

# OUTREACH 2005



BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

MONDAY 19TH

## RISING TIDE?

### Charting the Course on the International Water Agenda

The first global debate on water was held in 1977 in Mar del Plata, Argentina. In-depth discussions were held and thus the documents that were produced contained lots of bright ideas for effective and efficient water management. Since then, over more than twenty five years, huge volume of water has flowed through the Ganges and the Thames but has there been progress in-terms of emergence of new ideas and approaches, and how much of those ideas are really being practiced at ground level? We posed this same question at Jeju as UNEP GCSS/GMEF prepares for CSD12 to be held in New York next month.

The global process of consultation was re-initiated in Dublin in 1992. It produced four convincing policy statements through which the entire water management at global, regional and national level would be rationalized. Known as *Dublin Principles* these were appropriately incorporated in Agenda 21. Since then, a plethora of global and regional events have further debated the way forward on the water agenda. In 2002, at WSSD we have reached a general acceptance of the importance of Integrated Water Resources (IWRM) with governments agreeing to adopt, by 2005, national IWRM strategies and water efficiency plans. Currently an estimated one-third of the countries would comply with the target and there is a vital need to accelerate action for addressing the challenges of water management.

Thus the answer to the question we had posed earlier, is possibly that we have managed to define IWRM and set out the essential ingredients for it but we are still debating over implementation strategies.

Water is essential for our lives and our livelihoods and it is essential for the ecosystems on which we, as individuals and as a species, depend for our lives and our livelihoods. Historically, water management has been a central driver of human cooperation and a hallmark of human achievement from ancient Mesopotamian

irrigation systems to Roman aqueducts to Classical Chinese flood control systems. Indeed, modern intergovernmental organizations spring from the 19<sup>th</sup> century river commissions of Europe. But water, or the lack of access to it, can also be a driver of human conflict. And too much of the world today does not have adequate access to healthy water for personal, agricultural or commercial uses.

In recognition of these inequities, the UN General Assembly adopted the Millennium Development Goal to reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water by 2015. At the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), the international community adopted a complimentary target to reduce by half by 2015 the proportion of people without access to basic sanitation.

While we focus on water supply and sanitation, it is important that we also embrace the wider framework within which the provision of clean water must be expanded. This includes WSSD commitments to develop integrated water resource management and water efficiency plans by 2005, to significantly reduce the rate

of biodiversity loss by 2010, and in, the widest sense, manage our natural wealth sustainably.

The challenge is to keep our eye on the immediate needs of the millions without access to clean water and simultaneously ensure the provision of clean water in the long term. The latter will not be achieved without taking a holistic approach to water resources management, or without conserving our natural ecosystems as an integral part of the infrastructure needed to deliver water to our homes. The international community's response to date has been far too narrowly confined to debates about distribution of water between competing sectors and needs, and has largely failed to address water within an ecosystem context from source to sea. UNEP's working paper for the GCSS/GMEF proposed the Ecosystem Approach for IWRM, which would include the following elements:

- i) assessment of vulnerability and resilience of water ecosystems to cumulative anthropogenic and natural pressures;

(Continued on page 2)



Political Will: *Coming in or going out?*

- ii) mitigation of the impacts of urbanization on water ecosystems,
- iii) management of environmental flows i.e. ensuring minimum stream flows would be essential.
- iv) the principles and practice of IWRM with the integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) should be linked up;
- v) water supply and sanitation practices are environmentally sustainable must be ensured, and;
- vi) pressure on ecosystem arising from poverty, and pressure on poverty arising from degraded ecosystem must be alleviated.

The Jeju meeting presents an ideal opportunity for governments, intergovernmental agencies and Major Groups to share their experiences in integrating poverty alleviation, conservation and watershed management. During CSD 12, governments will present their integrated water resource management plans, as promised in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. In light of this it is essential that governments, intergovernmental agencies and major groups implement policies and measures to realize the international targets related to water as contained in the MDG and JPOI. A step forward in achieving these targets would include an increased attention on the following issues:

- i) adoption of a systems approach to water supply and sanitation;
- ii) establishment of 'environmental flow requirement' in the context of river basin planning and IWRM;
- iii) financing of the project that aim at maintenance of nature's infrastructure, and;
- iv) improvement in governance of water management.

The Ministerial Consultations, in Jeju, has endorsed the approaches contained in the discussion paper and approaches summarized in the preceding paragraphs. They argued for adoption of an ecosystem approach in water resources management; suggested that flow regimes that balance human and ecosystem needs are ensured in all basins of the world; proposed for protection of coastal environment by ensuring adequate supply of upstream flows; and recommended that all stakeholders are effectively involved to improve good governance in water management. Now it remains to be seen that how much of these approaches will take roots at ground level.

