



# World Water Forum Bulletin

Mexico 2006  
4th World  
Water Forum



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## A Daily Report of the 4th World Water Forum

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President Vicente Fox Quesada of Mexico (center) joined other dignitaries on Thursday morning in welcoming participants to the 4th World Water Forum

### 4TH WORLD WATER FORUM HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 16 MARCH 2006

The 4th World Water Forum opened on Thursday, 16 March 2006 in Mexico City, Mexico and will continue until 22 March. Participants convened in a morning plenary to hear opening statements, followed by the presentation of the King Hassan II Great World Water Prize, a special presentation on the connection between the 3rd and the 4th Forums, and an introductory roundtable session on the 4th World Water Forum in the afternoon.

The World Water Forum seeks to enable multi-stakeholder participation and dialogue to influence water policy making at a global level, in pursuit of sustainable development. Over 200 thematic sessions are scheduled, and more than 11,000 participants are expected to attend, representing governments, UN agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academia, industry, indigenous groups, youth and the media.

The Forum's main theme, "Local actions for a global challenge," will be addressed through five framework themes: water for growth and development; implementing integrated water resources management (IWRM); water supply and sanitation for all; water management for food and the environment; and risk management.

A Water Fair and World Water Expo will also take place during the Forum, offering a platform for participants to present their achievements and to highlight the cultural and traditional aspects of water.

## OPENING OF THE FORUM

**OPENING STATEMENTS:** Welcoming participants to Mexico, Cristóbal Jaime Jáquez, Co-Chair of the 4th World Water Forum and Director General of the National Water Commission, Mexico, emphasized: the strategic importance of water to national security; the need for a long-term vision on water management; and the need to create a new culture of water management that enables people to face water and development challenges based on cooperation and tolerance.

Noting that water issues are a subject of concern and disagreement worldwide, Loïc Fauchon, President of the World Water Council (WWC) and Co-Chair of the 4th World Water Forum, stressed that lack of access to safe drinking water and poor water quality are unacceptable, and that the right to water

is indispensable to human dignity. He outlined major challenges for global water systems, including demographic growth, deforestation, soil degradation and climate change. Urging the international community to step up its efforts in addressing the global water crisis, he called for: greater investments in water infrastructure; technological progress to ensure water security; research and education; water management decentralization; and improved risk management.

José Luis Luege Tamargo, Mexico's Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources, underscored the need for universal access to safe drinking water, stressing that water is a fundamental human right and a key to development. He said that although sovereignty must be respected, water access must not be constrained by borders. He also said that local experiences, knowledge and technology must be exchanged, and forest issues must be addressed.

Prince of Orange Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands stressed that global water challenges must be met with actions at the local level. He highlighted the water-related findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, which describes current rates of environmental degradation and their impacts on development. He urged implementation of IWRM plans and stressed the need for consideration of water issues in energy, agriculture and other policies. He also underscored the need for leadership at all levels.

Crown Prince Naruhito of Japan recalled the outcomes of the 3rd World Water Forum, and noted several follow-up initiatives at the global level, such as the UN Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation and the UN's 2005-2015 International "Water for Life" Decade, and strengthened regional activity in Africa and Asia-Pacific. He noted modest progress towards improving water supply and sanitation, and urged action to cope with the increasing number of weather-related disasters. Crown Prince

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Naruhito expressed hope that this Forum will constitute a big step forward in addressing the water problems that the world continues to face.

Driss Jettou, Prime Minister of Morocco, drew attention to the King Hassan II Great World Water Prize, created jointly by Morocco and contributing countries to recognize outstanding achievements in management and development of water resources. He underscored the importance of institutions in creating awareness and contributing to water management. Stressing the need for collective action and experience sharing, he further welcomed South-South cooperation and emerging solidarity for addressing global water challenges.

