

## **Strong Messages as 2007 World Water Week Ends: It is Time to Do Better on Global Poverty, Sanitation, Water Scarcity and Climate Change**

**Summary distributed by Dave Trouba to Water Issues Announcement List, 22 August 2007**

A 2007 World Water Week in Stockholm ([www.worldwaterweek.org](http://www.worldwaterweek.org)) that began with a call for governments around the world to better manage their existing water resources concluded Friday morning with the 2,500 participants from 140 countries saying, collectively that progress is being made, but in the face of global poverty, critical lack of sanitation, water scarcity and climate change, we all need to do much better. The date, theme and location for the 2008 event was also announced: "Progress and Prospects on Water: For a Clean and Healthy World," to be held August 17-23, 2008, at the Stockholm International Fairs Centre.

Anders Berntell, Executive Director of the host Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), while assessing at the end of the event the efforts to improve the world water situation, said: "There is progress, but there is still far too little action and now when climate change is upon us and we need to adapt even faster. None of us can say we are prepared but it's clear that poor people will again suffer the most. Changes in water availability are what will hit us first with an altered climate; rising sea levels and floods in certain regions but drought in others. The pressure on infrastructure and physical planning will be considerable. Ecosystem management will be fundamental. The question remains relevant: Why is water still not high enough on the political agenda?"

Climate, sanitation and hygiene, water management, ecosystems and biodiversity, technology and business issues were prominent programme focal points throughout the week. SIWI itself called for governments around the world to better manage how they use their existing water resources, taking necessary and sometimes painful measures to decrease losses in water delivery infrastructure and irrigation, to cut subsidies to agriculture, and to put in place realistic water-pricing measures - all before attempting to boost water supplies. The World Water Week, which included 140 co-convening organisations, witnessed the launch of a number of new and groundbreaking studies, reports and initiatives designed to improve a global situation where billions of people are without sustainable access to safe drinking water or suffering ill health due to poor sanitation, where bioenergy demands are diverting water from food production, and where global climate change is affecting the overall water balance.

Some of the studies, reports and initiatives and announcements made during the week included:

- \* UN-HABITAT, the United Nations agency working with human settlements, launched the 1) Global Water Operators' Partnership and the 2) Water and Sanitation Trust Fund.

- \* SIWI and the Swedish Water House launched four new reports: Making Anti-Corruption Approaches Work for the Poor; On the Verge of a New Water Scarcity; Agriculture, Water, and

Ecosystems; and Planning for Drinking Water and Sanitation in Peri-Urban Areas.

- \* The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) launched the Global Water Tool.

- \* The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) and SIWI announced the opening of the nomination period for the WASH Media Award.

- \* British charity WaterAid launched Global Cause and Effect: How the Aid System is Undermining the Millennium Development Goals.

- \* The Global Water Partnership announced 1) Letitia A. Obeng as the new Chair of GWP and 2) released the policy brief Climate Change Adaptation and Water Management, and 3) the book Sustainable Sanitation in Eastern and Central Europe

- \* The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida, released a position paper named Natural Resource Tenure.

- \* The Asian Development Bank released Dignity, Disease and Dollars: Asia's Urgent Sanitation Challenge.

- \* The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) South Africa presented new technology for removing heavy metals and subsequent radioactivity from mines.

- \* The Co-operative Programme on Water and Climate (CPWC) released Water, Climate, Risk and Adaptation, and presented its new resource centre on water, climate, risk, adaptation and mitigation.

- \* The World Water Council (WWC), the General Directorate State Hydraulic Works for Turkey (DSI) and the Secretariat of the 5th World Water Forum released the First Announcement of the 5th Forum, to be held in 2009.

- \* Borealis and Bororouge became a Founder of the Stockholm Water Prize.

- \* The International Institute for Environment and Development issued two briefing papers that summarise new research on payments for watershed services in developing nations.

- \* The International Foundation for Science released Strengthening Capacity for Water Resources Research in Countries with Vulnerable Scientific Infrastructure.

- \* The Government of Singapore and the World Health Organisation (WHO) signed a new partnership agreement to jointly promote the safe management of drinking water globally.

- \* The Water Environment Federation and the International Water Association introduced the revamped World Water Monitoring Day initiative and provided kits to Stockholm Junior Water Prize participants.

- \* The International Water & Film Events Istanbul 2009 issued the official call for entries.

- \* The Water Integrity Network launched new website to fight corruption in the water sector.

