and peri-urban areas, who form the bulk of those without access.

There was also a debate on the figures used by the panel ranging between 20 and 180 billion dollars! The total figure of 180 billion referred to in the report includes not only water supply and sanitation but also agriculture, pollution prevention etc, but this was often neglected in the debate. The most fundamental difficulty is that there are two visions of the future of water services: one of water services based on low

*"There is an overall agreement on the need for a substantial increase in the resources allocated to water if we want to reach the MDGs."*

cost technologies, relying on a strong involvement of communities in their management; and one of water services based on more “classical” technologies. The first type of low cost community-based water services has its origin in the experience of NGOs, often working in rural areas. The second rests on the experience of cities using classical approaches. It seems obvious that behind these two estimates, there are a lot of assumptions that need to be clarified.

It is important not to neglect this debate on the figures for the future. To be convincing, the water community should come up with a narrower range of values. Getting feedback and experience from various countries in order to better estimate financial needs to achieve various objectives is thus crucial. It will also be very important to distinguish new investments from O&M of existing systems, from rehabilitation of poorly efficient systems.

In terms of communication, the Panel (and its sponsors GWP, WWC and 3rd World Water Forum Secretariat) could have done better. Very little was published in the process of auditing the various situations around the world while a lot of good material was produced. Communication on the substance of the report has remained negligible except at the end. This may have been perceived as a lack of transparency in the work of this prestigious panel. Moreover the title given to the Panel (Financing Water Infrastructure) gave the impression that the focus was only on new infrastructures, whereas the management of existing ones was also addressed.

The rural areas and water and poverty related activities in these areas did not receive the attention of the Panel as the focus was mainly on urban areas and water and sanitation infrastructure. The different water management mechanisms and the role of communities and farmer organizations may shed a different light on the conclusions of the Panel. It is necessary to evaluate this important facet of the financing of water infrastructure and incorporate and present the findings in a next report.

#### *Cost Recovery*

Major progress is made in the cost recovery debate. Where-as in The Hague full price-cost recovery was advocated, the concept of sustainable cost recovery emerged in Kyoto. This implies that for the management of public goods like water, public support may be required because not always all

beneficiaries of water management interventions can be identified and solidarity mechanisms may impose subsidies to certain categories of consumers/beneficiaries. Participants acknowledged the general necessity for subsidies, and accepted it as long as the funding schemes provide to the operators (be they public or private) sufficient resources to operate and maintain the infrastructures.

The payment for environmental services is among the concepts that have gained acceptance since the Second World Water Forum. Several case studies showed that this approach is successfully implemented, and that wider geographical dissemination is required.

#### **Private sector participation**

Public-Private Partnerships remained one of the major items of discussion in Kyoto and important progress was made on the thinking on principles and their implementation. Real privatisation in the water sector would mean that ownership of water resources and pricing policies are in the hands of the private sector. This idea does not find support neither with the Forum nor with the World Water Council nor with the private sector itself! In this sense significant progress has been made since The Hague. However, the discussion in Kyoto highlighted the very sensitive relations between privatisation, globalisation and liberation of trade. Another issue was the possible conflict of interest in the management of water utilities and the management of water resources, the ownership of public resources like water, their management, the guiding principles on pricing policy and the ethical question of making profit on public services.

The position of the Council in this debate reflects the opinion of the large majority of participants, though there were also strong opposing arguments from some of the civil society groups on the fundamental issue of involvement of the private sector in water services. The Council states that (i) a wide range of solutions may be possible to successfully manage water utilities and that (ii) local authorities should be able to make their own choice taking into account their capacities and the wishes of their constituency. In any case, helping the local private sector to strengthen



its capacities is also critical for the development of their countries. There is also agreement that local communities or consumers need to be involved in the process.

What was clear is that nobody proposed that the government monopoly should be replaced by a private monopoly, or that water resources should be privatised.

In Kyoto, points that were of general agreement were:

- a. water services, as a public good, must remain in the public sector and all governments must commit to public sector delivery of water services.
- b. The policy of private sector involvement is a national one, and the international financing institutions should not pressurize governments to privatise utilities by making this a condition for loans and grants.
- c. The consideration that water services should be included in the GATS discussions creates a lot of concern as such services are of public nature. The full meaning of this and its consequences calls for deeper and more precise investigations and debate.
- d. Strengthen the role and capacity of local authorities that are in charge of more than 95% of water services in the world.

What is striking in the discussion is that it all focuses on private sector participation in water supply (and for a lesser extent to sanitation) probably because there is even less interest in private investment in public irrigation, flood control and eco-management schemes as returns on investment are fairly insecure compared to water supply (be it as owners, managers or contractors). However, an important privatisation is ongoing in the irrigation sector where management authority is being transferred on a large scale to farmers groups and water users associations. These are also privatisation actions, which are not included in the debate.

One of the commitments made during the Forum is that of the Dutch government who announced the launching of a dialogue on PPP. Although dialoguing is always useful, dialoguing and clarifying this debate requires a lot of energy and time. A lot has been done and published on this issue and the link between "privatisation" and globalisation is such that the productivity of such an official dialogue should be well

studied in advance. It must be noted that focusing on PPP means focusing on water utilities, which represent only a small percentage of the facilities.

### Governance

Governance was still one of the central issues during the 3rd World Water Forum. Nearly all themes produced recommendations for an improved legal and institutional context with more transparency and accountability.

For instance, the Panel on Financing Water Infrastructures expressed the view that strong, equitable and transparent legal and institutional systems are a prerequisite for the sustainable financing of water development. Similar statements were made in other themes regarding water allocation and ecosystem protection. Though many of the discussions were focused on water related governance, the issues are also valid for other sectors. However, the water sector is very sensitive to the quality of public governance and the associated risks for sector managers and financing institutions are consequently higher. The relative high levels of capital investment in water infrastructure and the associated financing mechanisms make the sensitivity even higher. Moreover, the changes in decision-making processes called for by the water community are far-reaching and often challenging the existing political systems (behavioural revolutions, not cosmetic modifications).

The need for capacity building for enhanced water management is unquestioned. Yet this critical element of the water development process is often treated as an add-on to programs, with scant regard to local capacity-building institutions, or to long-term commitment.

Governments are called upon to start or continue reforms of public water institutions, drawing on public-private cooperation, twinning, private know-how, and other options. They are also called upon to promote good governance in water management and service delivery, ensuring cost-efficiency, transparency and accountability through increased stakeholder participation and public, private partnerships. The donor community should commit an increased percentage of its funds to establishing better water governance systems. Extra support should be given to countries with sensible socio-economic policies to help implement laws and build administrative

capacity for efficient public institutions.

It is evident that governments, donors and NGO's should focus their attention on capacity building of the decentralised agencies in their new institutional context, so that they can work effectively in a participatory, people- and service-oriented approach with user groups, communities, and households. Central agencies also have to be transformed, so that they can take up their new roles and responsibilities.

