

## **Climate Change issues in the 5th World Water Forum Istanbul, Turkey, March 16 to 22, 2009**

The 5th World Water Forum convened in Istanbul, Turkey, from Monday, 16 March to Sunday, 22 March 2009. Around 30000 people from 192 countries representing governments local authorities, 263 parliamentarians, 100 ministers and heads of State), UN agencies, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, academia, business and industry, indigenous groups, youth and the media had participated in the largest international event on water. The main theme of the 5th World water Forum's was "bridging divides for water". Its main outputs include a Ministerial Declaration and the Istanbul Water Consensus, agreed to by local authorities. The World Water Forum is convened every three years by the World Water Council (WWC) and a host country. The 6<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum will be in South Africa in March of 2012.

Participants agreed that water must be a priority on the climate change agenda. They stressed on the need to focus simultaneously on mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to climate change with equity and burden-sharing approach.

### **Climate-related Disasters**

Participants discussed about the increaseing trend of disasters due to climate change and recognized that disasters are initially characterized by intense media coverage and goodwill from donors but a financing gap creates when international attention decreases. During the panel sessions on "management of water-related disasters in view of climate change", panelists called for the improvement of climate data and modeling products to provide better seasonal predictions of rain. It is also highlighted that the data has to be presented in such a way that politicians can understand. Key outcomes on the topic "management of water-related disasters in view of climate change" of the Forum are as follows:

- The need to prepare for the extreme effects of climate change;
- The importance of interdisciplinary cooperation in mitigation efforts; and
- The potential for establishing a network of national climate services to improve management of reservoirs and food production.

### **Climate Change Adaptation**

During the discussion on the distinction between adaptation and development, it is shared that confusion between the adaptation and development has hindered project design and funding. Participants have stressed on the need to develop not only new sources of and mechanisms for

funding, but also well-designed, viable projects that use funds effectively. Considering the impacts of the financial crisis on government funding on adaptation, participants called for secure, long-term, predictable funding for adaptation incorporating the need for distinct approaches in different locations. It has been emphasized in the Forum that traditional cost-benefit assessments and technical approaches are inadequate for addressing climate change adaptation. Many participants highlighted the need to diversify the range of tools and management practices available to address adaptation.

In order to adapt to climate change, policy makers highlighted the critical need to: develop financing mechanisms to ensure investment; use public awareness to catalyze action and invest in science and technology development.

Key outcomes on the topic “adapting to climate change” of the Forum are as follows:

- The need to gear national budgets towards adaptation;
- Development of a framework for adaptation financing;
- Engagement with the private sector to find solutions;
- Device mechanisms to monitor the use of adaptation funding;
- The need to link water and adaptation and address adaptation as a “way of life”

## **Political Commitment on Water**

The 5th World Water Forum’s political process comprised four levels of politicians: heads of state; ministers; parliamentarians; and local authorities. The heads of state adopted a high-level appeal for action to governments worldwide; the ministers adopted a Ministerial Declaration; the parliamentarians summarized discussions on numerous contentious issues surrounding water; and the local authorities adopted the Istanbul Water Consensus. The ministerial roundtable highlighted the need for robust policies for the prevention of water-related disasters and risk reduction; national flood and drought management plans; information sharing, data collection and harmonization of indicators; and preventive actions for reducing the impact of water-related disasters. They ministerial roundtable acknowledged the importance of sub-regional initiatives as well as international strategies to combine ICZM and IWRM for freshwater-coastal areas”.

On the subject of “*water for food and poverty eradication*,” ministers highlighted the need to addressing climate change; and providing adequate funding to mobilize and upscale investments. During roundtable discussions on “bridging the water and climate agendas,” ministers have agreed to increasing importance of adaptation, the different needs faced by various regions and the synergies between mitigation and adaptation.

Ministerial Roundtables have presented a clear message that water should be used as a framework for planning and action to the 3rd World Climate Conference in September 2009 as well as at the climate change negotiations in Copenhagen in December 2009.

The Ministerial Declaration and the IWC are the two most important outcomes of the 5th World Water Forum.

#### **THE MINISTERIAL DECLARATION:**

- 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.

#### **THE ISTANBUL WATER CONSENSUS (IWC)**

- Good quality water supply and sanitation is a basic human right;
- Water is a public good that should be under strict public control;
- A consistent approach at the local, regional and national levels is needed to adapt to global change and achieve equitable and optimal sustainable management of water resources;
- Cost recovery should be achieved in an equitable manner that ensures provision of services to the most vulnerable in society;
- Water security should be based on the principle of equitable and reasonable allocation;
- Capacity building, creative finance mechanisms, and regulatory frameworks should facilitate access to water and sanitation; and
- Local and regional decision makers should be integrated into policy processes at higher levels of governance.

In order to address these objectives, local authorities' committ themselves to:

- Assessing the pressures on water resources and aquatic biodiversity;
- Making inventories of local and regional policies and planning to be adapted to challenges threatening water resources in the medium and long term;
- Initiating dialogues with stakeholders to define local priorities and plans of action;
- Defining objectives and measurable targets related to the IWC objectives; and
- Implementing the action plans to improve service provision and increase local resilience.

### **Climate Change highlights in the 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum**

- Ger Bergkamp, **World Water Council (WWC)**, defined that the term "climate change" for the water community means "adaptation."
- Veysel Eroğlu, **Minister of Environment and Forestry, Turkey**, urged development of a financial structure for adaptation funding.
- Baratli Koshmatov, **Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Water Resources and Processing Industry, Kyrgyzstan**, urged to undertake measures to facilitate adaptation to climate change.
- Tineke Huizinga, **Vice Minister for Transport, Public Works and Water Management, the Netherlands**, said adaptation is as important as mitigation.
- Julia Marton-Lefèvre, **IUCN**, stressed the importance of natural infrastructure, such as aquifers and river basins for adaptive measures, in addition to built infrastructure, such as dams and dikes.
- Lindiwe Benedicta Hendricks, **Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry, South Africa**, highlighted the implications of adapting water use to availability rather than focusing on supply management.
- Jan Dusík, **First Deputy Minister of Environment, Czech Republic**, stressed on the need for the development of a framework for action on adaptation at the climate change negotiations in Copenhagen in December 2009.
- Roger Pulwarty, **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), USA**, noted that processes for learning and sharing knowledge must be added to the climate change dialogue.
- Henk van Schaik, of **Co-operative Programme on Water and Climate (CPWC)**, highlighted the links between water, climate change, disasters and migrations on "human development and the MDGs." Marloes Bakker of CWPC noted that the confusion between adaptation and development has hindered project design and funding, and stressed that funding for adaptation must be sufficient, predictable, equitable and effective.
- Mohamed Ben Sakka, **Ministry of Agriculture and Hydrological Resources, Tunisia** stressed on the country level focus on long-term strategies instead of short-term crisis management for adaptation.
- Eberhard Goll, **German Organization for Technical Cooperation**, highlighted the importance of a multilevel approach to adaptation, involving local-, regional- and national-level plans.