



World Water Forum Bulletin

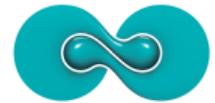
A Daily Report of the 5th World Water Forum

5th WORLD WATER FORUM
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5TH WORLD WATER FORUM HIGHLIGHTS: SUNDAY, 22 MARCH 2009

The 5th World Water Forum concluded deliberations in Istanbul, on Sunday afternoon. Ministers met at a closing session in the morning, during which they presented summaries on eight roundtable sessions and adopted their Declaration. Participants at a celebration of UN World Water Day then joined the ministers for the closing ceremony of the Forum.



Secretariat staff posed for a photograph at the end of the Forum

WORLD WATER DAY - TRANSBOUNDARY WATERS

Participants watched "One Water," the award-winning documentary by Sanjeev Chatterjee and Ali Habashi, which was filmed in 14 countries over five years and can be downloaded online at: <http://1h2o.org/>.

András Szöllösi-Nagy, UNESCO-International Hydrological Programme, on behalf of UNESCO's Director General,



András Szöllösi-Nagy, UNESCO

introduced the high-level roundtable on "adapting to global changes in transboundary basins." He noted that there are 263 shared watersheds and 273 shared groundwater aquifers worldwide, on which 3 billion people directly depend. He said cooperation and solidarity must be governing principles so that these populations avoid water-related

conflict engendered by the growing competition for shared water resources. He then highlighted numerous obstacles to cooperation, including conceptual and historical differences and the lack of: financial resources; technical and institutional capacity; and political will. Rhoda Tumsiime, African Union Commission (AUC), underscored that World Water Day is a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the links between water and environment, and health and economic development, and to reflect individually and collectively on how to achieve internationally agreed goals. Noting that the bulk of Africa's

transboundary water resources are underutilized, she highlighted recent regional initiatives facilitated by the AUC and its partners.

During the roundtable discussions, panelists deliberated on key drivers that will shape future water management and best practices that countries and regions can draw on to enhance the sustainable use of transboundary resources. Alfred Duda, Global Environment Facility (GEF), underscored the role of the GEF and its partner agencies, including: seed funding provision to start the process of trust building and cooperation; technical support; and third-party facilitation. Noting that transboundary agreements increasingly deal with issues of climate variability, he underscored that GEF support can help prepare basin organizations to implement larger projects under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Shaddad Attili, Chair, Palestinian Water Authority, noted that there is currently no transboundary agreement that governs equitable sharing of the Jordanian river basin by all users due to the conflict in the region. Stating that there is sufficient capacity to manage these water resources, he reiterated the call by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas that Palestinians should not be forced to wait until a peace agreement is reached to access their rightful share of transboundary water resources. He called on more countries to ratify the 1997 UN Watercourses Convention to enable it to enter into force.

Sibylle Vermont, Vice Chair, UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, noted that the Convention has developed a range of technical guidelines and tools for managing transboundary resources. She said the Convention fosters cooperation because it obliges countries to enter into bilateral

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and multilateral negotiations and to establish joint bodies. Angela Cropper, Deputy Executive Director, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), highlighted her organization's role in research and information dissemination and institutional capacity building.

Anders Berntell, Stockholm International Water Institute, highlighted a number of conceptual "clashes" in the discussion, including between "transboundary" and "international" waters and the principle of state sovereignty and that of shared governance of resources. He called for discussions on transboundary resources to consider not only national boundaries, but also federal, regional, ethnic and cultural divides as well.

Discussing the role of existing international instruments in managing conflicts over transboundary resources, panelists highlighted: a common framework for conducting Environmental Impact Assessments developed by the UN Economic Commission for Europe; arbitration provisions under the UN Watercourses Convention and related international law instruments; UNEP guidelines for the application of integrated water resource management at the transboundary level; and a UNESCO 'toolbox' on methods and practices for transboundary water resources management.

With regard to the issue of power asymmetry and mechanisms to ensure greater participation of non-governmental stakeholders in transboundary agreements, panelists underscored the importance of building strong community institutions, financing consultative processes, mainstreaming water and environmental awareness in education programmes, and considering the role of external mediators in facilitating contacts between parties.

In closing remarks, UN-Water Chair Pasquale Steduto, highlighted the active involvement of youth at the Forum, and underscored the role of education in nurturing a new generation of environmentally conscious future leaders.

The closing of the Forum's Ministerial Conference began with statements from the floor. Ethiopia requested the deletion of reference to "conformity with existing agreements" in the Ministerial Declaration's principle 16 on transboundary watercourses.