### Role of Local Authorities

An issue that was also given clearer priority is that of the role of local authorities. It should be recalled here that local authorities are not mentioned at all in the action plan of the WSSD of Johannesburg. In this respect, Kyoto brought some progress. The role of local authorities is evoked in the Panel on Financing Water Infrastructures and also in the sessions on PPP (PSI) and appears clearly in the Ministerial Declaration.

Local authorities are critical for the future of water. Decentralisation has begun in many countries but capacity building at that level is very important. Indeed local authorities are those in charge of the establishment and in most cases of the management of water utilities. After the State level has provided a framework, they have to be efficient, decide and implement their policies.

Effective decentralisation remains however a big challenge for the near future. In many developing or emerging countries, the recommendation made by the Panel on Financing Water Infrastructure to develop lending at sub-sovereign level is not yet possible, because decentralisation has not yet gone that far.

### Dams

Infrastructures have been one of the key features of water management in developed countries. They have been constructed in a period where concerns about their impacts on societies and on the environment were less than today. It is therefore easy to understand why the debate on infrastructures generates extreme positions. On the one hand, it is clear that their role for development is critical in countries where they are not developed at all. Dams for instance are obviously more needed in countries facing great climatic heterogeneity i.e. in most developing countries. It should be pointed out

in this respect that the likely effects of climate change plead for increased storage of water. On the other hand, it is also clear that when looking at the balance between demand and supply-driven policies, the first type needs to be clearly strengthened because they have been too often neglected and because they provide more cost effective measures.

The 3rd World Water Forum considered the issues of water infrastructures from many points of view: financing, planning, operations, maintenance, environmental, economic and social impacts. Large dams constitute the most visible of these infrastructures. The Forum concurred with the importance of water storage for meeting the MDG for water supply, agriculture and poverty eradication as elucidated in the WSSD WEHAB papers. Being fully aware of both positive and negative impacts the

Forum endorsed measures to improve the decision making process related to the planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance of large dams and the call to increase the financial outlay to meet the needs of the world in general and developing countries in particular. The way forward is still a long one but a considerable progress was made. There was consensus among participants that dams should be considered as one of many infrastructural

elements in water resources development and as such should be developed in an economically, socially and environmentally just and sustainable way.

The debate on infrastructure is that of the balance between supply-driven and demand driven policies. As pointed out by various institutions (Blue Plan, World Bank), it is generally less expensive and more sustainable to invest in increased efficiencies of water systems. For instance Blue Plan estimates that in the Mediterranean region about 70km<sup>3</sup> out of 300 could be saved through demand management policies. Of course the benefits of demand driven policies are greater in cases of relative water scarcity.

*“There was consensus among participants that dams should be considered as one of many infrastructural elements in water resources development and as such should be developed in an economically, socially and environmentally just and sustainable way.”*

## Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)

The number of stakeholders included in different consultation processes continues to increase, but the decision-making process is often fuzzy and protracted, and decisions are frequently delayed or cancelled. Education on Integrated Water Resources Management needs to continue to be made available to all stakeholders. Greater attention should be given to water education in primary and secondary school, and higher-level water-sector education and training needs to be re-oriented towards IWRM.

IWRM was again a much-quoted principle. However, few sessions adopted the broad view required by an IWRM approach. The sectoral organization of themes, and the lack of interaction between some

themes—such as Agriculture and Nature—contributed to showing that there is still a long way to go before the different sectors proclaiming the need for IWRM, really collaborate on water issues.

IWRM is a process of political nature where different and often opposing water related interests are considered, balanced and

decided upon. Progress is certainly being made in IWRM in particular river basins or in particular countries. The importance, but also the difficulty of implementation of decentralization and stakeholder participation in water management are recognized and obtaining consent of all affected people as a selection of the stakeholders to be included in the decision making processes can be very difficult and controversial.

The Forum participants called again for preparation of IWRM plans by 2005 according to the implementation plan of WSSD. The Forum Summary Report considers that primary responsibility rests with governments to make water a priority. However, we should recognize that IWRM is not only about identification of interests and weighing up of these but also about making choices and decisions and especially the decision making process is the hardest and requires time, skill and acceptance of the decision making part of the process.

## Groundwater

Groundwater management is for sure one of the most difficult issues at the moment. Accelerated groundwater development over the past few decades has resulted in great social and economic benefits, by providing low-cost, drought-reliable and (mainly) high-quality water-supplies for urban areas, for the rural population and for irrigation of (potentially high-value) crops. However, investment in groundwater resource management has been seriously neglected.

In many countries, groundwater reserves are degraded by pollution and depleted in a non-sustainable way by overexploitation. In some areas the consequences are far from trivial – falling water-tables frustrating poverty alleviation, irrevocably salinised or polluted groundwater, serious land subsidence, and reduction of groundwater flow to sustain wetlands - but acceptable effective solutions to these problems are not readily available due to the inherent variability of groundwater systems and of related socio-economic situations.

Though for the first time addressed in a Forum as a specific theme, little overall progress has been made. It is always feasible, however, to make incremental improvements. Government agencies need to be enabled as ‘guardians of groundwater’ – working flexibly with local stakeholders as partners in resource administration, protection and monitoring, whilst also acting on broader water resource planning and management strategies.

The knowledge about groundwater resources and their management is still partial. A lot remains to be done to identify aquifers and to determine what could be their sustainable use. Both short- and long-term mechanisms to increase the economic productivity of groundwater use, whilst renegotiating and reallocating existing abstractions, will be important components of this overall strategy. Enhanced public awareness, improved scientific understanding and local capacity building are also key elements for improving groundwater management. This task should be among the priorities of many countries suffering or starting to suffer from water scarcity.

Time is of the essence. Many developing nations need to appreciate their social and economic dependency on groundwater, and to invest in strengthening institutional provisions and building institutional capacity for its improved management, before it is

*“IWRM is a process of political nature where different and often opposing water related interests are considered, balanced and decided upon.”*

too late and groundwater resources are irrevocably degraded.

The 'competent professional association', supported by its UN agency partners pledged to put much more effort into promoting constructive dialogue on groundwater policy issues and into disseminating international experience in best practice for aquifer management and protection.

Special efforts like specific monitoring would be welcome and it would be really worthwhile to adopt specific objectives (like MDGs) to reverse the current trends. The challenge will be whether such objectives could be worked out before the next Forum.

### Addressing the impact of climate variability and change

While there were not so many discussions concerning water-related risks up to the 2nd World Water Forum in 2000, meaningful discussions and significant statements were made at the 3rd World Water Forum in Japan. The themes, such as flood, water and climate specifically highlighted disaster issues. In addition, other themes also stressed the importance of disaster management: water and poverty; water and cities; science, technology and management panel; dams and sustainable development; water and information.