The closing session on August 17 looked eastward to China, where the upcoming 2008 Beijing Olympics and China's increasing emergence as the world largest developing economy were in focus. Chinese Vice Minister of Water Resources, Zhou Ying, presenting China's contributions to the conference's theme, Striving for Sustainability in a Changing World, stating: "China remains the face of industrialisation. Shortage of resources is a bottleneck for development, so we will work to harmonize resource saving, clean production, and integrate water management into our sustainable social and economic development."

In the week that preceded the closing session, a number of interesting topics were taken up in seminars, workshops and side events. These and all other events will be summarised in the Synthesis Report to be made available in the late Fall of 2007. Some brief highlights:

Sunday, August 12

### Finding the Balance

Food feeds our bodies, bioenergy heats our homes and ecosystem services sustain our planet. The SIWI seminar Water for Food, Bio-Fuels or Ecosystems raised the challenging question: is there enough water to maintain all three? According to chair Jan Lundqvist, the number of people earning an annual income of \$10,000 will increase from 800 million to as many as 7 billion in 2050. While the MDGs correctly focus on the unmet needs of the world's poor, it is the unsatisfied wants of the upcoming generation that will have the most significant implications on consumption patterns. "Poverty is no longer the (only) problem," he stated as he proposed a 9th Millennium Development Goal of a 50% reduction in the amount of water wasted in agricultural production.

Dr. Vaclav Smil of the University of Manitoba, Canada, noted that with increased quantities of food and bioenergy, "production is no longer the problem. Its impact is the problem." Those impacts range from nitrogen and carbon increases to declining services from water starved ecosystems. The experts concluded dramatic reductions in water lost during production processes and changes in consumer behaviour are keys to ensuring water security.

### Investors Still Only Toe-Deep in the Water

The finance sector still seems to have cold feet when it comes to investing in the water sector, according to Sunday's forum Poverty Wealth and Water: Prioritising Water Investments. The number of water funds is increasing, however, concerns over profit generation, high risk/low return, inefficiency and instability inhibit investors. Nevertheless, the bottom line is that in the 1990s, \$280 billion was spent dealing with the aftermath of water-related disasters that \$40 billion in preventive investment could've helped avert.

In order to break the bottleneck in water investment, hydro-projects on the macro and micro scale must avoid being presented primarily as social marketing plans and stress the financial engineering aspects. This will help prevent investors' "cold water fear of jumping into the pool."

## Caucusing in the Caucasus

The southern Caucasus region is a test case in hostile neighbours finding common ground over shared water resources. Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan - under the auspices of ENVSEC, OSCE and NATO - have managed to set up data-sharing and other mechanisms that could plausibly be the foundation of an IRBM-based institutional structure for joint resource administration. This was one of the cases covered in Sunday's seminar OSCE and UNECE Experience in Transboundary Water Cooperation.

The role of the UNECE and OSCE is to promote IWRM principles among stakeholders, as has happened between Ukraine and Moldova. This can be challenging, given the regional specific ties, which has contributed to the erosion, pollution and eutrophication of the Black Sea. An NGO-led initiative kick started a paradigm shift that has increased the depth of stakeholder involvement and set the stage for future cooperation over more than just water.

## Trigger Happy

It is an all too common lament among academics and civil society activists: weaning policy makers off of entrenched, inefficient water management policies and practices requires more than just common sense appeals to move towards more sustainable models. In rare cases, e.g. South Africa or Chile, a seismic change in political leadership, allied in a coincidence of interests with the old technocracy, can induce radically improved approaches to water governance on national scales. More often than not though, triggers occur when there is a crisis, an ideological shift, or some economic condition that necessitates a change in policy. But does a country have to hit the wall before it fundamentally alters its water policies? This was one of the issues raised at the seminar entitled How to Trigger and Sustain Water Policy Change.

Sunita Narain, the 2005 recipient of the Stockholm Water Prize, said that "resistance gets the most change," meaning that triggers can occur when the inertia of poor policy seems to be insurmountable. Paraphrasing Gandhi, she proposed that knowledge-based activists must "work the change," the foundation of which is knowing why one wants such a change and how best to capture the imagination of the public and media in order to achieve it. In this way, triggers can be created without having to wait for disaster.