CLOSING OF THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

SUMMARIES OF MINISTERIAL ROUNDTABLES:

Chairs of eight ministerial roundtables held on Saturday summarized key outcomes from their sessions. The ministerial roundtable on "freshwater-coastal areas" acknowledged that an international legal framework already exists on this topic but that implementation is low due to poor governance. It noted the importance of sub-regional initiatives as well as international strategies for integrated ocean and coastal management.

On "reducing the impact of water-related disasters," the ministerial roundtable highlighted the need for: robust policies for water-related disasters and risk reduction; national flood and drought management plans; information sharing, data collection and harmonization of indicators; and preventive actions.

During roundtable discussions on "bridging the water and climate agendas," country representatives noted the increasing importance of adaptation, the different needs faced by various regions and the synergies between mitigation and adaptation. In order to adapt to climate change, it highlighted the critical need to: develop financing mechanisms to ensure investment; use public awareness to catalyze action and invest in science and technology development; and present a clear message that water should be used as a framework for planning and action to the 3rd World Climate Conference in September 2009 and at the climate change negotiations in Copenhagen in December 2009.

The roundtable discussions on "water for energy, energy for water" emphasized, *inter alia*: coordinating and integrating the water and energy sectors; addressing the multiple uses of water; managing water resources at the basin level using IWRM; and sustainably developing water projects through the use of environmental impact assessments. It also encouraged greater interaction between the World Water Forum, the World Energy Forum and other international processes addressing energy issues.



Musicians performed during the closing ceremony

On “financing water infrastructure and energy services,” the ministerial roundtable emphasized the importance of: developing and implementing national financial plans and strategies; improving the bankability of proposals; establishing public-private partnerships; and building in-country capacity for financial planning. It also stressed that the financial crisis should not be an excuse for inaction but an incentive to improve efficiency.

In the roundtable discussions on “water for development in Africa,” ministers highlighted the need for: effective mechanisms for implementation and monitoring of progress; gender mainstreaming; regional integration; improved delivery of water and sanitation through existing instruments; and scaling up of finance to meet the MDGs. They also stressed their commitment to the implementation of the African water development agenda.

On the subject of “water for food and poverty eradication” ministers addressed the inter-sectoral aspects of water for agriculture, noting that agriculture uses more water than any other sector. Highlighting the critical need to prioritize water for agriculture, representatives discussed actions including: investing in technology; enhancing infrastructure; improving cooperation including south-south partnerships; improving participation of agricultural stakeholders in decision making; addressing climate change; and providing adequate funding to mobilize and upscale investments.

Presenting the roundtable discussion “beyond the international year on sanitation (IYS) and implementing the right to water and sanitation,” representatives noted that the IYS was successful in raising awareness but that there is a need for innovative pro-poor approaches, creation of effective national policies and financing regimes, and mobilization of resources to achieve the MDGs. The “right to water” was also discussed during this session. Ministers said a right of access to water and sanitation has gained significant attention since the 4th World Water Forum and stated that it is crucial to achieving the MDGs. They also acknowledged that several countries have already protected the right to water as a constitutional right in national legislation. Several ministers highlighted that the Istanbul Ministerial Declaration does not sufficiently recognize a human right to water and sanitation, while others argued that it was premature to insert an express reference to existing human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation before the outcome of the report of the Human Rights Council’s Independent Expert.

Response to roundtables by major stakeholders: On the protection of a right of access to water and sanitation, a representative of the Gender and Water Alliance argued that “the Ministerial Declaration seems to go back in time.” She stressed that it is the role of governments to protect their people, in particular the most vulnerable. She said it is essential to provide a basic quantity of free water for each person as well as a right for each child to have safe sanitation, while taking into account the particular needs of girls.

A representative of Business Action for Water said that: water is critical for business, and business for the economy and employment; water, energy and food are inextricably linked; and that technologies are available to address water-related problems in coastal areas. On finance, he said progress had been achieved since the 4th World Water Forum.

Public services and trade union representatives noted the need to hold Fora such as the World Water Forum within the context of the UN to produce binding outcomes on the right to water and sanitation and called on governments to use the tools available to them to provide sustainable access to water and sanitation, while considering the roles of workers in the water sector.

OFFICIAL ADOPTION OF THE MINISTERIAL DECLARATION: India stressed the need for the Forum to send a powerful message to the 2009 UN climate change negotiations that all nations have the duty to mitigate climate change within the context of common but differentiated responsibilities and that stronger action on climate change must emerge.

Highlighting the Ministerial Declaration and the Istanbul Water Consensus as the two most important outcomes of the 5th World Water Forum, Veysel Eroglu, Minister for Environment and Forestry, Turkey, called for the official adoption of the Ministerial Declaration. He said the draft, finished March 4, 2009, represented the final product of a longer preparatory process and that it would not be reopened as requested by some delegations. He congratulated all who participated in the drafting of the document and predicted successful outcomes if adopted.