As a consequence, the risk management on water related disasters and climate change issues, which had not been fully recognized in water communities, are now firmly incorporated in discussions at the Forum. In response to the Forum discussions or through their preparatory activities, several tangible commitments were made, which include establishing a global network of organisations concerned with water and climate, launching the Global Flood Alert System Project, and initiating a Drought Network for South Asia. Up to now, funding for the activities on disaster preparedness and adaptation to climate change has been very limited. In this regard, creating a Special Climate Change Fund from 2005 committed by the Global Environment Facility is a favourable step, but still a much more immediate and comprehensive financial scheme is needed to enhance/ promote such activities.

As stated in the Forum Summary Report, prospects for economic and social development, poverty alleviation and environmental sustainability would be hindered when combined with increased vulnerability to water

related disasters. More significantly, the Ministerial Declaration highlights "the need for a comprehensive approach" including the structural and non-structural measures in considering the growing severity of the impact of floods and droughts, as well as putting importance on enhancing the sharing/ exchange of knowledge base and on encouraging the continuation of collaboration among relevant stakeholders.

At the Ministerial Conference of the 2nd World Water Forum countries were "encouraged to set feasible and quantifiable targets for reduction in water-related risks." However, few countries/ regions have been identified which have tried to create this kind of targets so far. Risk management is often not included in national water policies. Therefore, setting tangible targets on water related disasters, must encourage water and disaster managers to start first the vulnerability assessment in each country or region, to create the strategies and planning, and to further promote the implementation of preventive and preparatory disaster management measures seeking efficient legislative and financial endorsement.



### Emerging topics/issues

New topics were addressed in Kyoto, which shows a broadening of the scope of the Forum and the willingness of new actors to participate. These issues are water and transport, water and energy, water and culture, water and medicine, and water and parliamentarians.

Water and culture is something that has been little explored so far. The topic is of importance because it is well known that the way water is valued depends very much on cultural aspects. Also the legal & institutional frameworks developed in each country are or should be closely related to the culture, and so depend on local politics. In Kyoto, it seemed important that the cultural aspects of water management be identified and analysed in order to better match institutions and legal aspects with culture.

Water and Energy is also a theme that is very critical for our future. Interactions are at least of a double nature: water is used to produce energy and a lot of energy is used to transport water. A third aspect

is the increasing water withdrawals in developed countries linked to energy production. It is therefore very important to address these issues in our fora. Debate in Kyoto focused mainly on the first of these issues i.e. hydropower.

## Regional Sessions

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Regional sessions were organized during the 3rd Forum In Kyoto like in The Hague during the 2nd Forum where regional visions and action plans were presented. These regions are Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the Middle East and Mediterranean region.

### Africa

Africa is the region which has drawn most attention during the recent Forums for a multitude of reasons. It is also the continent where changes are being discussed at various levels.

Poverty was the main focus of the water discussions on Africa during the 2nd World Water Forum. Water is a critical factor in poverty alleviation and better coordination and co-operation between organisations at the national and international level was recommended, including trans-boundary waters. Good governance, the need for a regulatory authority within governments and private sector involvement in the water sector were main issues. The need for a 'think tank' for financing solutions to water problems was emphasised. The role of research and technology to increase agricultural production was stressed. Specific attention was given to risk management, especially related to floods and a target was set for the removal of 50% of the people in flood prone areas to safer places in 2025. Establishment of civil liability for pollution, gender, and debt relief were other issues discussed in The Hague:

Especially on the international coordination and financing important progress has been made since the 2nd Forum. With the NEPAD development agenda, and the willingness of its development and social partners to contribute to Africa's developmental efforts, many actions have been undertaken on international coordination issues like the formation of the Africa Ministerial Council on Water (AMCOW) to give political leadership and coordinate various water initiatives in Africa; the emergence of the Africa Water Task Force (AWTF); preparation of the NEPAD water programme based on the Africa Water Vision and Framework for Action for addressing the challenges of meeting the MDGs in Africa and the establishment of an Africa Water Facility for capacity building and investment support in Africa. This supply part of

the cooperation and coordination still needs to be complemented with an effective demand side from stakeholders and social partners at different levels in the various countries.

In Kyoto, poverty remained the key issue with as the main needed water actions: improved access to water and sanitation; sufficient water for productive purposes for food security and energy generation; better use of groundwater and rain water harvesting for domestic and agricultural uses; Integrated Water Resources Management in national and shared water basins; balancing water development and ecosystem water requirements; water-related disaster prevention, mitigation and management; empowerment and capacity building and financing the interventions required.

In this context specific initiatives that are being pursued are: efforts to position water high on the local and international development agendas by providing economic justification to facilitate mobilisation of domestic and external resources to undertake investments; strengthening existing River Basin Organisations promoting sub-regional cooperation, economic development and conflict management; setting up measures to ensure adequate environmental flows and to reduce and mitigate water-related disasters and; adoption of programmes targeted at vulnerable groups

The main recommendations in Kyoto related to the preparation of a common African regional water development and management strategy supported by capacity building and provision of adequate financial resources through the establishment and support of the African Water Facility to ensure the sustainability of investments necessary to achieve the MDGs / WSSD targets in partnerships between the public, communities, NGO's, civil society groupings and the private sector

### The Americas

With 40% of the freshwater resources in the world and 14% of the world population, the Americas are a privileged region. The countries in the region face a range of problems related to natural disasters, water management and water quality, the poor use of its hydro-electric potential, the degradation of its estuary and clean water ecosystems, the uneven development of its hydraulic infrastructure and the uneven application of innovative tools for water

management. The region has been subjected to significant structural changes and to reforms in its macro-economic policies due to globalisation and economic and commercial liberalization, which has inevitably had an impact on agriculture and on water management in general. Nevertheless, in general terms, the water sector continues to be highly regulated and subsidised, even if these subsidies need to be effective, differentiating between the needs of the poor and the communities.

In The Hague, the Americas Statement emphasised that water is an important resource for economic growth and development. Implementation of the goals outlined in the Ministerial Declaration would require the strengthening of institutional frameworks and capacity at the regional and national levels, the sharing of information and knowledge, and the transfer of technology. Concern was expressed about the appropriate mechanisms for the valuation and pricing of water, and the implications for equity and access to all. Risk assessment and management policies and programmes should be adopted to reduce the vulnerability and impacts of natural disasters in the region.

During the 2nd Forum, participants recommended that rational approaches for the valuing of water services be undertaken to determine an appropriate cost, while at the same time subsidies and other incentives be set up to assist those communities that are unable to pay for water services. The individual governments should address the unsustainable practices of industry, other sectors, and urban communities that impact negatively on water resources, including upstream and downstream effects. All stakeholders should be given an opportunity to participate in the decision-making processes regarding water resources conservation and management. Also the role of multilateral financial institutions and multinational co-operations in water resources conservation and management should be more carefully examined.

