



# Budapest Water Summit Bulletin

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## BUDAPEST WATER SUMMIT HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2013

The Budapest Water Summit opened on Tuesday, 8 October 2013, in Budapest, Hungary. Participants engaged in the opening ceremony setting the stage for the four-day conference. The meeting is taking place in the context of the United Nations (UN) International Year of Water Cooperation 2013, the outcome of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, or Rio+20) "The Future We Want," and the ongoing post-2015 development agenda process to negotiate sustainable development goals (SDGs).

### OPENING CEREMONY

Moderator Klára Breuer, Head of Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hungary, opened the session, welcoming participants to Budapest.

President János Áder, Hungary, emphasized that every day 10,000 children die due to the lack of clean drinking water. He highlighted that access to water impacts human health, agriculture and the environment, noting that water disputes across the world could culminate in war. He stressed that if water use trends continue, global vulnerability will be created posing high costs to humanity. He called for close-knit water cooperation between countries and for the conference to draw the world's attention to water issues by, *inter alia*: building awareness of individual and common responsibilities; demonstrating common faith to achieve objectives; and leading by example.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon explained that water is needed for health, security and economic progress and holds the key to sustainable development. He lamented that by 2030 nearly half the global population could be facing water scarcity, and demand could outstrip supply by 40 percent. Stressing the need for all countries to work together, he outlined three areas for cooperation: food security; climate change; and sanitation. He drew attention to the report, "A Life of Dignity For All," which sets out what is needed to define and achieve a set of SDGs to inspire the world.

Sok An, Deputy Prime Minister, Cambodia, stressed the importance of water as a basic human right and called on all governments to cooperate on water issues to give the future a chance. He described water management within the Mekong River basin, noting the example of regional water cooperation in South-East Asia.

Highlighting the UN International Year of Water Cooperation taking place in 2013, Irina Bokova, Director General, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, stressed that cooperation is imperative, and underscored that there is no sustainable development without sustainable water management. She called for reaching decision makers outside the "water box," promoting dialogue among stakeholders, and building

an improved knowledge base for integrated water resources management (IWRM). She emphasized that sustainable water management is necessary to achieve all of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 and is essential for any SDGs to follow.

HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal, Jordan, Chair, UN Secretary General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation, lauded the third Hashimoto Action Plan, explaining it aims to help shape the direction of water and sanitation policy throughout the world. He stressed the need for a standalone SDG addressing water and sanitation in the next round of development goals. Lamenting that for water issues, "we think locally but act globally," bin Talal explained it is not a question of money but a question of priorities. He emphasized that past development of the Indus Waters Treaty, the Mekong River Commission, and the Nile Basin Initiative, among others, demonstrate that water cooperation is possible. He called for addressing the challenges surrounding the often-taboo issues of menstruation and open defecation.

HRH Prince Khaled bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz, Saudi Arabia, Chairman, Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz International Prize for Water, complimented Hungary for its exemplary model of water and sanitation management, efficient system of dams, flood management, and cooperative strategies. He highlighted the need for: integrated management, including all available resources and participation of all sectors; political will to support management and enforce legislation; and political power supported by economic and military forces. He raised concern regarding the potential consequences of water-focused terrorism.

Benedito Braga, President, World Water Council, said the elaboration of new SDGs must be based on global realities, noting the MDGs provide a solid foundation for poverty reduction. He stressed a water-specific SDG is necessary and should include targets for increasing social resilience, achieving universal and sustainable access to water, sanitation and hygiene, and preserving aquatic ecosystems. He emphasized that development cannot be achieved without water security and called for consideration of water throughout all areas addressed by the post-2015 development agenda. He highlighted the increased variability and uncertainty predicted in a changing climate, emphasizing the importance of increasing resilience and adopting adaptation strategies.

Noting that water is not a domestic or bilateral issue Lamberto Zannier, Secretary General, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, stressed that access to water must be addressed globally. He discussed the nexus between water, energy and food security, and explained that the challenges the international community faces regarding water are highly contentious.

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Sándor Fazekas, Minister of Rural Development, Hungary, observed that the majority of Hungary's surface waters come from abroad and flow to other countries, making water cooperation a matter of security. He said that increasing incidence of extreme weather exacerbate Hungary's existing challenges for flood and drought management. He underscored that Hungary stands ready to share its knowledge and experience and will continue its proactive approach to international water cooperation.

José Graziano da Silva, Director General, UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), noted that one of FAO's strategic objectives is to reduce hunger, and that water is the primary production factor linked to food security, particularly in rural areas. He said increased efficiency has enabled production of more food, but this has often been through chemicals at the expense of water resources. He observed that since agriculture uses so much water, food waste implies water waste. He emphasized the need to give water the prominence it deserves across its full spectrum, and to achieve inclusiveness and cooperation across political and sectoral boundaries.

