



International Mayors gather in Istanbul for pressing water issues

For World Water Day 2008, Mayors from around the world are gathering in Istanbul to discuss the most pressing water issues of their cities, as a dress rehearsal for the 5th World Water Forum, to be held in March 2009 in Istanbul.

March 20th, 2008, Istanbul. Mayors of the world's largest cities face great challenges. Rapid population growth and urbanization, with over half of the world population now living in cities and this percentage predicted to increase, are placing new stresses on water resources and on the systems that supply cities' water and sanitation services. New and changing patterns of climate change and variability will impact every aspect of the urban water cycle. Facts stand clear today that more than 1 billion people are without water supply and 2.6 billion lack basic sanitation.

To find solutions to these pressing problems, the Mayor of Istanbul, Kadir Topbaş, will welcome Mayors, high-level officials and experts from more than 35 countries around the world to encourage the world's leading cities to take decisive action on water issues. The Minister for Environment and Forestry Veysel Eroğlu, World Water Council President Loïc Fauchon, 5th World Water Forum Vice Secretary General Ahmet Mete Saatçı and 5th World Water Forum Water Ambassador Klaus Töpfer will be among the speakers during this two-day conference, organized to coincide with World Water Day 2008.

At this conference, Mayor Topbaş will present the "Istanbul Urban Water Consensus", a declaration which is being developed by municipalities around the world to find solutions to these water-related challenges, which are common to cities in both developed and developing countries. In the Consensus, the municipal authorities recognize that major water actions must be taken to better manage environmental uncertainties, alleviate poverty, achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and protect biodiversity. They pledge to study their cities' unique challenges and opportunities, and then develop and implement a specialized adaptation plan.

About the World Water Forum

The World Water Forum is THE international meeting place where the world comes together to share concrete solutions for water problems. It is organized every three years by the World Water Council and the government of the host country, and is the result of more than two years of preparation involving people from all regions, sectors and backgrounds. After previous Fora held in Morocco (1997), the Netherlands (2000), Japan (2003) and Mexico (2006), the 5th World Water Forum will be held in Istanbul, Turkey in March 2009. For more information on the World Water Forum and the World Water Council, please visit www.worldwatercouncil.org.

About the 5th World Water Forum

The overall theme for the 5th World Water Forum, "Bridging Divides for Water", describes the aim to bring together contrasting viewpoints, supply and demand, rich and poor and developed and developing worlds. For more information on the 5th World Water Forum, and to view the draft of the Istanbul Urban Water Consensus, please visit www.worldwaterforum5.org.

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