## Making Knowledge Smarter

To meet the Millennium Development Goals set for 2015, better sharing of experience and know-how in agriculture and water management is vital. The seminar, Addressing the MDGs Through Exchange of Knowledge and Technology, took a step forward in developing mechanisms for international stakeholders to improve North-South knowledge of sustainable water management practices.

## World's Eye on Sanitation in 2008

With the upcoming International Year of Sanitation in 2008, global attention will focus on the critical need for improved health and hygiene. Sanitation and Hygiene: Approaches for Sustainable Development resulted in a series of "Sustainable Sanitation" advocacy messages for future projects. A follow-up seminar, The Killing Fields of Sanitation, was also held.

## Human Development Needs New Course on Carbon

According to The Human Development Report 2007, massive human development costs will result from climate change unless we dramatically reduce carbon emissions within the next decade. Sunday's side event Climate Change and the Life Cycle of Disadvantages, introduced the theme for the upcoming report set to be released this November. Speakers discussed water as the link between climate, human societies and ecosystems, while emphasising an immediate need for adaptation measures. The report, they said, explains why we have less than 10 years to change course in carbon emissions in order to avoid long term low development traps among the world's most vulnerable populations.

Monday, August 13

## Kicking off the Week

The opening session featured many luminaries from the water world. SIWI Executive Director Anders Berntell kicked things off, followed by Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt, who exhorted those assembled to keep fighting and raise awareness of water issues. "It's the drop that hollows out the stone," he told them. Then Mikael Söderlund, Stockholm's Deputy Mayor, spoke about municipal water issues. UN Habitat Under-Secretary-General Dr. Anna Tibaijuka explained how that in the immediate post-WWII period, the UN's founders prioritised economic and security issues over environmental ones, but that now water and climate issues have been elevated to the top of the agenda as well. This year's Stockholm Water Prize winner, Professor Perry McCarty, spoke of the advances in anaerobic processes that can speed up the natural flushing of polluted groundwater, which normally takes centuries or even millennia. This was followed by talks from Margaret Catley-Carlson, Chair, Global Water Partnership, United Nations Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation and Dr. Vaclav Smil, Distinguished Professor, University of Manitoba, Canada. Gram Vikas Executive Director Joe Madiath gave colourful accounts of his organization's sanitation efforts in rural India, where in some villages a fine of fifty rupees are imposed on those who use the outdoors as their toilet. Once collected, the fifty rupees are split between community organisers and the one who catches the violator, which has spawned a cottage industry of vigilant lookouts in treetops. The session concluded with a talk by Dr. Monirul Mirza of Environment Canada and a lead author for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

## Let's Stop Playing Games on Climate Change

The World Water Week high level panel discussion on Climate Change, Water and Vulnerability inspired passionate debate over the most relevant question left on the climate table: What do we now?

Moderated by Mr. Adrian Finighan of CNN International, the distinguished panel featured South African Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry H.E. Mrs. Lindiwe Hendricks, Dr. Monirul Mirza of Environment Canada, Dr. Pavel Kabat of Earth System Science & Climate Change Group, Mr. Colin Sabol of ITT Fluid Technology, Professor Jörg Imberger of the University of Western Australia, and Human Development Report Co-author Mr. Claes Johansson.

The speakers made appeals for a shift in global attitudes, priorities and development models, and called on governments to take climate and water issues more seriously. "Climate risks are wavering heavily on the lives of the poor, and those living in poverty are not able to withstand the shocks," said Claes Johansson. Measures to increase adaptive capacities among vulnerable populations, coupled with deeper commitments to mitigate carbon emissions, were put forward as immediate ways to minimise present and future devastation. Their message was clear: we need to act now, waiting is no longer an option.

## Who'll Store the Rain?

In order to make the MDGs reality, new solutions can come in old packages. To this end, Uganda's Water Minister Maria Mutagamba extolled the virtues of rainwater harvesting, a practice "as old as history itself." As chair of Rainwater Harvesting for Climate Change Adaptation and for Accelerating MDG Implementation, Ms. Mutagamba presided over a panel discussion that covered, among other things, the wide-ranging impacts of under-utilisation of rainwater. For example, in dry areas, an average of 4-5 hours/day is spent fetching water. Addressing this problem can be local, long-term and low-tech. It takes about a week to construct a 10 cubic meter rainwater harvesting tank, which usually has a life span of 20 years.

