

National opening conference for the 5th World Water Forum in Stuttgart:

On the 11th and the 12th of November 2008 the national opening conference for the 5th World Water Forum took place in Stuttgart under the guidance of Prof. Dr.-Ing. Ulrich Rott and Prof. Dr.-Ing. Heidrun Steinmetz from the Institute for Sanitary Engineering, Water Quality and Solid Waste Management of Universität Stuttgart.

During the event, more than 200 experts met and discussed with the top-class lecturers from the fields of politics, sciences and various professional associations about the challenges of international water management and the potential German contribution.

As introduction to the conference, Prof. Dr.-Ing. Tabasaran, general secretary of World Water Forum, presented a review about the topics and the plans for the up-coming 5th World Water Forum in Istanbul in 2009. He suggested that a German contribution would be desirable especially in the fields of knowledge, technology, education as well as schooling, and invited the contributors to Istanbul.

Mrs. Tanja Gönner, minister for the environment of Baden-Württemberg was the first speaker from politics. German states could contribute through training and advanced education of specialised personnel coming from poor regions. Another possibility would be the firm cooperation in water sector with other countries. The adjustment of water management on the changing marginal conditions due to climate change and population growth must be carried out by integrated and innovative approaches, whose frameworks are set by politics. As far as the development aid in water sector is concerned, in which Germany the third largest donor worldwide is, the acclimatisation of the organisation structures and technologies on the respective onsite conditions and the establishment of self-supporting systems are important.

The German technical and scientific associations such as DWA, DVWK and BWK among others, carry out a very important international contribution through the spreading out of their recognised guidelines, the advanced training of specialised personnel and their involvement in forums and exhibitions. A contribution to the solution of water supply problems worldwide could be achieved by implementing German technical security management of the water supply companies.

International water management problems often originate from the lack of specialised knowledge and problem awareness, inadequacy in topic addressing in school, deficiencies in specialised education and unavailability of independent research. From science's point of view the provision of university places as well as PhD positions and the sponsorship of local education and research capacities are possible ways of intensified German contribution. The introduction of indicators and statistics regarding the educational status in water sector are recommended in the report of the World Water Forum.

German competence is demanded in international level, especially when dealt with complex challenges. The solution of water problems can be carried out by German know-how contribution as far as water management organisation and versatility in the methodology of

problem solving are concerned. The difficulty concerning the implementation of an innovative sanitary concept lies very often on the public acceptance. In countries of concern, same standards as those in industrial countries are desired. Hence, for the implementation of these novelties, more references from the industrialized countries are required.

Population growth and climate change set new challenges to the international water management. For coping with these problems, international cooperation is essential. Germany is overall good positioned in international water management. Engineering consultants, water associations and research institutes make a great contribution to accomplishment of international challenges. This contribution could be further intensified by means of further coordination and adjusted political framework. Interdisciplinary exchange between representatives from politics, associations, science and economy contributed to a successful German opening conference for the World Water Forum in Istanbul in 2009.