Margaret Chan, Director General, World Health Organization, addressed the human dimension of the water challenge. Noting progress made on reducing childhood deaths associated with poor water and sanitation, she also identified weaknesses in the MDGs that need addressing when setting future SDGs. She said these include, *inter alia*, that current goals only deal with household access to water and sanitation, and there is no indicator for monitoring microbiological or chemical water quality. On a future sanitation and hygiene agenda, she urged frank discussion on open defecation and hand-washing post-defecation, explaining progress will not happen without it.

Michel Jarraud, Chair, UN-Water, and Secretary General, World Meteorological Organization, offered UN-Water's reservoir of expertise to address one of the most "cross-cutting issues we have to solve." He explained UN-Water is working to help develop potential targets and indicators for an SDG on water and to provide technical input into the post-2015 development agenda to inform forthcoming discussions and negotiations.

Mahmoud Mohieldin, Special Envoy of the President for the Post-2015 Development Agenda, World Bank, underscored that though progress has been made, one billion people still lack access to safe water, and added that far less progress has been made on access to improved sanitation. He said this global crisis causes economic losses of US\$ 260 billion per year. He called for reinvigorated efforts to achieve MDGs related to safe water, saying this requires: knowledge; finance; change of culture; and leadership. He stressed leveraging crowdsourcing and encouraging private sector investment. He emphasized that targets need to be supported with strong implementation frameworks and knowledge bases.

Jonathan Taylor, Vice-President, Environment and Climate Action, European Investment Bank (EIB), outlined how the EIB is responding to post-2015 challenges through seven priority areas of work: IWRM, supporting transboundary initiatives; sector development and capacity building; water efficiency; new water supply development; sanitation and wastewater management; climate action; and research and innovation in technical, financial and social dimensions. He drew attention to the Bank's focus on developing a natural capital finance facility and addressing the nexus between water and food security. He highlighted their role in the European Innovation Partnership on Water.

Kandeh Yumkella, Special Representative of the Secretary General and CEO, Sustainable Energy for All Initiative, Chair UN-Energy, underscored the nexus between energy and water,

saying they were two sides of the same coin, with nearly half the water withdrawals in some areas being used for energy. He warned that using energy badly will exacerbate both water challenges and food security, noted that the next Stockholm World Water Week will be devoted to energy and water, and linked both as central to overall security and conflict issues. He cautioned against subsidizing energy alone, which can lead to overusing aquifers for agriculture, and cited the importance of addressing universal access to energy and water to ensure the empowerment of women.

Sven Alkalaj, Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), observed that 40 percent of the world's population lives in transboundary water basins, saying cooperation is critical to achieving sustainable development. He highlighted the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), saying its implementation has led to great improvements in transboundary water management in the UNECE region. He said the UNECE Water Convention is a sound legal framework reflecting the most modern aspects of international water law. He lauded the "globalization" of the UNECE Water Convention, with adoption and entry into force of an amendment allowing non-UNECE UN members to accede to the UNECE Water Convention. He called for countries to sign the UN Convention on the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses (Watercourses Convention) to ensure its entry into force, saying the two Conventions provide complementary bases for transboundary water cooperation.

Taizo Nishikawa, Deputy Director General, UN Industrial Development Organization, provided a perspective on the water-energy nexus, saying the interrelation between water and energy will become closer with climate change and noting that energy consumption is the main driver of climate change. He explained that industrialization requires power but sustainable development needs to balance energy and water use. Nishikawa concluded by highlighting the upcoming launch of the World Water Development Report dedicated to water and energy during World Water Day, March 2014, in Tokyo, Japan.

Pavel Kabat, Director, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, Austria, proposed a vision for water futures based on three principles: science; understanding the future; and a new generation of partnerships. For better science, he emphasized the importance of using a cross-sectoral approach, citing as an example the cost-effectiveness of integrating energy, climate, air quality and health. He said investors and business partners understand the value of developing both short-term and long-term future scenarios, especially given the increasing severity of transboundary issues. He called for new partnerships and a new paradigm of "positiveness," seeing the challenges not as a threat but an opportunity.

János Béri, Dézy Kakas, and Péter Polak, Stockholm Junior Water Prize, Hungarian winners, were introduced. Polak described a well in his grandparents' garden that went dry causing the garden to lose its character, noting this is a common problem the world over, in the Aral Sea, in the Yellow River basin, and at the melting poles. He said the carelessness that brought us to this point still exists and stressed that we are still far from a recovery. Adding that while he is perhaps naïve, he believes that the challenges can be addressed. He stressed participants have the power to make things better, not for just for themselves but more importantly for their children.