



World Water Council

PRESS RELEASE

4th World Water Forum Local Focus: A New Vision For The Global Water Challenge

- **The 4th World Water Forum will consider local actions as a means to overcoming global water challenges.**
- **The 4th Forum will offer an innovative scheme to promote citizen participation – facilitating agreements between stakeholders to generate local actions.**
- **The 4th World Water Forum will support a plural dialogue, open to local actors, international institutions, public leaders, legislators, academics and citizens.**

Stockholm, Sweden, August 19, 2004

Within the framework of the XIV World Water Week held in this city, the First Announcement of the 4th World Water Forum, to be held in Mexico City from March 16-22, 2006, was made.

During the event, William Cosgrove, President of the World Water Council and co-Chairman of the International Organizing Committee for the 4th World Water Forum, and Cesar Herrera, Secretary General of the Fourth World Water Forum presented to the international community the conceptual framework that will guide the event, as well as leading topics that will be discussed, while stressing the importance of local projects around the world as possible solutions for resolving global water problems.

They also announced that the central theme of the 4th Forum will be “Local Actions for a Global Challenge” – a theme that will give a unique character to the event in Mexico. In this respect, they noted: “There is a clear need to facilitate and strengthen local efforts to overcome leading global water challenges in the new millennium. This is only possible through multi-sector coordination, with special emphasis on the participation of local actors and the timely delivery of institutional and financial support available through international organizations”.

The objectives of the 4th World Water Forum are: position the topic of water at the highest level of the national and international political agenda; seek commitments between distinct actors in order to move solutions to water problems forward, and; generate awareness among those at the highest level regarding the gravity of the world’s water problems.

Leading global challenges in water serve as the basis for the five framework themes underlying the 4th Forum, with each theme being considered from five different cross-cutting perspectives. These five themes are: water for development; implementing integrated water resources management; water supply and sanitation for all; water management for food and the environment, and finally; water security. The five cross-cutting perspectives will be: new models to finance local initiatives; institutional development and consolidation of political processes; capacity-building and social learning; application of science, technology and knowledge, and, targeting, monitoring and implementation assessment.

To ensure multi-stakeholder participation and to emphasize the local vision, the 4th Forum will employ a regional work scheme throughout the preparatory process that includes local workshops and multidisciplinary regional meetings. Regional meetings' main output should be regional position papers, special studies and early ministerial involvement— key ingredients for generating a broader understanding of local and regional challenges that must be overcome, as well as for constituting the basic material for the Thematic Forum of the 4th World Water Forum.

The Thematic Forum is a space for exchange of local projects and best practice cases providing participants access to a network of contacts in order to understand and learn from other successful experiences from around the world. As well, there will be a Ministerial Conference whose objective is to impact the political agendas in participating countries; a Virtual Forum that will seek to increase dialogue between participants and facilitate the definition of topics; an Expo and Water Fair in which companies and related organizations can present their products, services and work; in addition to a cultural, social and educational program. Ministerial participation will be permanent and continuous from the initiation of the preparatory process in order to ensure that the debates and proposals translate into viable, concrete public policy that support and promote local action.

It is important to remember that in October 2003 the World Water Council selected Mexico to host the Fourth World Water Forum. It will be the first time that this event is held on the American continent – a region whose countries represent great environmental, social, economic and political diversity. This diversity, both of the American region and within Mexico, is also reflected in the broad range of water-related perspectives and challenges.

For Mexico, organizing 4th Forum is an opportunity to promote a water-oriented political agenda nationally and globally, given the priority that the current administration has placed on water resources. The Mexican Government considers water a strategic resource and a key part of national security due to the influence it has on economic development and poverty alleviation. This vision, shared by many nations, demands international cooperation where government and society work together. Mexico, as host and co-organizer of the 4th World Water Forum, is convinced that this event will provide an ideal platform for promoting dialogue and participation in overcoming a common challenge.

The World Water Forum is held every three years in March around the World Water Day. The first Forum was held in 1997 in Morocco, in 2000 in The Netherlands, and in 2003 in Japan – the Forum in Japan was the largest conference in history celebrated on the topic of water with more than 24,000 attendees and the presence of 130 ministerial level representatives from around the world.

The World Water Council is a multidisciplinary organization formed in 1996 to respond to growing concern within the international community to the various issues related to water. It was in the World Water Council where the concept of the World Water Forum was born, defined since its inception as an interdisciplinary and multi-stakeholder event where the international community gathers under a shared global vision in the search of concrete actions and agreements.

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Contact:

Ms Stéphanie Porro, Communication Officer

Phone: + 33 (0) 4 91 99 41 00 - Mobile: +33 (0) 6 64 21 64 25

s.porro@worldwatercouncil.org

Doyel Maitra at Weber Shandwick London, Tel: +44 207 067 04 16,

dmaitra@webershandwick.com

www.worldwaterforum4.org.mx