Vicente Fox Quesada, President of Mexico, emphasized that water is both a human right and a public good that all governments must guarantee. He said the 4th World Water Forum needs to advance the implementation of international water-related commitments by reviewing progress and communicating challenges and opportunities in this regard. He stressed that water conservation is imperative for combating poverty and promoting growth and development both nationally and internationally, and advocated a new water culture based on shared responsibility, equity and solidarity. Noting that there is no single approach to solving the global water crisis, he said many solutions lie at the local level. In closing, he highlighted the Forum's role in fostering public awareness and respect for water, and in inspiring leadership on water issues worldwide, and declared the 4th World Water Forum open. A folkloric music and dance performance followed.

**KING HASSAN II GREAT WORLD WATER PRIZE CEREMONY:** Mohamed Eyazghi, Morocco's Minister of Environment, introduced the King Hassan II Great World Water Prize. He announced that an international jury had selected Torkil Jønych-Clausen (Denmark) for his scientific excellence and support for international cooperation on water issues.

Fauchon highlighted Morocco's role as initiator of the Great World Water Prize and the country's success in achieving self-sufficiency in water management as a result of its political will and technical expertise.

Prime Minister Jettou then presented the Great World Water Prize to Jønych-Clausen. In his acceptance remarks, Jønych-Clausen stressed that his award is a result of cooperation between the Danish Government, the Danish Hydraulic Institute (DHI)-Water and Environment and the Global Water Partnership (GWP), and announced that the prize money would be used to fund women from developing countries to study water issues.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION "FROM THE 3RD TO THE 4TH FORUM":** Ryutaro Hashimoto, Chair of the UN Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation, said that most of the Millennium Development Goals cannot be achieved without solving water problems. He summarized global water-related developments since the 3rd Forum, including: the launch of the UN 2005-2015 International Decade for Action "Water for Life"; the establishment of the UN Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation; discussions at the twelfth and thirteenth sessions of the UN

Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) focusing on water and sanitation; and the African Ministerial Conference on Water. Hashimoto highlighted shortcomings in meeting the 3rd Forum's commitments, and called for concrete actions to resolve global water problems.

Fauchon summarized intersessional activities, suggesting that much work is needed to "quench the water's thirst" for action, such as procedures for decentralization of water management. He highlighted several achievements since the 3rd Forum, including a 40 percent growth in WWC's membership, and in the areas of water financing, monitoring and water rights.

Jaime Jáquez outlined the institutional history of global water policy since the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment and highlighted progress achieved. He said regional reports will form the basis of the Forum's discussions and provide input into the Ministerial Conference and Declaration.

**ROUNDTABLE "INTRODUCTION TO THE 4TH WORLD WATER FORUM":** Opening the roundtable, Eduardo Sojo Garza-Aldape, Chair of the Mexican President's Public Policy Office, encouraged all stakeholders to be open to different viewpoints, and to share and learn from local experiences.

Hashimoto presented the UN Advisory Board's recently released Compendium of Actions "Your Action, Our Action," noting that it draws upon existing consensus documents and focuses on six vital areas: financing; water operators partnerships; sanitation; monitoring; IWRM; and water-related disasters.

On financing, he said governments should install an appropriate mix of equitable tariffs and subsidies. Noting that available financial resources often fail to effectively address water and sanitation issues, he called for: better governance and transparency; programmes to expand knowledge on developing local markets; and water funding focused on capacity building. Hashimoto said water operators partnerships are crucial to

achieving hygiene promotion, household sanitary arrangements and sewage treatment, and called for concrete tools for action, advocacy at the global level, and concerted campaigns at the sub-regional level.

On sanitation, he highlighted the Compendium's recommendations to the UN, *inter alia*, to: designate 2008 as the International Year of Sanitation; install a UN Sanitation Prize; promote regional high-level meetings; and organize a global sanitation conference towards the end of the ongoing UN Water Decade.