*Ainun Nishat and Sebastian Winkler, IUCN – The World Conservation Union*

## Editorial

UNEP's recent Global Ministerial Environment Forum was an interesting, if not groundbreaking, event. Apart from the beautiful location and silky smooth running, the gathering offered an interesting insight into government and stakeholder thinking on environmental aspects of water, sanitation and human settlements.

Admittedly, there were no headline grabbing developments. A lot of the language used was familiar to seasoned conference hacks, but the tone seemed to change. That intangible *je nais se quoir* that drifts along corridors unencumbered by brackets.

The closest the Ministerial came to giving this phenomenon a name was perhaps witnessed in the governance discussions, which opted for an 'omnibus approach' to options available. In plain speak - a rarity, I know - it was a 'lets leave most things on the table now, and focus down by our next Governing Council session' tactic. With the Ministerial free from the demands of achieving consensus, governments were able to afford themselves the next 10 months to consider options before the binding GC session, next February.

Again, its not the act itself here that is of interest, but more a case of what that act implies. Following 12 (exhaustive) years of negotiations, the main issue are known and have largely been negotiated to death. The positions of various groups have been stated and stated again, as are the a considerable number of available initiatives, solutions and policy options.

Within that context governments, and lets not forget stakeholders too, essentially have 3 options at their disposal. One: reverse - drop away from priority issues by lowering political will. Two: stagnate -, regurgitating well worn positions. Three: advance - by starting a process of what one observant delegate at the Ministerial called '*An accumulation of small successes*'. It seems consensus is behind door number three.

This bodes well on one level, less so on another. On the bright side, as with the governance discussion, governments can trade between options to achieve best fit options. While these may not be the most optimal approach available, it is at least progress. On the other hand, the dark gloomy cloud lurking within this silver lining is centered around the murky web of governance structures within which this process will unfold. The very mechanisms that led to entrenched positions and 'business as usual' may very well, unless reformed, suffocate any willingness to innovate.

The first case study of the relative merits of 'an accumulation of small successes' will be CSD 12. Its format is new, and offers delegates of all types an opportunity to brainstorm a shopping list of success stories, their replication, constraints and barriers, their removal, and roles and responsibilities around this. This shopping list would then provide the tradable commodities for governments to achieve their small successes, at next years CSD, at UNEP's governing Council and ultimately during the 5 year MDG review.

Of course, there are a lot of assumptions here: That government departments talk to each other within their own national boundaries; that governance structures are open to change from within; that sacred cows are put out to pasture and that resources are committed at meaningful levels to support all those words. After all, its not the talks that take the time, it's the time it takes to implement the talks that takes the time. *T. Middleton,*

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## Outreach 2005

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**Published by,** Stakeholder Forum *for Our Common Future*

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## The Challenge of Achieving the Millennium Development Goals

Since Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment (1972), achievements have been made in protecting the environment through the creation and strengthening of institutional mechanisms. To include, the formation of the United Nations Environment Programme strengthened through the development of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum, Multilateral Environmental Agreements, the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Environmental Management Group. Such mechanisms have been established to address sectoral environmental issues, as well as the inter-linkages between the environment, development and economic concerns. However, despite these advances, the state of the environment continues to decline and the divide between developed and developing countries continues to expand. Indeed during the inaugural session of the 8<sup>th</sup> Global Ministerial Environment Forum of UNEP the critical challenges we face in the areas of water, sanitation and human settlements were explicitly illustrated.

This situation can largely attributed to weak international environmental governance and a lack of political will to commit to both progressive environmental targets and additional sources of finances. The establishment of multilateral environmental agreements, soft law commitments and national policies without due consideration to their relationship with one another, or to the wider international system has resulted in a multifaceted institutional architecture at the international level which lacks cohesion and coherence. This has contributed to a lack of pressure to be placed on governments and international organisations to make difficult political decisions on environmental protection.

Attempt have been made in the past to address this, for example at Rio (1992), Rio+5 (1997), Track 2 of the Secretary Generals Reform Package, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

It has been recognised that the proliferation of environmental agreements, institution, mechanism and processes has exacerbated the fragmentation of international environmental governance. In 1998 the Environmental Management Group was set up by UNEP to address this issue on an ongoing basis, and in particular to make recommendations to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Whilst the Summit did make decisions in an attempt to strengthen international environmental governance through improved coherence between environment, development and economic policies, and through strengthening institutional capacities, in reality the process requires more focused recommendations and political will to effectively bring greater coherence to the international environmental architecture.