In a region with so many water resources, commercialisation has been pinpointed (and disputed) as one of the potential solutions enabled by the free commerce treaties, like the ones signed between Canada, the United States, and Mexico and the ones under consideration between North



America, Chile, and Central America. However, the ownership and local and national control of water remains an issue. Significant legal hazards have been underscored in the international commercial and investment agreements whose validity is placed above the National Laws and Constitutions, and that have to be taken very much into account by the countries when going into raw water and block water commerce. This could lead to extreme situations, to the prevalence of the right of foreign investors to the detriment of the local communities' rights.

With these considerations during the Day of the Americas in Kyoto it was recommended that transparency in the international and bilateral commercial agreements needed to be looked after insofar as their impact on the water ownership at the local and national levels is concerned. Also steps need to be taken towards the elimination of subsidies to agriculture in the developed countries. Other recommendations concerned effective decentralization, participatory governance and regulation of the services in water management; establishment of participatory and efficient systems for natural hazards management at the local and national levels; applying an ecosystem approach in river catchments, including environmental services that can be sold and meeting the financial needs in order to increase and improve the water sector infrastructure in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals.

### **Asia and the Pacific**

Water resources management will be an increasingly challenging task in Asia and the Pacific – the world's largest region in terms of land area and human population – due to the growth in both water demand and population. Even though the region accounts for about 36% of global runoff, water scarcity compounded by pollution is a key issue to be addressed for its sustainable future. Of all available freshwater resources in the region, agriculture consumes 86%, industry 8% and households for domestic use only 6%. Today, one in three Asians does not have access to a safe drinking water source within 200 meters of their home. One in two Asians does not have adequate sanitation facilities and 90% of people deprived of immediate access to water or sanitation live in rural areas. Furthermore the region is constantly subjected to drought, flooding and

pollution.

The key issues identified in The Hague were the need for national governments and regional donor agencies to revisit their priorities and support the needed water-sector reform that should create strong institutions, policy and law, enabling and ensuring peoples participation at all levels. These reforms need to go hand-in-hand with private sector partnership, which form needs to be flexible allowing proper maintenance of hydraulic infrastructure, under gradual introduction of full cost recovery. The need for regional and bilateral co-operation in shared rivers, based upon a basin-wide management approaches was identified.

In Kyoto participants confirmed their recommendations on governance and institutional development, capacity building and public awareness; strengthening of transparency in water resource management; active participation of water users and decentralization to ensure equitable access to water. Development of more and effective cooperative relationships in utilising trans-boundary water-resources and more focus on natural disasters and increased investments for flood and drought mitigation were also recommended. Provision of safe drinking water to all rural populations requires the development of water-related technologies matching the economic conditions and should be one of the most urgent policies to implement.

Recommendations bringing matters further comprised: demand management, pollution control and water allocation policies designed to maximize the socio-economic value of water and water pricing. High water stress countries should shift to higher-value, less water-intensive crops, and develop low-polluting agricultural industries to process more of the products, thus raising the value-added component of the output.

The countries are urged to give high priority to investment for wastewater treatment and reuse, implementing pollution monitoring policies.

### **Europe**

The pressure on the water resources caused by relatively high population density, the significant industrial activity, the intensive agricultural production and the large number of trans-boundary rivers are the particular challenges of water resources management in Europe. Chronic water shortages and water stress

characterize many of the regions of southern Europe and these problems will be aggravated in the future as a result of climate change. In recent years, the region has also suffered increasingly frequent and widespread floods: a phenomenon, which may also be linked to climate change. From the regulatory perspective, the challenge for the future is to develop an integrated approach, with the river basin being recognized as the basic unit of management. Appropriate mechanisms need to be developed for involving stakeholders and the general public in the decision making process. Local and grassroots initiatives can make a significant contribution towards the achievement of environmental goals. Additional instruments to reduce pollution and to reinforce the polluter pays principle are necessary in the context of trans-boundary river basins.

With regard to water and development, Europe contributes a significant proportion of the global aid budget. The management and protection of water resources features prominently in assistance programmes both in developing countries and transition economies. A major challenge is to ensure that actions and projects are coordinated effectively among donors and between donors and recipient countries. The effectiveness of the programmes should be strengthened and partnerships should be developed to generate the necessary level of investment.

In The Hague, Europe emphasized that in addition to the challenge of meeting basic needs, the European countries agreed that access to safe and sufficient water and sanitation should also be considered as a basic right. Awareness raising is needed at all levels on the importance of the protection of ecosystems for water production. A very cautious approach to food security for advocated together with the need for labelling genetically modified organisms. It was also recommended that sharing water resources should be based around a river basin approach where International agreements are implemented with an exchange of information and relevant data for mutual trust for trans-boundary cooperation. The European countries proposed a liability regime as an economic instrument for disaster prevention and mitigation.

Since the 2nd Water Forum in The Hague, various actions have been undertaken. The EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) came into being at the end 2000. It will be implemented across the

EU and in trans-boundary river basins such as the Rhine and the Danube. In 2002, the EU launched its water initiative (EUWI) aiming to implement projects in 2004 and beyond. Under the EUWI, the EU has reached two formal, strategic agreements, one with African countries and the other with 12 countries from Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia on long-term strategic partnerships. Similar approaches are being developed with other regions, notably the Mediterranean and Latin America. The UNECE-Protocol on civil liability and compensation for damage caused by the trans-boundary effects of industrial accidents on trans-boundary waters was adopted in May 2003.

Also international scientific and technological cooperation on water related issues is being broadened with developing countries and countries in transition in the context of the 6th Research Framework Programme (2002-2006).

New recommendations and commitments in Kyoto comprised improvement of co-ordination and co-operation moving towards sector wide approaches, establishment of multi-stakeholder processes to reinforce partnerships for action, promotion of south-south collaboration and cooperation and better water governance arrangements enabling stronger partnerships between public and private sectors and local stakeholders.

### Middle East and the Mediterranean

Water resource management issues in the Middle East and Mediterranean Region are among the most critical of any region in the world due to limited availability, high population growth and increased urban and rural water use. In many parts of the region, dwindling water resources are threatening people's livelihood, the environment, and economic growth. Intermittent supply is common in many cities and agricultural water supply faces the challenge of competing demands for water.

At the 2nd World Water Forum, development of regional strategies was recommended for managing both groundwater and surface water resources, and to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of water use by recycling waste water, reducing pollution,



increasing water availability, desalination and using science and technology to increase the productivity and reducing wastage of water in agriculture, industry and all other uses.

Knowledge of these technologies was limited in some of the countries in the region. Therefore, pilot projects were implemented in several countries on demand management, recycling of wastewater and desalination. The need to attract international funding for the substantial investments that will be required to realise the potential contribution of these technologies to improved water use is critical.

The Kyoto discussions focused on the question from water scarcity to water security, which is achievable only through major reforms in the management of water resources. Some countries have made significant progress with reforms to meet their water challenges and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, while others are at early stages of the reform agenda. Water reform requires capacity building and empowerment of the public and private sectors as well as community organizations to realise and fulfil their roles.