## Partnering Across the Subcontinental Divide

Bringing women closer to the decision-making process about water practices has been one of the key successes of the Crossing Boundaries Project in Bangladesh, India and Nepal. Those presenting at Crossing Boundaries, Meeting Future Challenges - Capacity Building in IWRM and Gender and Water in South Asia talked about their efforts at facilitating higher education partnerships across South Asia that stress "research with an impact."

## The Fifth Dimension

Organisers of the 5th World Water Forum to be held in Istanbul in 2009 solicited input from the audience at Monday's lunchtime side event. Expressing their intentions to make the World Water Council event more multi-stakeholder and real world focused, they announced that there will be a political component that encourages direct interaction between policy makers and those working with water issues. During the question and answer period, an attendee remarked that all too often water conferences tend to be an exercise in preaching to the choir, and need to include those outside the water box who might help integrate trade and labour issues into the overall debate.

Tuesday, August 14

### Aquifers Under the Desert

There are 8 different words in Arabic to express "dying of thirst," a telling fact in a region where none of the shared aquifers are jointly managed. In order to strike a balance between water availability and demand, more international attention needs to be diverted to developing groundwater agreements among the nations of the region. The Transboundary Groundwater Resources in the Middle East Region seminar featured lively discussions of a part of the world where power relations usually trump governance principles. As one panelist noted, the political leadership of the region are prone to seek short-term results, which is usually at odds with sustainable water resource planning. One attendee noted that the Palestinian-Israeli Joint Water Committee was one example of coordination between neighboring political entities. However, given the region's lack of a widely practiced framework based on international law, weak actors in the region will be stuck with the status quo unless they can make coalitions that allow them greater negotiating power.

### Combating Inaction

In the workshop "Making Governance Systems Effective," participants explored legislative and economic solutions to water inequity. Speakers dissected existing government structures, examining shortcomings and feasible action plans in developing countries. Participants discussed legislative enforcement and mitigation of corruption, especially on the transboundary level. Speakers stressed the need for dialogue among stakeholders, with an emphasis on economic incentives for water sustainability. Cooperation within the public and private sector is key. "We create awareness of the benefits of collaboration," said UNDP's Joakim Harlin, the chair of the workshop. Speakers called for leaders to take responsibility for previous failures in policy and embed water equity standards in the political framework.

### Target Practice

According to the workshop International Targets and National Implementation, in order to ensure long-term benefits and global progress towards the MDGs, national political commitment is paramount. Leading scientists evaluated challenges and opportunities in monitoring and implementation in nations as diverse as Bangladesh, Uganda, Israel and Ukraine.

The day-long event focused on questions critical to our ability to move forward in the quest to improve human health and livelihoods: How can we enhance political will for implementation? “Political will comes from the people themselves, taking active part and engaging decision makers,” said Jon Lane of the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council. Speakers and participants energetically debated how science can be better used to translate information into political commitment and how these commitments can bring about tangible improvements in human development. The discourse highlighted the need for the scientific community to improve its ability to make recommendations more accessible to political actors.

### Saving the Slums

Nearly one billion people live in overcrowded urban areas that lack adequate shelter, water supply and sanitation. At Integrated Slum Upgrading: Meeting the Water and Sanitation Needs of the Poorest of the Poor, speakers presented current work underway to improve the conditions and planning in destitute areas throughout Asia, Africa and the Americas. Participants packed the room to discuss ways to engage local governments and empower communities through people’s participation and micro-finance initiatives. In the afternoon, H.R.H. Willem-Alexander hosted the seminar Practical Approaches to Pro-Poor Water and Sanitation Governance that expanded on this crucial theme by devising clear steps to better connect water and national poverty eradication policies.

### European Union Water Initiative: It Was a Very Varied Year

The EU Water Initiative released a draft report detailing their work over the past year. While progress was “slow and varied across regions,” presenters at the EU Water Initiative Partners Meeting - Multistakeholder Forum Part I reiterated their efforts’ strengths. The EUWI is based on 4 pillars: reinforcing political will for concrete action, improving coordination, increasing efficiency and water governance for long term sustainability.

### Getting off the Fence

Getting beyond the basic levels of corporate social responsibility is one of the main goals of the World Council for Sustainable Development. Their workshop Business Working on Water - Beyond the Fenceline, engaged participants to think about possibilities, and cited examples such as water supplies destined for mining operations being tapped along the way in order to give communities access to clean water.