The Ministerial Declaration includes commitments to, *inter alia*:

- Intensify efforts to achieve MDG targets;
- Implement IWRM at the river-basin level;
- Improve water-demand management;
- Preserve environmental flows, increase resilience and restore ecosystems;
- Prevent and respond to water-related disasters;
- Recognize water as a basic human need and acknowledge work on human rights and access to water in the UN system;
- Prioritize water and sanitation in development planning;
- Promote cooperation on sustainable use and protection of transboundary water resources; and
- Agree to respect international law protecting water resources during conflict.

Principle 15 on water as a basic human need garnered attention during debates at the Forum. Representatives from some countries called for recognizing the human right to water and basic sanitation as well as acknowledging the cultural value of water, and the inclusion of indigenous peoples in water management.



L-R: **Oktay Tabasaran**, Secretary General, 5th World Water Forum, and **Veysel Eroglu**, Minister for Environment and Forestry, Turkey, who shared a Turkish proverb with participants.



Youth delegates during the closing ceremony

CLOSING STATEMENTS: WWC Director General Ger Bergkamp, encouraged governments and participants to move the world water agenda forward and expressed the WWC's readiness to help implement the commitments made by providing support for capacity development.

Eroğlu highlighted that the Forum had brought together over 120 countries and helped create a better understanding of water issues as well as designing water policies for sustainable development. He concluded by highlighting that the decisions taken at the Forum and their implementation are a platform for "fraternity, cooperation and peace."

CLOSING OF THE FORUM

READING OF YOUTH FORUM DECLARATION:

Youth delegates said their participation at the World Water Forum was due to their capability, not their vulnerability, and stressed that they wanted to be partners in the process, not stakeholders. They said language in the Ministerial Declaration should have stated more clearly that water and sanitation is a human right.

Youth representatives then read their Youth Declaration, written by young people from 25 countries. Organized according to the 5th Forum's themes, the Declaration states, *inter alia*, that:

- Recommendations from the 5th Forum should be taken to the 2009 UN climate change negotiations in Copenhagen;
- Access to clean, affordable, secure and readily accessible water should be considered a basic human right and defined as such in national legislation;
- Good governance cannot exist without participation;
- Governments should create mechanisms to provide access to drinking water for all people, regardless of their ability to pay for it; and
- Youth should be engaged in decision-making processes related to their education, which should be sensitive to gender and current social challenges.

KYOTO WORLD WATER GRAND PRIZE: Hitoshi Ohshima, Executive Officer on Global Environmental Policy, Japan, introduced the Kyoto World Water Grand Prize, awarded to an NGO for grassroots activities. William Cosgrove, Chair of the Prize jury, noted that the 10 finalists, who gave final presentations on Saturday, had included women and youth in their diverse projects. He expressed optimism that their activism would encourage politicians at the Forum to also act. He then presented the Prize to the Watershed Organization



Winner of the Kyoto World Water Grand Prize

Trust, India. Marcella D'Souza accepted the prize on the organization's behalf, stressing that water must be a uniting force.

CLOSING STATEMENTS: Oktay Tabasaran, 5th World Water Forum, said the knowledge obtained and results achieved at the Forum would be Istanbul's gift to the world. He highlighted the equitable participation of women at the Forum. He thanked the DSI, Water Agency of Istanbul and the Municipality of Istanbul for supporting the Forum and commended the DSI, WWC, and thousands of individuals who cooperated to make the Forum a success.

In his closing remarks, Ben Braga, WWC Vice President, noted that water issues deserve new thinking and concrete actions, highlighting that the 5th World Water Forum had



Ben Braga, Vice-President, World Water Council

set in motion a new process characterized by open and democratic participation and knowledge sharing. Klaus Toepfer, former UNEP Executive Director, described the three-year task of organizing the 5th Forum. He highlighted UNEP's "New Green Deal," emphasizing that it is a sustainable way of addressing the economic crisis. He lauded participants for recognizing

the role of women in water management. Highlighting the desertification process, he emphasized the need to address both water and desertification issues in a post-Kyoto framework.

Tomris Türmen, former Executive Director, World Health Organization, said clean water and sewage disposal are scientists' greatest discoveries. She stressed the importance of meeting the MDG targets to ensure a more sustainable future for the world's most vulnerable groups.

Hasan Zarikaya, Under-Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Turkey, noted that "water can exist without us, but we cannot exist without it." Citing the question on how best to manage water as the Forum's greatest challenge, he praised participants for the democratic and transparent manner of their participation. He noted that the Forum had achieved its objectives of putting water on the political agenda and sharing best practices, and suggested that the WWC prepare indicators to monitor the actions carried out by the relevant stakeholders after Istanbul. He declared the Forum closed at 1:45pm.