Governments were committed to promoting a reform agenda that should at least contain the following four key strategic actions: (i) Adopting an Integrated Water Resources Management framework for planning and management of water resources in the country; (ii) Promoting efficient use of water through technical instruments and economic incentives, including appropriate pricing and cost recovery mechanisms; (iii) Mobilizing stakeholders to advance participatory and decentralised approaches and public-private-partnership; and (iv) Promoting regional and international partnerships to foster technical and financial cooperation on water issues.

There is a need to support the countries' reform agenda, which calls for concerted and sustained effort among governments, stakeholders, local communities, and partner organizations. Partnership activities should be strengthened among the countries of the region (i) to deepen the understanding of common water challenges, (ii) to enhance knowledge and information sharing between the countries and the partners, and (iii) to provide systematic support for strategy formulation and capacity building for governments, institutions, and civil society organizations. The recommendations of the report of the World Panel on Financing Water Infrastructure will

be adapted to the regional situation.

In general, the regional meetings confirmed their usefulness through the many specific conditions but also insights into development and water management that vary regionally. Despite these many regional specificities and the availability of local capability on problem resolution, international support is still required especially for political commitment and policy development relating to prioritising water on the political agenda, global issues such as financing, world trade and market access, trans-boundary water issues, effects of climate variability and climate change and exchange of and access to knowledge.

### Where do we go from here?

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#### Translating water as a human right and the MDGs into national development targets and programmes

Water has internationally been recognized as a human right through the United Nations Economic and Social Commission. While participants acknowledged that, they called upon the Ministerial Conference for its inclusion in the Ministerial Declaration. However, no mention of water as a human right was made in the Ministerial Declaration. While a United Nations body has formally recognized the right, this recommendation has no legal consequences for countries and there is still reluctance to go further.

The difficulty to reach the MDGs and to motivate all decision-makers towards these targets made the need to monitor progress apparent as monitoring was one of the major topics addressed, for example in the Water and Poverty theme, in the Camdessus report, in speeches by President Chirac and by several ministers. However, preparing plans, arranging financing, providing assistance to meet these goals and the consequent monitoring have to be done at the country level. This calls for an explicit translation of the global MDGs to country level targets and country programmes. The world water community and the UN-CSD should call for such efforts because the chances that the MDGs will be achieved will only be smaller without concrete target and programme formulation.

#### Develop Linkages in Monitoring

It is obvious from this report that we cannot present

the exact and complete data and figures of what has been going on since The Hague. Monitoring systems at present are not focused towards achievement of development goals and successful water management interventions. The need for monitoring progress on the achievement of the MDGs, was stressed at the Forum but monitoring and indicator setting should not pump too many resources from the limited sector funding. The UN system launched the first edition of the World Water Development Report, and announced that on top of existing processes within the World Water Assessment Programme new initiatives will aim to produce national or regional Development Reports, starting with an African Water Development Report to be produced by the end of 2003 under UN-ECA leadership. The World Water Council committed to launching a follow-up to this report and the associated database, taking into account suggestions made by participants on the current work, and in coordination with other major monitoring initiatives so as to optimize efforts.

### **Recognizing water's many values and the benefits of sound water management**

Sustainable development is built on economic, social and environmental pillars. Until now, in investment and management decisions usually only the economic values of water development have been taken into account but the other components are often undervalued or even ignored unless there is a very specific purpose.

A better overview and quantified arguments are needed to convince decision-makers of the many values of water and the overall benefits gained from water, better water management and water investments. The World Water Council is taking initiatives to contribute in cooperation with all interested organizations to the creation of a better understanding of all tangible and intangible, direct and indirect water benefits, and the provision of methodologies and the associated development of tools to include these benefits in planning, economic analysis and decision making processes. Valuation of ecosystem services, wetland economic valuation and linkage to river basin management must provide improved insights in the ecological benefits.

The direct values of water are usually recognised but the translation of this recognition into the required behaviour of society and governments needs to

be improved. Awareness raising and education campaigns to achieve a better understanding of benefits and to translate these into appropriate behaviour have to be developed and institutionalised. The ongoing Dialogues on Water, Food and Environment and the Dialogue on Water and Climate are important to the development of new water ethics. Culture as one of the important fundamentals of water resources management must be fully taken into account in the development and management phases of water systems. Water solutions should combine local culture and traditional knowledge with modern technology and management. They need to be complemented by initiatives like the Water Education Programme for African Cities of UN-Habitat, aimed at bringing about positive attitude changes among both water consumers and providers and developing a new water-use ethic in society.

### **Stimulate financing and investment in water infrastructure**

Governments translate water laws, strategies, and plans into realistic budget estimates and financing plans for water in all WEHAB sectors. Governments and local authorities take adequate measures to reduce risk and improve cost recovery, necessary to encourage investment. Primary responsibility for such investments rests with national governments. Donors stand by commitments to increase aid for water.

International agencies and multilateral and bilateral donors give priority in allocating support to countries that are establishing strategies for integrating and coordinating water issues for all water-related sectors and that are increasing investments based on sound planning. Governments and donors give particular attention in their investment strategies to pro-poor, affordable and appropriate technologies and approaches. Governments, donors and the private sector will develop a range of public financial instruments, accessible to local water managers for the development and management of infrastructure that provide water to the poor at an affordable cost.

*“A better overview and quantified arguments are needed to convince decision-makers of the many values of water and the overall benefits gained from water, better water management and water investments.”*

### **Clarify potential of Public Private Partnerships and strengthen the role and capacity of local authorities for their management and regulation**

It is the position of the Council that community organisations, non-governmental organisations, private and public sectors, local administrations, and national governments should work in partnership for the best in water management—because water is everybody's business. Optimum use should be made of the options available. Governments will prepare the required regulation (for both public and private organisations), facilitate operation in an accountable and transparent way under public oversight and ensure that water services are provided to the poor at an affordable cost. Partners cooperate in

developing and using new instruments to mitigate risks and reduce overhead cost of which objective benchmarking and performance monitoring systems are an integral part.

The Government of the Netherlands has committed itself to supporting Dialogues for PPPs. What will be necessary is the development of a governance capability to regulate the private sector

involvement in the public sector in general and water in particular. Also investigations are necessary to find out to what extent strengthening of the public sector can be a suitable first option. Capacity building of local authorities will in any case be essential to develop the necessary capability for management and regulation of public and public-private water services. Case studies and real life experiences will have to be inventorised, synthesised, documented and disseminated to learn the lessons of public-private partnerships and make these available to the public at large and decision makers for a better understanding in the dialogues proposed.