On monitoring, he called upon the UN to disseminate reliable data on

progress towards water-related targets. He said the Compendium recommends: the UN Secretary-General to work with existing UN agencies to prioritize resource allocation; UN Water to coordinate monitoring, synthesizing and reporting at all levels; national governments to support efforts to develop monitoring tools; and the international community to focus on financing for monitoring. He urged all UN member States to submit progress reports to CSD-16 in 2008, to be incorporated in a UN database.

Recalling recent water-related disasters, Hashimoto stressed the importance of preparedness and called for efforts to create global awareness, commitment and consensus. Highlighting



Torkil Jønych-Clausen, Denmark, receives the King Hassan II Great World Water Prize from Prime Minister Driss Jettou of Morocco

cross-cutting perspectives, he said stakeholder participation remains insufficient in the field, and called for synergies with other key sectors, including education, health care and agriculture. Stressing the need for concrete action, he said the UN Advisory Board will work with stakeholders at all levels, including donors, to materialize proposals for the improvement of water services at the grassroots level.

Margaret Catley-Carlson, GWP Chair, chaired the ensuing roundtable discussions on the Compendium's six vital areas.

On water operators partnerships, Gérard Payen, President of Aquafed, International Federation of Private Water Operators, said that capacity building is critical and stressed the need for partnerships between experienced operators and public utilities in helping public operators deliver water services.

On financing, José Angel Gurría Treviño, incoming Secretary General of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), emphasized that although practices and commitments have been adopted, flows of financing have not occurred. Noting that only five percent of Official Development Assistance is assigned to water while a twofold increase in present financing levels is needed, he called for "a rallying cry to capture the imagination of world leaders."

On ethics, Pedro Arrojo Agudo, President of the New Culture of Water Foundation, stressed that access to drinking water is not so much a financial but a political and democratic problem. Drawing attention to the various values assigned to water, he said that part of the problem has been prioritizing profit over access to water as a human right.

Sojo Garza-Aldape speculated on the implications of showing the real price of water delivery as a subsidy that is mainly given to high-income areas, and underscored the importance of transparency in decision making.

Julia Carabias Lillo, Coordinator of the Programme on Water, Environment and Society, National Autonomous University of Mexico/El Colegio de Mexico, said that experience in decentralization is scarce. She stressed the need for real participation to foster legitimate organizations.

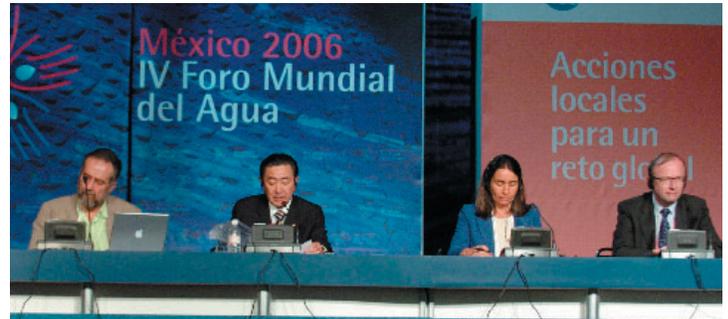
Payen said that lack of consensus on a right to water is due to a shortage of knowledge of its implications and stressed the need for dialogue. He stated that local governments are in the best position to implement water rights.

On actions that can be taken at the UN level, Manuel Dengo, Chief of Water, Natural Resources and Small Island Developing States Branch, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, said the absence of a mechanism that can accelerate the translation of global policies into actions that reflect local needs is a problem. He stated that local demands must meet top-level policies at a common point of agreement. Arrojo Agudo added that grassroots solutions are often the most cost-effective and successful.

In response to the question of whether there is a deficit in central governments' support to citizens at the local level, Sojo Garza-Aldape suggested a new social contract at the municipal, state, and federal levels combined with legislative action to improve water governance.

Noting the absence of an environmental component in international discussions on water, Carabias Lillo expressed hope that the Forum's Ministerial Declaration would lead to the ecologically sensitive management of water.