### Mexico Wins Stockholm Junior Water Prize

Adriana Alcántara Ruiz, Dalia Graciela Díaz Gómez and Carlos Hernández Mejía from Mexico were awarded the prestigious 2007 Stockholm Junior Water Prize in a formal ceremony in the Stockholm City Conference Centre/Folkets Hus during the World Water Week in Stockholm. The students from the Cultural Institute of Paideia in Toluca, Mexico, received the Prize from the hands of H.R.H. Crown Princess Victoria on behalf of the Stockholm Water Foundation. They also received a USD 5,000 scholarship and a crystal sculpture.

Wednesday, August 15

### Storm on the Water

At the opening session of Water and Climate Day, speakers from the IPCC presented the findings of the latest climate simulation models and their implications for global and regional water management. The presenters were frank on the considerable challenges we face, stressing that water and climate issues are not future concerns, but problems of yesterday and today. “It’s quite clear that current water management practices are likely to be inadequate to reverse the impacts of climate change,” Dr. Zbigniew Kundzewicz of the IPCC said. Flexible water management that accommodates new understandings of climate change scenarios was pushed as imperative in order for societies to successfully adapt. In practice, this involves performing risk assessment and cost-benefit analysis of management schemes which can both protect the vulnerable against hazards and take advantage of new opportunities to increase water efficiency and equity. Dr. Bryson Bates compared the successful adaptation policies implemented in Western Australia and the static management practices precipitating the current water crisis in Queensland to highlight our role in determining what the consequences of global change will be. A classic axiom suits our modern circumstances, “Failing to Plan is Planning to Fail.”

### Sanitation Seminar a Real Lavatory of Ideas

At the UN-Water Seminar: Preparing a Final Action Plan for the International Year of Sanitation 2008, Prince Willem-Alexander asserted that “every dollar spent on sanitation is five dollars spent on at least five other MDGs.” The cross-cutting impact that lack of access to sanitation is indisputable: a child dies every 15 seconds from water-borne diseases, mothers die in childbirth, menstruating girls skip school because of poor facilities, and so on. To make matters worse, there seems to be an aversion to open discussions of hygiene issues in the larger water discourse. This, the seminar’s speakers agreed, is counterproductive to say the least. The International Year of Sanitation is meant to address the problem, and organisers are hoping that 2008 will be the year that the stigma surrounding sanitation is overcome.

### Access to Water at any Cost

If water doesn’t have a price, it doesn’t have value. This was according to one of the panellists at The Global Water Challenge - A Shared Responsibility. He cited the case of subsidised irrigation in Mexico and correlated it with the high levels of water loss there. Nestlé - who convened the

seminar and is one of the sponsors of World Water Week - believes that the immense water use in the agricultural sector can become more sustainable through economic incentives that will drive farmers to use more efficient methods. For its activities overall, Nestlé has recently published a comprehensive Water Management report, describing the initiatives it has taken in its own business and indirectly in its value chain to meet the challenge. During the seminar's coffee break, ATTAC, an NGO working for global justice, announced their opposition to World Water Week's association with Nestlé. Nestlé's representatives and World Water Week organisers responded by inviting ATTAC to organise a seminar and constructively join the discussion.

Later in the day another seminar, Founders Business Seminar: When Sustainable Water Use Becomes Everybody's Business - Linking Investors, Business Sectors and Water Sector and Water Sector Stakeholders, grappled with the issues of public/private collaboration. The moderator pointed out that while reaching the MDG targets will require capital investment from the private sector, "civil society has strange feeding habits. NGOs tend to bite the hand that feeds them."

### Asia's Hydrohub Honoured

PUB Singapore was awarded the 2007 Stockholm Industry Award for their impressive work to transform the urban nation into a model of smart and sustainable water management practice. PUB, the creator of NEWater, has established a blueprint for water industry success: sound policy, investment in technology, close partnerships with business and community, and cost-effective policy implementation. Using four "national taps:" imported, desalinated, rain-captured, and recycled water, the public corporation, which provide 100% of Singapore's water, will increase its NEWater production to 30% within the next five years.

### Burning Issues

In Indonesia alone, the burning of tropical peatlands, primarily resulting from palm oil and peat production, causes an equivalent of 8% of the annual worldwide greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels. According to the Water and Climate Day side event Clearing the Smoke in South-East Asia, restoring these ecosystems not only reduces greenhouse gases at a fraction of the cost of other mitigation efforts, but also reduces poverty, improves health, and saves biodiversity. Speaker Jane Madgewick concluded, "Restoring peatlands is a no-brainer. This will bring results and do it quickly."