### **Promote the development of comprehensive approaches to manage water more efficiently**

Increasing water use efficiency and improving demand management are essential. But these alone may not be sufficient to meet the growing demand

for water in most developing regions and particularly in urban areas. All options to augment the available water supply, including increased storage, must be considered. A comprehensive approach is required on demand and supply management especially related to water for food production. This would include promotion of practices on supplementary irrigation and water harvesting and a wider adoption of good practice is required in order to avoid unnecessary environmental and social costs, risks and delays of the past. This also includes the option of food imports to save water. On the demand side the possibility of making conscious choices on import and export of food products should be incorporated in the water management policies of each country. Trade of food products (or Virtual Water Trade) and its consequences on equity, poverty, water resources, environment, and geo-political conditions on local, national and regional level should be better understood. Development of case studies on these different levels is essential, also as an input in the discussions on the effect of GATT and GATS on development in general and poverty, water resources and the environment in particular.

For example, accelerated groundwater development over the past few decades has resulted in great social and economic benefits. But excessive resource development, uncontrolled urban and industrial discharges, and agricultural intensification have caused widespread degradation of surface waters and aquifers, in turn hindering economic and social development, poverty alleviation and sustain ability of ecosystems.

### **Have a better understanding of the effects of trade liberalization and inclusion of water services in GATS on poverty, environment and development and formulate actions to mitigate adverse effects**

The next round of World Trade Organisation negotiations takes into account the impact of water resources availability on countries' trading positions, food security and development programmes respecting the right to food sovereignty of these countries. OECD reviews consensus rules on export credit.

The theme on governance at the 3rd Forum recommended that care be taken to consider external influences such as international (trade)

*“Capacity building of local authorities will in any case be essential to develop the necessary capability for management and regulation of public and public-private water services.”*

agreements on water management at the country level. No further recommendations were issued, but Civil Society Groups committed to lobby for exclusion of water from GATS and other trade agreements. In this context it will be essential for the Council to develop a position on the globalisation of trade of agricultural products, the free trade arrangements with their impact on poverty, water, agriculture, rural development and environment, and the effect of water services becoming part of the GATS agreement. At present these issues have not been well addressed but for achieving the MDGs related to poverty, water supply and sanitation and hunger these need to be better understood so that appropriate action can be undertaken to mitigate adverse effects.

### **Develop and activate alliances, partnerships, networking, participation and dialogue**

Governments, civil society and industry should be encouraged to develop ways of collaborating, combining their strengths and skills with those of others, creating a new ethic of responsible water-use in society through advocacy, information sharing and education. This can only succeed if governments are clear on their strategies and priorities for the water sector, and plan accordingly. Donors, NGOs, IFIs, companies and others will assist, but there has to be real political "ownership" from host governments as a precondition.

Local people, authorities, government representatives, the research community, farmers, industries, women and minority groups are fully involved in the development of basin and aquifer strategies, agreements and institutions. Stakeholder representatives and local authorities are given a permanent and official role in decision-making and implementation.

The water-related knowledge, practices and rights of communities in all cultural contexts and their contributions are recognised and better integrated in water management and environmental stewardship. Private companies can contribute to achieving the MDGs by twinning and other kinds of help with capacity building. This also links with the need for partnerships in the North. During the Forum, the Memorandum of Understanding for "Partnerships for Experience Exchange Enhancing the Northern Dimension – Linking to the South" was signed by the World Water Council, Global Water Partnership and

the National Steering Committee of the 3rd World Water Forum in order to further develop the N-N partnerships.

### **Strengthening international cooperation in trans-boundary waters**

The idea that water has more potential for cooperation than for conflict, already promoted at the 2nd World Water Forum, was emphasized again and drew much attention from the media, now reaching a broader public. The emphasis was put again on the needs to:

- Change the focus from sharing water to redistributing shared benefits at the national level, including poverty reduction;
- Respect the integrity of transboundary ecosystems;
- Increase stakeholder participation and capacity building, including training of mediators
- Increase, adapt and coordinate funding of activities related to internationally shared water bodies.

Initial money is needed to create institutions and build capacity so that countries start managing trans-boundary waters for the benefit of their socio-economic development and protection of the ecosystems.

The proposed Water Cooperation Facility is a UNESCO/World Water Council initiative. The Facility will on request collectively provide distinct and complementary services to aid trans-boundary water governance: it will provide the necessary resources, the favourable environment, political backing, professional support and judiciary mechanisms for the anticipation, prevention and resolution of water conflicts and above all for building consensus around the use of shared water resources.

Preventing conflicts through cooperation on trans-boundary waters was especially addressed in the Water for Peace theme, but was also discussed in the Parliamentarians meeting organised by Globe (Global Legislators Organization for a Balanced Environment). In both cases, the lack of ratification of the UN Convention on the Navigational Uses of International Watercourses was deplored. Parliamentarians pledged to work with their governments to change the situation and to develop a United Nations Water Charter to reaffirm the importance of water resources and secure their sustainability.

## 4. Lessons, Perspectives and Recommendations

### Lessons

The Forum is and should remain an essential tool of the Council for the achievement of its mission: raise awareness and place water higher on the political agenda.

On our path to sustainable management of our freshwater resources, Kyoto is obviously an important step in the construction of a global awareness of freshwater issues. Water has clearly become one of the important topics of the political agenda. Johannesburg had been a good indicator of this and the recent G8 summit has also confirmed it.

The debate in the many sessions of the 3rd Forum

was good and open. There had never been a possibility to have such a large debate and in a rather constructive way in most cases. The fact that everybody could propose a session and be accepted played an important role.

Many participants noticed a significant evolution since the Hague

in the quality of the debate. The reason for this is that a common language and a common understanding of many issues is progressively emerging. Thus there is less need to talk to understand each other and this provides a good basis to initiate concrete action. For several participants, this result alone would justify the need of the Forum

The complementary actions in the preparation stage of the Forum as applied for Kyoto through the Virtual Water Forum, Water Voices and Water Actions have not only raised the awareness of ordinary people on water issues but shown their potential of providing a good input to the Forum itself. However, it required more facilitation to allow for the development of recommendations and actions. It also required more interaction with other preparatory activities to benefit from their complementarity. Moreover, a thorough analysis and reporting is required showing clear messages, conclusions and recommendations that feed in to the processes, debates and recommendations of the Forum itself.

The challenge for future organisers of the World Water Forums is how they can maintain advantage

of the Forum, such as multi-stakeholder involvement and image of an open citizen's Forum, vis-a-vis other official water conferences such as those of UN, while promoting concrete actions and commitments at the field level. Ways to ensure appropriate balance between mass-involvement and management of discussion to focus topics have to be carefully designed to maximize the function and the unique nature of the World Water Forum. It should be noted that the greatest achievement of the World Water Forum so far has been successfully raising awareness of the international community, governments and NGOs alike, on global water issues. Now we have reached the stage where the problem-identifying debates of the previous Forums have to become more focused on commitments and action to resolve these problems. We now know more or less what the problems are and what should be done. The challenge is to get it done and this should be the focus of the next Forum

The regional meetings confirmed their usefulness through the many specific conditions but also insights into development and water management that vary regionally. Despite these many regional specificities and the availability of local capability on problem resolution, international support is still required especially for political commitment and policy development relating to prioritising water on the political agenda, global issues such as financing, food trade and access to markets, trans-boundary water issues, effects of climate variability and climate change and exchange and access to knowledge.