At the 8<sup>th</sup> Global Ministerial Environment Forum discussions are again addressing the issue of international environmental governance, drawing on the recommendations made from the Environmental Management Group in preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development and on discussions around strengthening the scientific base of UNEP. These deliberations are set against a backdrop of ongoing discussions around the proposal

of the French Government which recommends the development of a United Nations Environment Programme. As an increasing number of governments, NGO's and other stakeholders begin to pay greater attention to this issue, it is essential that we don't become introspective in our approach. A diversity of issue require attention as outlined below;

The term 'international environmental governance' can be interpreted in many different ways. To ensure all participants are working towards the same purpose, a globally agreed and understood definition of environmental governance should be explored and adopted;

In recognising the complexity of the international architecture, it is recommended that any approach to strengthening and reforming the current system is: evolutionary in nature, is an iterative learning process and whilst being progressive does not place unrealistic demands on both the UN system and its member states;

Civil society offers a wealth of expertise, knowledge and implementation experience. Stakeholders at all levels have a critical role to play in strengthening international environmental governance. Measures should be taken to ensure the full and effective participation of civil society in environmental governance at all levels, and in the decision making processes that leads to its reform.

A current discordance exists between sustainable development and economic policies. This is further compounded by trade and finance rules not being in accordance with environmental agreements. The reform in the international environmental architecture needs to address an increase in the authority of environmental governance to redress the current imbalance between environmental, trade and financial international organisation.

Geographic characteristics request regional specific policies and implementation activities to ensure effective achievement of sound environmental policies. A multi-layered approach to environmental governance could be developed in recognition of this.

It is suggested that UNEP, in collaboration with UNDP and UNCTAD, could have an increased role in country-level capacity building to enable the adoption of mutually supportive national policies. This requires an understanding that greater coherence between trade and environment polices promotes rather than impedes development opportunities;

Discordance exists between environmental, financial, trade, health, planning, and education and development policies at the national level. Fragmentation of national policy has the potential to undermine international environmental governance. New policy development instruments / frameworks could be developed at the national level which ensure due regard is given to national priorities whilst ensuring effective environmental protection;

Policy decisions should always be based on sound scientific evidence. Strengthening of the scientific base of UNEP, to include capacity building for development countries as well as the transfer of environmentally sound technologies is critical for improved environmental governance.

The proliferation of MEAs has placed an increasing burden on

Parties to meet their collective obligations. The development of a mechanism which enables the strengthening of inter-linkages between MEAs will ensure improved coherence in their implementation.

Concerns exist that the dispute settlement mechanism of the WTO undermines the implementation of MEAs. This concerns stems around the evidence that disputes within the WTO have focused on the negative implications of environmental agreements on trade opportunities rather than the adverse effect of trade rules on sustainable development. The development of a neutral compliance mechanisms outside of the WTO would assist in redressing the current in balance between environmental and trade decision making processes, and result in strengthened environmental governance;

Universal Membership of UNEP has been suggested and needs to be reflected on. Discussions on the Universal Membership of UNEP should be separated from deliberations on the development of a new organisation. Further more, Universal Membership should not be discussed as a solution to the vast array of

challenges in achieving strong environmental governance.

Inadequate funding significantly hinders UNEP in delivering its current mandate. It is widely argued that new financing mechanisms need to be identified which result in a stable, predictable, and a broad financial base of UNEP.

These are just a handful of the issues that require attention, and by no means reflect the wealth of arguments currently being put forward on this issue. It seems that whilst we have a difference of opinion on the technical and structural aspects of a reform in the international environmental governance architecture, it seems that there is a broad consensus that reform is nevertheless required. Too long has the environment suffered in the pursuit of development and trade liberalisation. We are presented with an opportunity to ensure that this is no longer the status quo.

*Stakeholder Forum for Our Common Future*

## REGIONAL PREPARATIONS

### **Pan-African Implementation and Partnership Conference on Water**

The Pan-African Implementation and Partnership Conference on Water (PANAFCON), which opened on December 8 simultaneously with the Africa Water Week, ended today in Addis Ababa with an action plan to meet Africa's World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) targets, the African Water Vision and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on water. More than 1000 participants attended the Conference from across the world.

In a continent where more than 300 millions people lack reasonable access to safe water and 14 countries are currently subject to water stress or scarcity, water management has become a development issue.