### Capable Hands

At the workshop Building Capacity for Future Challenges, focus was placed on tapping the greatest renewable resource we have: human talent and ingenuity. Participants discussed ways to improve knowledge sharing and networking activities in the water sector. Building teams with diverse talents was recommended to reduce internal competition and improve organisations' abilities to communicate important messages.

Thursday, August 16

## Cities for the Future

With more than half the global population, over 3.2 billion people, living in urban areas, humanity is for the first time in history truly an “urban species.” According to The Royal Colloquium in Honour of H.M. King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden, *Cities at Risk: A Warmer World and the Big Chill for Urban Planners*, the capacity of our now urban species to adapt to climate change will be decided largely by how we construct and use our cities. Speakers stressed the stark challenge ahead and the increasing vulnerability that cities face from rising sea levels, stronger, less predictable and more frequent natural disasters. Housing and transport that is more energy efficient were recommended as positive improvements. The most essential steps, however, to building resilient cities are to fortify existing infrastructure in vulnerable areas and to ensure all new urban expansion is built in less disaster prone locations, using construction methods that take climate uncertainties into account. As Anna Tibaijuka, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, explained, this profound challenge is neither simple nor singular; and if any solution is to work for nations in the developing world it will require great global progress on poverty, gender and international inequity issues. Still, she encouraged everyone to renew their commitment to urban development, “I invite all of you to change your professions a little bit so we all become urban planners.”

Stockholm Water Foundation Chair Peter Forssman ended the colloquium with humour and hope. He joked, “Well, your Majesty, happy birthday. Someone asked me what kind of gift is this? A depressing seminar about catastrophic problems we can not solve?” Rejecting defeatist outlooks he noted recent success in conquering the Freon emission crisis, and pointed out the water management model in Singapore as an inspiring example to the world. “A serious seminar creates reflection. Reflection creates awareness. Awareness brings about change. Humanity has always proved itself under hard conditions to develop solutions.”

## Microbes and More

Professor Perry L. McCarty from Stanford University, California, a pioneer in the development of the understanding of biological and chemical processes for the safe supply and treatment of water, received the 2007 Stockholm Water Prize on August 16 from the hands of H.M. King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden. The ceremony took place at the Stockholm City Hall.

## All the World's a Stage...

Much progress in public health has been made since the founding of the WHO, when the reigning catchphrase was “environmental sanitation.” The seminar *Progress in Environmental Public Health* tracked the progress made from the landmark 1978 Alma Atta Declaration onto the work being done today. Participants painted a mixed but encouraging picture of the situation. They noted the paradoxical situation where exponential progress in terms of number of actors involved

in the public health and environment sector leading to an increasingly fragmented and complicated field. As a result, the overall effort to combat preventable diseases, create better hygiene conditions, provide more access to safe water, etc., all continue to face challenges. For instance, while fresh water supplies can be extended through re-use of water for agriculture, there are consequent risks that the soil will be contaminated by that water and adversely affect consumers of produce coming from the polluted fields.

### Unshrinking Sanitation Capacity

There are many factors to consider when the talk turns to getting decent sanitation within reach of those who lack access, which is nearly half the world's population. The panellists participating in the seminar *The Killing Fields of Sanitation - Political Neglect* touched on many of the basic capacity building strategies. One speaker noted that the declining role of the state over the past 25 years has set the stage for the lack of capacity today. "People forget that in the 1980s, when Tanzania refused to shrink its public services like sanitation, it was subject to a donor boycott by the world, except for the Scandinavian countries." The upcoming International Year of Sanitation 2008 and its potential effects in achieving MDGs was also discussed.

### Heaven Can't Wait

According to the *Water, Ethics, Religion* seminar, religion can play a key role in furthering human development efforts. Representatives from a wide variety of creeds and denominations from every corner of the world came together to discuss the role that religious ethics can play in driving users, stakeholders and policy makers to foster more sustainable water practices and help achieve the MDGs. The panel asserted that while science tells us what can be done, religion tells us what ought to be done. As one speaker reminded the audience, this function of organised faith can be quite powerful: "Don't underestimate religion's ability to mobilise and motivate authorities and social assets to get things done."