From the onset of the Forum preparation a clear strategy and methodology should be devised to synthesise the inputs provided in these preparatory activities, involving politicians and local authorities and to enable effective incorporation of the results into the Forum debates and into the Ministerial Conference.

Looking ahead we have to rethink continually the role, purpose and structure of the Forum, its frequency and the way it is organised. In considering alternatives we have to look at what we have had, what were the Forum's strengths in light of the political social atmosphere, and what it is envisaged the Forum should provide.

*“A common language and a common understanding of many issues is progressively emerging.”*

## Building on what has been achieved

After the 3rd, the World Water Forum has become the internationally recognised global platform for the water sector to link with politicians, policy, decision makers and donors and financing institutions. These links have to be strengthened by associating politicians and decision makers already in an early stage with decisions on themes, topics and issues to be addressed. This should start at a local level and develop to regional and global level. The regional meetings as proposed by the Government of Japan through the secretariat of the third Forum could be a first step in this direction.

The Forums have set in motion a process of global participation where issues may be discussed and developed. These processes have to become an inseparable part of the Forum where more and more grass-roots needs, aspirations, experiences and lessons can be scaled-up to a representative regional level. Regional meetings in the process towards the Forum clearly provide continuity to water actions but also allow lessons to be learned and incorporated in due course in the discussions at local, regional and global level. The regional days during the Forum showed the specificity of the regions, their problems and approaches to facing the water crisis. The importance of these regional days should lie in linking the regions to the global water community, comparing issues, experiences and approaches and discussing regional perspectives to global issues like trade, subsidies and financing but also climate variability and change, access to and exchange of information, knowledge and technology. These and the political linkages should be addressed at the Forum.

Inventiveness and flexibility are two sources of strength of the World Water Forum. Compared with other more official international conferences, organisers can relatively freely tailor the Forum process in a way that matches society's needs at that time. As seen in the 3rd World Water Forum, innovative projects such as WWF, WVP and WAU have not only kept people's attention on the Forum process but motivated people to actively participate in the Forum itself.

The Forum is a place where different sectors and actors meet. This unique opportunity should remain at the heart of the Forum. This means that the Forum sessions should be multi-disciplinary,

multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral. However, programmes should not become overloaded with meetings and sessions of specific scientific nature or specific organisations preaching to their own parish. The number of themes and topics should be conducive to optimise the quality and acceptability of the output taking also into account the financial limitation of the host country in organising the Forum and its preparatory processes. To enable inclusiveness and comprehensiveness, the process of defining and selecting the themes of these sessions should be done in a consultative and transparent way. Ideally, the Council and the host country would consult each other to take responsibility for this process.

## Linking with other Global Initiatives

Also due to the success of the World Water Forums, water has become an important point on the international development agenda. The CSD and MDG initiatives have a heavy water agenda and the Forum should link with these programmes in terms of agenda setting, advocacy, policy development but also in joining efforts in organizing regional or global meetings and using the opportunities for sharing for example Ministerial Conferences.

The regional activities of various programmes could also be linked like for example the AMCOW and NEPAD activities in Africa. Institutional linkages with these processes are currently being developed. As the World Water Forum is an indispensable tool for global water discussion, the strengthening of the link between the Forum and other international water policy agreement processes should continue. The regional networks of GWP could be very useful and instrumental in the scaling up processes towards the global Forum. These possibilities have to be explored and programmes have to be developed.

*“This means that the Forum sessions should be multi-disciplinary, multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral.”*

## Possible scenarios for future Forums

The Forum could take different shapes for different purposes. It could:

- provide an open multi-sector, multi-stakeholder platform for dialogue and debate;
- provide a working space where actions and concrete projects are prepared;
- prepare resolutions and concrete projects that are submitted and discussed by representatives of governments

Could we imagine new ways to conduct the Forum? For instance could we establish working groups that hold working sessions on projects and resolutions? Or should we stick to the format already experienced?

How can we ensure the interlinking between the Ministerial Conference and Forum? Could this be a joint venture with UN-water for instance? (It seems indeed that the legitimacy of the UN is and will remain greater than ours in this respect). In any case, this is one of the key points to be discussed with the organisers of the next Forum.

Preparatory technical work could be presented at separate meetings, mostly sponsored by the Council's

members, between Forums.

The Forum and its related expenditures are often criticized. It seems that many agree that the next Forum needs to be downsized, but at the same time many agree that the openness of the 3rd Forum was very positive. We have to recognize that it is a challenge to be at the same time very open and action-oriented. How can we manage this? If we keep the frequency of the Forum at every three years, it is likely that a lot of energy and resources will be used for it (not only by us!), and that it may be difficult to come up with new ideas every three years. Some solutions to this could be:

- to rely more on regional water fora (quite a few were organised to prepare the 3rd one) which could be very open but also more clearly organised in partnership with the Council; and have world water fora with a more action and commitment oriented perspective; this solution could provide a solution to the dilemma of a Forum that is both open and action-oriented;

- to alternate between open Forums and more focused ones

It may be difficult and unwise to try to control the size now that the precedent has been established. As noted, many regional and thematic (e.g. Dialogue Water and Climate) preparatory meetings were held. They were all clearly identified as preparatory for the Forum. In this case, it was also clear that they could suggest whatever subjects they thought were important for discussion in the Forum. Not enough emphasis was placed at that stage on policy aspects and the necessity to propose actions

The following features should shape the Forum in the future.

A first one is clearly to be more "action oriented". The urgency of many situations in the water sector obviously does not require much more rhetoric. Action and action plans are needed. For this purpose the preparation and conduct of the Forum (and its link to the Ministerial Conference) need to be revised.

But in any case, one clear criterion needs to be applied to future Forums: sessions organised should be "policy-oriented". Hundreds of conferences are organised every year by the numerous water organisations. In our Forum, we should try to avoid any duplication with these conferences and consequently, the sessions in the Forum should have another component, which is policy.

Another option that could be considered would be to open the water community to other sectors: once the water community has been strengthened, it becomes possible to build interactions such as between water policies and trade, health, agriculture, soil conservation or energy policies.