In closing, panelists reemphasized the need for capacity building, good governance, and action at the local level. Payen



Panelists (L-R) Pedro Arrojo Agudo, Ryutaro Hashimoto, Julia Carabias Lillo and Gérard Payen during the roundtable "Introduction to the 4th World Water Forum"

insisted that local governments cannot provide water and sanitation unless national governments provide the necessary frameworks. Sojo Garza-Aldape called for well-defined strategies, while Carabias Lillo encouraged the inclusion of binding commitments in the Ministerial Declaration.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF GLOBAL WATER ISSUES

Freshwater is a finite resource and is imperative for sustainable development, economic growth, political and social stability, health and poverty eradication. While water issues have long been on the international agenda, the debate on how to meet the growing global demand for freshwater has intensified in recent years. More than one billion people currently lack access to safe drinking water, and an estimated 2.7 billion people, or one third of the world's population, will face major water shortages by 2025.

Convened every three years, the World Water Forum is an initiative of the World Water Council (WWC), an international water policy think-tank established in 1996 in response to global concern over the pressures on the Earth's freshwater resources. The Forum's objectives are to: raise the importance of water on the political agenda; support the deepening of discussions toward the solution of international water issues in the 21st Century; formulate concrete proposals; and generate political commitment.

**UN MILLENNIUM SUMMIT:** At the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000, world leaders adopted the Millennium Declaration, which inspired eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and 18 targets, including the target to halve the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water by 2015.

**1ST WORLD WATER FORUM:** The 1st World Water Forum, held in Marrakesh, Morocco, in March 1997, mandated the WWC to develop a long-term Vision on Water, Life and the Environment for the 21st Century. The 1st Forum also cautioned against treating water as a marketable good, and prioritized: water and sanitation; shared water management; ecosystem conservation; gender equality; and efficient use of water.

**2ND WORLD WATER FORUM:** The 2nd World Water Forum took place in The Hague, the Netherlands, in March 2000. The Ministerial Declaration identified key challenges for the future as meeting basic water needs, securing food supply, protecting ecosystems, sharing water resources, managing risks, and valuing and governing water wisely. In this Declaration, Ministers also agreed to review progress in meeting these challenges on a regular basis, and to provide support to the UN system to periodically reassess the state of freshwater resources.

### INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FRESHWATER:

The International Conference on Freshwater convened in Bonn, Germany in December 2001, in preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), and addressed: equitable access and sustainable supply of water for the poor; strategies for sustainable and equitable management of water resources; integration of gender perspectives; and mobilization of financial resources for water infrastructure.

**WSSD:** World leaders convening in Johannesburg, South Africa at the WSSD in 2002 took the MDG target on safe drinking water a step further by agreeing to also halve the number of people lacking adequate sanitation by 2015. Other water-related targets in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation include the commitment to develop integrated water resources management (IWRM) and water efficiency plans by 2005. Governments, lending agencies and international organizations also launched several voluntary partnerships and initiatives in the area of water and sanitation.

**3RD WORLD WATER FORUM:** Held in Kyoto, Osaka and Shiga, Japan in March 2003, the 3rd World Water Forum was the largest water-related conference held to date, gathering 24,000 participants from over 170 countries. Following a two-day Ministerial Conference, some 130 Ministers adopted a Declaration underscoring the role of water as a driving force for sustainable development, and launched the Portfolio of Water Actions – an inventory of more than 3,000 local actions with respect to this vital resource. The “Financing Water for All” report of a high-level Panel chaired by Michel Camdessus, former Director General of the International Monetary Fund, was also presented, leading to the establishment of an intersessional Task Force on Financing Water for All. The Task Force will report its findings at the 4th World Water Forum.

## DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE 3RD WORLD WATER FORUM

**4TH FORUM PREPARATORY PROCESS:** A number of preparatory meetings took place ahead of the 4th World Water Forum, including meetings of the WWC Board of Governors, regional and civil society workshops, meetings of the Task Force on Financing Water for All, and negotiating sessions on the draft Ministerial Declaration.