### Breaking the Cycle

At the workshop *Water - A Brake on Economic Development*, participants discussed ways arid and semi-arid regions can steer clear of paths that lead to vicious cycles of water scarcity, poverty traps and environmental degradation. Case studies from North Africa, India, China and the Middle East pointed out potential pitfalls for planning in water-scarce regions while displaying opportunities to improve groundwater management and rainwater harvesting practices. Participants suggested that tackling the simultaneous increases in water demand and hydrological variability requires steady sources of investment and multi-pronged approaches to improve the socio-economic efficiency of water use.

### Setting the Trend

Today, we lie halfway between the pronouncement of the MDG targets in 2000 and the deadline

in 2015. But where do we stand in terms of progress made towards our goals? On Thursday, two seminars looked at trend-related monitoring and evaluation of water supply and sanitation and integrated water resources management. The open discussions worked to find ways to better conduct and analyse evaluation processes.

### New Capacity Initiative

The UN-Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development (UNW-DPC) was launched in Bonn, Germany, on 1 August and announced during the World Water Week. It is hosted by the United Nations University and funded by the German ministries of BMZ and BMBF. Dr. Reza Ardakanian, the founding director of this programme, says the work plan presented in Stockholm will follow up on the Johannesburg targets and Millennium Development Goals related to water.

### Voices from the World Water Week

What do you consider being the most pressing water global issue right now?

“Pollution of water due to industrial urbanisation performed in an unplanned way, making clean freshwater less accessible.”

Shaikh Halim, VERC, Bangladesh

“Sustainable sanitation for all. We need to assure better governance and make advanced technology options available to more people.”

Helmut Lehn, Forschung-szentrum Karlsruhe, Germany

“Lack of political will to make a significant change for the poorest or the poor women and men in the world's remote - no-go areas.”

Joke Muylwijk, GWA, Netherlands

Why do you attend the World Water Week?

“This a good forum for known scientists to share experiences with young scientists as well as getting updated evidence of water related issues.”

Alebel Weldesillassie, IWMA, Ethiopia

“World Water Week is a great collective opportunity to get together with new and old partners.”

Köeti Sousa Serôdio, Sida, Mozambique

“To motivate students and future decision makers to care for the global environment. It is inspiring to see so many nations with so many young people working so hard for the same good goal.”

Camilla Mathisen & Torill Roeggen, Working with the Norwegian Junior Team, Kastellet Skola

“I represent a new water company in Kenya. We are concerned about the usage of water resources and we are here to learn more to make the future of the company sustainable.”

John K. Nyumu, Nairobi Water Company, Kenya

What is the greatest climate change challenge?

“It will be challenging to tackle in Africa where people are not prepared for it technically and socially.”

Joseph Sang, ICRAF, Kenya

“We have to be smart. We have to use conservation, reuse, recycling, reduction of demand and land management. If we do that, we should be alright for the next 50 years.”

Peter Rogers, Harvard University, USA

“Change is necessary for individual survival and global survival. If we do not change our lifestyle, nothing will happen. We have to internalise it, especially in the Western world.”

Björn Guterstam, GWP, Sweden

“We need political commitments by the right governments to make tangible and meaningful impacts in the right places. We cannot look at business as usual. We must back cast - look at our goals for the future and assess tangible steps to get there.”

Dana Cardoo, Institute for Sustainable Futures, Australia

How can we raise the water issue on political agenda?

“The first step is to get a clear political message - The reason why its difficult to is that water is the ultimate common property resource dilemma. Nobody owns the solution, therefore no one owns the political solution.”

Domjinic Waughray, WEF, Switzerland

“For now this link to climate change is good. It’s quite concrete. People are concerned with climate, so pointing out that linkage can help.”

Karin Bagge, Political Advisor to European Parliament MP

“The media should give greater attention. The organisations in water sector must cooperate with media more to get indirect pressure to politics.”

Urooj Amjad, BDP Water and Sanitation

### **Links**

World Water Week in Text and Photos: <http://www.worldwaterweek.org>

Press Kit: [http://www.worldwaterweek.org/Downloads/WWW\\_2007\\_Press\\_Kit.pdf](http://www.worldwaterweek.org/Downloads/WWW_2007_Press_Kit.pdf)

**SIWI - Independent and Leading-Edge Water Competence for Future-Oriented Action**  
The Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) is a policy institute that contributes to international efforts to find solutions to the world's escalating water crisis. SIWI advocates future-oriented, knowledge-integrated water views in decision making, nationally and internationally, that lead to sustainable use of the world's water resources and sustainable development of societies.