



PRESS RELEASE

Results of the 4th World Water Forum unveiled in Stockholm

**Press Briefing
Monday, August 21, 15:00 – 15:30
Room 206**

- ***Launch of the Final Report and Synthesis Report***
- ***More than 27,000 participants gathered in Mexico***
- ***Focus on local actors for implementing new ideas and new perspectives in international water debates***

Stockholm, Sweden, August 21, 2006 - "Water is a political issue. It is a tremendous vehicle for enhancing democracy, public participation and for empowering local stakeholders. The overall management of water must be and remain in the hands of elected people and of those in charge of public decisions. When politicians disregard their responsibilities over water, water becomes at risk."

This is one of the conclusions of the 4th World Water Forum, which was held in March 2006 in Mexico and was attended by over 27,000 people from over 150 countries. Five months later, the World Water Council and the Secretariat of the 4th World Water Forum are releasing the Final Report and the Synthesis during the World Water Week in Stockholm.

For the first time, the political process designed for the Forum also brought together local authorities and governments, and parliamentarians, in addition to ministers. They all sat around the same table, initiating a new form of dialogue.

"Beyond the reports and declarations, there was a clear willingness to favor action in the Forum week and Preparatory Process", declared Loïc Fauchon, President of the World Water Council, strengthening the importance of a big amount of pertinent, innovative and particularly promising local actions presented in Mexico.

"Local Actions for a Global Challenge' as the Forum's overarching theme resulted from the deep conviction of the need for a bottom-up process for this event", stressed Orlando Jaimes, Executive Secretary of the 4th World Water Forum. "The experiences, successes and difficulties of the local actors are of great importance for the water community", added Jaimes, "for implementing new ideas in the international debates on water topics as well as helping to focus on action. Involvement of local actors is understood as active civil society, indigenous peoples, children, women and youth, among others."

The decentralization of the Preparatory Process carried out through Regional Committees in five regions of the world helped to collect a total number of more than 1,600 worldwide local actions, from which more than 530 were presented during the Forum week.

The cultural and artistic exhibits related to water found their places in the Water Fair, as well as through the 1st Water and Film Encounter, with the participation of more than 300 films mostly from civil society.

Among the issues that were at the heart of the Forum dialogue was the Right to Water. "If some of the Forum's declarations showed that this right is now endorsed by a majority, there is still debate over the consequences of such a right and whether national or sub-national entities should be in charge of its implementation", stressed Daniel Zimmer, Executive Director of the World Water Council.

Financing was also highly featured during the event. In line with the main theme of the Forum, the question of how local governments can generate financing for investments in water services was central. This was the main focus for the work accomplished by the Task Force on Financing Water for All, led by Angel Gurría, now Secretary General of the OECD, which culminated in its report released during the Forum.

In the perspective of our global population reaching 9 billion people in 2050 and with the first signs of an obvious global warming, more risks for tensions over water will certainly arise in the coming decades. This is why, according to the Synthesis, immediate action is key. It is urgent to find solutions, to change habits and to make responsible decisions in order to overcome these challenges ingeniously. The World Water Forum aims to be a strategic tool in achieving this goal.

The creation of new institutions and partnerships was announced during the 4th World Water Forum, including the Asia-Pacific Water Forum (APWF). Taeko Yokota, involved in the regional organization of the Forum for the Asia-Pacific community, explained that, with their four databases regarding policy, technology, NGO activity and information sources, the APWF will aim to continue their work in this domain for the 5th Forum in 2009, providing an important resource for the international water community.

About the 4th World Water Forum

The World Water Forum is an initiative of the World Water Council aiming to raise awareness on global water issues. The First Forum was held in Morocco (1997), the Second in The Netherlands (2000) and the Third in Japan (2003). The 4th World Water Forum was held in Mexico City in March 2006, under the overarching theme of "Local Actions for a Global Challenge" and focused on analysis of experiences and knowledge sharing. The 5th Forum will take place in March 2009.

The Forum was established as an open, multi-stakeholder participatory process, which built on the knowledge, experience and input of the global water community and enabled multi-stakeholder participation and dialogue to influence water policy-making at a local, regional, national and global level, thus ensuring better living and respect for the principles of sustainable development to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The World Water Fora are built on the knowledge and experience of different types of organizations active in the global water policy. It is a venture founded on the principles of collaboration, partnerships and innovation.

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