**Regional and civil society meetings:** Several regional and sub-regional meetings were convened to advance Forum preparations and identify contributions to the draft Ministerial Declaration, including the meeting of the Africa Regional Directive Committee (8-9 December 2005, Windhoek, Namibia) and a dialogue of Plata Basin countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay (23 November 2005, Foz de Iguazú, Brazil). Civil society workshops were also organized in San Salvador, El Salvador, Buenos Aires, Argentina and Mexico City, Mexico.

**Gurría Task Force:** The Task Force on Financing Water for All, led by Angel Gurría, former Finance Minister of Mexico and incoming OECD Secretary-General, has met twice since the 3rd Forum. The Gurría Task Force, composed of representatives from NGOs, local authorities and financing institutions, will present a case-based report at the 4th Forum on progress made and challenges ahead, focusing on financing water for agriculture and new models for financing local action.

**G8 SUMMIT:** At their annual Summit held in Evian, France from 1-3 June 2003, leaders of the Group of Eight (G8) countries

adopted an Action Plan on Water to help meet the MDGs and the WSSD targets of halving the number of people without access to clean water and sanitation by 2015. In this Action Plan, G8 leaders committed themselves to: promoting good governance; utilizing all financial resources; building infrastructure by empowering local authorities and communities; strengthening monitoring, assessment and research; and reinforcing the engagement of international organizations.

**GLOBAL WASH FORUM:** The first Global Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Forum, held in November-December 2004 in Dakar, Senegal, sought to accelerate action in the areas of water, sanitation and hygiene to help achieve the MDGs. The WASH Forum resulted in the Dakar Statement, which outlines actions that need to be scaled up to achieve international goals on water and sanitation.

**UN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** At its twelfth and thirteenth sessions, held in New York from 14-30 April 2004 and 11-22 April 2005, respectively, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) focused on policies and options to expedite the implementation of international commitments in the areas of water, sanitation and human settlements. The section on water in the CSD-13 outcome document calls, *inter alia*, for: accelerating progress toward the MDGs and WSSD 2015 water access targets by increasing resources and using a full range of policy instruments such as regulation, market-based tools, cost recovery, targeted subsidies for the poor and economic incentives for small-scale producers; improving water demand and resource management, especially in agriculture; and accelerating the provision of technical and financial assistance to countries that need help to meet the 2005 target on IWRM.

**2005 WORLD WATER WEEK:** Held from 21-27 August 2005 in Stockholm, Sweden, the World Water Week examined the relationship between infrastructure development and water management and governance, and the importance of a people-centered approach, which determines the type (i.e. “hard” or “soft” solutions) and the scale of interventions.

**UN WORLD SUMMIT:** Held from 14-16 September 2005 at UN headquarters in New York, the Summit reaffirmed earlier commitments related to water and sanitation in the context of the MDGs. It also called for assisting developing country efforts to prepare IWRM and water efficiency plans as part of comprehensive national development strategies to achieve the MDGs.

**RAMSAR COP-9:** Held under the theme “Wetlands and water: supporting life, sustaining livelihoods,” the Ninth Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (COP-9) convened from 8-15 November 2005 in Kampala, Uganda. Parties adopted 25 resolutions on a wide range of policy, programme and budgetary matters, including engagement of the Convention in ongoing multilateral processes dealing with water, and an integrated framework for the Convention’s water-related guidance.

**2005-2015 INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR ACTION “WATER FOR LIFE”:** Organized by the UN, the International Decade focuses on the implementation of water-related programmes and projects and on strengthening cooperation on water issues at all levels. Priorities include: sanitation access; disaster prevention; pollution; transboundary water issues; water, sanitation and gender; capacity building; financing; and IWRM. Africa is a region for priority action.