## Role of the Council

The role of the Council as owner and co-organiser of the World Water Forum is becoming more clear, more obvious and more sensible. The Council has become the entity that is very much instrumental in identifying and defining issues to be put on the international water policy agenda. The Council is also instrumental in formulating follow-up and providing input as continuation into the next Forum. Moreover, the Council is becoming more and more the corporate memory on Forum organization and implementation. Therefore the role of the Council relative to the



organization of the World Water Forums have to be considered in the light of:

- the Council as the owner of the World Water Forum
- the World Water Forum as a triennial event and a moment in a continuous process of water policy development and action implementation.
- the Council as safeguard of the continuity of attention for water in political agenda's and consistency of the Forum series related to these programmes
- the Council as the collective memory of Forum organisation and implementation experiences

## Timeline and process

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The process of organization of the Forum is estimated to effectively take 2.5 years. With the results of the previous Forum being fed back into the local and regional discussion and policy-making platforms, new issues can be identified and proposals for themes for the next Forum can be made. The GWP regional meetings could be a mechanism for this scaling up process that will go beyond IWRM. With the results of these consultations in hand, a global pre-Forum meeting could be organized 2 years before the Forum to prioritise the issues and define the themes for the next Forum. Based on these selected themes that have gone through a transparent participatory process, 1-1.5 year action programmes in regions, according themes and if necessary specialized panels can be initiated to prepare for the input of the Forum in accordance with the themes agreed. This process should be well documented as their output will be the main debate during the Forum and will constitute the core of the Forum output.

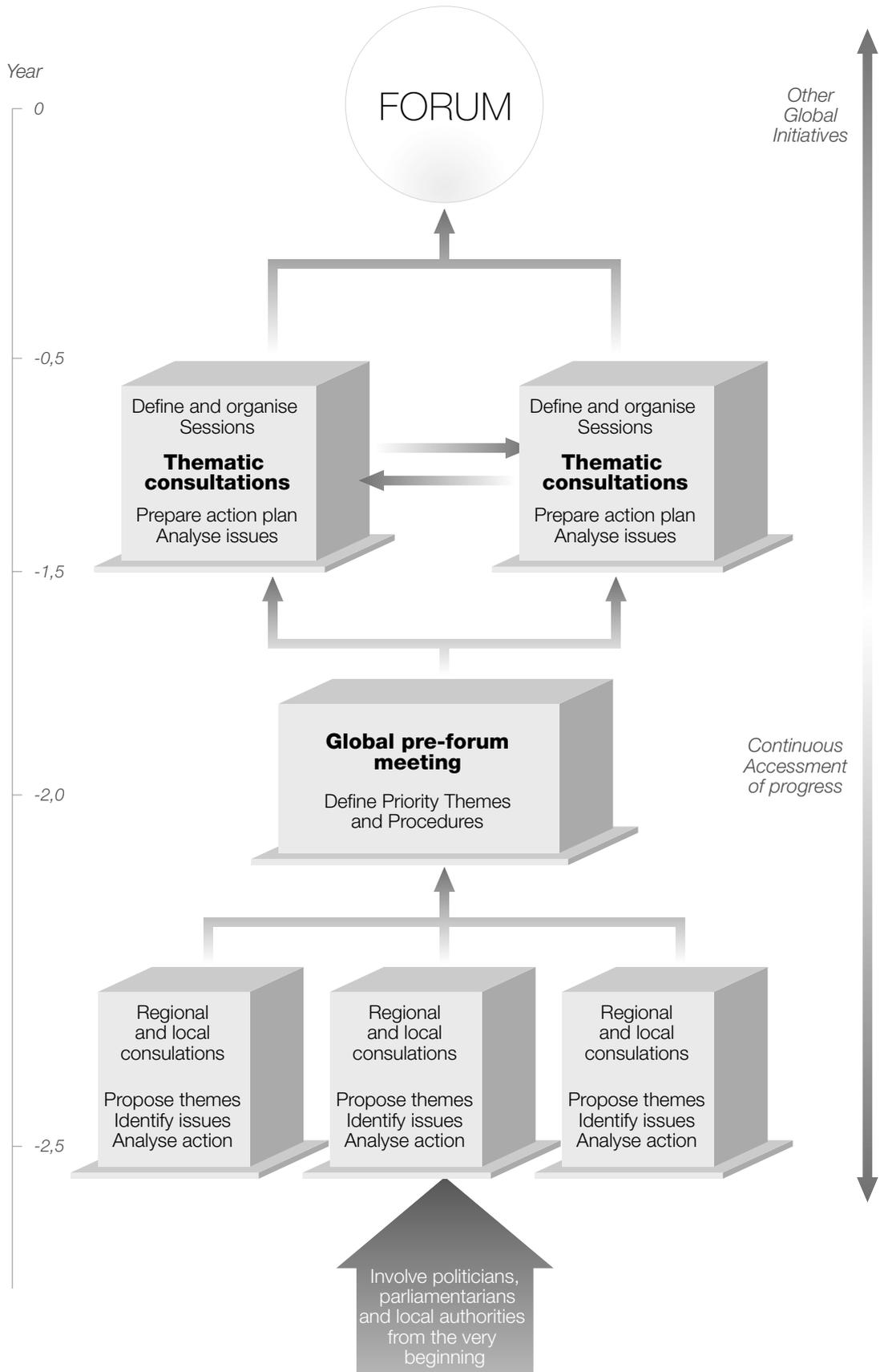
Regional meetings deserve more attention in the process towards the Forum. It may not be tactically wise for issues that can be discussed at regional meetings to be directly brought into the global meeting. They should be presented either in the context of global issues that need global attention and synthesized experience for information exchange or for the purpose of sharing experiences with other regions.

To have a meaningful and successful Ministerial Conference, it is essential that local authorities and parliamentarians are actively involved in the

preparation of the Forum from the very beginning. In this way the priority issues and the themes as formulated for the Forum can find their way in time in the political agenda's allowing politicians and governments to formulate their position and fine-tune these with their colleagues from other countries. Openness should allow for accommodation of new emerging issues beyond the agreed themes. Satellite thematic programs around the core of the Forum should provide a platform for those occasions.

*“To have a meaningful and successful Ministerial Conference, it is essential that local authorities and parliamentarians are actively involved in the preparation of the Forum.”*

# Scaling up process towards the Forum



## Post-scriptum

The 3rd World Water Forum was an important milestone for the entire water community. It marked the apex of a decade long process of awareness raising and development of mutual understanding and shared perceptions. This process has helped the development of a global water movement and has placed water high on the global political agenda.

Having taken this first step, the development of action and its implementation has now become a major challenge. The water community has to continue to grow to maintain water as a priority on the political agenda. The water community itself will grow by including many stakeholders and actors that more and more are being recognized as indispensable in the water policy processes such as politicians, parliamentarians, and local authorities. It therefore has to continue and even intensify the interaction between stakeholders making use of the available discussion platforms made feeding them with new experiences, ideas and approaches.

The awareness generated amongst the water community has also helped it to realize that the interaction with other sectors becoming more and more important. The development of interactions and linking of policies between the water sector and other sectors such as energy, health and soil conservation will become the next major challenge for this water movement.

These new challenges will become the focus of the coming forums and requires a more inclusive and active support of the whole water community and other professional and sectoral communities for the benefit of all.





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