PANAFCON made proposals for concrete actions in nine key areas: meeting basic needs: water, sanitation and human settlements; water for food security; protecting ecosystems and livelihoods; managing risks: water and climate; financing water infrastructure; integrated water resources management / shared water resources; valuing and allocating water; ensuring water wisdom; and governing water wisely.

In pursuit of the MDGs, about 45 Ministers of Water and Environment from Africa, who attended the Conference, resolved to give special attention to countries likely to miss their targets for safe drinking water and sanitation. They also agreed to establish, next year, a National Task Force on Water and Sanitation which will prepare national plans with service delivery targets for achieving water and sanitation goals by 2015.

During the Conference, the Ministers launched a number of initiatives, including the African Water Facility with a targeted funding of over \$600 million for medium-term projects on water and sanitation; the African Water Journal which will provide an

outlet to disseminate knowledge; the Water and Sanitation for African Cities (Phase II), the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative and the G8 Action Plan on Water for Africa.

They also signed a joint declaration with the European Commission on the implementation of the African-European Union Strategic Partnership on Water Affairs and Sanitation. PANAFCON was organized jointly by the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW), the UN-Water/Africa made up of UN agencies, the African Development Bank and key development partners and with its secretariat located at ECA.

The Ministers welcomed the active participation of civil society organization in PANAFCON and agreed to incorporate civil society and gender issues in policy formulation on water.

In an opening remark on Monday, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa and co-chair of the Conference, Mr. K.Y. Amoako, reminded participants that access to water, which is a basic human need, still eludes a large proportion of Africans. He said "Poor management of this precious gift of nature continues to hinder our progress and is a major constraining factor in food production, health and industrial development". Mr Amoako said there was a large funding gap in the water sector, stating: "The average annual investment between 1990 and 2000 for water supply and sanitation in Africa was 4.6 billion US dollars, or 40% of the requirement for meeting basic needs".

For more information on the PANAFCON, contact:

[www.uneca.org/panafcon](http://www.uneca.org/panafcon)

### **Comparative Analysis of the Regional Implementation Forums**

The 11<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) invited UN Economic Commissions to coordinate and

contribute to the work programme of the CSD at the regional level. To this effect a series of Regional Implementation Forum took place within each of the UN Regions between October 2003 and January 2004. The purpose of these meetings was to identify challenges, constraints and obstacles as well as achievements, recommendations and lessons learned in the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. During the period 2003/2005 specific attention is being paid to; Water, Sanitation and Human Settlements.

The regionalisation of the CSD processes is essential in supporting a bottom-up approach. The effective review of implementation of sustainable development agreements can only occur if monitoring and evaluation takes place at the functional level - most usually the national and sub-nation. It is anticipated that the regional process will enable solutions to be developed which serve specific regional challenges, as well as encouraging the sharing of experiences and lessons learned between regions. Experience of the first round of Regional Implementation Forums so far suggests that this task has at least in part been achieved. However, some key challenges have arisen.

There are clear disparities in the function and form of each of the Regional Implementation Forums. This has resulted in specific issues receiving greater attention within each region. Whilst this is to be expected due to different regional priorities and experience, this needs to be better aligned with the work programme of the CSD to ensure that all issues are dealt with in a balanced manner.

The level of interaction between governments and between government and stakeholders within the Forums has generally been low. More innovative methods of dialogue need to be developed and enacted within the forums. More lively discussion leading to a better exchange of experiences, such as those witnessed at the World Summit during Jan Pronks facilitated session, would be a welcome substitute for pre-prepared governmental statements.

The most notable inconsistency in the Regional Implementation Forums is in the structure of the Chairs Summary. As a result, the outcomes are largely incomparable. The reporting process would benefit from a set of guidelines or the development of a framework to enable all regions to report in a similar fashion. This would both assist the Secretary General in his task of pulling the reports together, and in illustrating common issues for address in the review year.

It is essential that the Regional Process it is structured and used effectively. Critically we need to learn from our experience this time around to determine a process which achieves the objectives of the review process, and delivers results to which action based solutions can be developed. This should be an iterative process, which leads to the strengthening of the process year on year.

*Georgina Ayre – Head of Policy and Research*

## RIO GRINDS

### The light-hearted side of Sustainable Development

*Outreach 2005 is pleased to announce the return of Rio Grinds, injecting humour where others insert brackets. Here at CSD 12 we are dedicating Rio Grinds to friends departed, by asking the question: Where's Andrey?*

*So far Rio Grinds has come up with the following suggestions:*

- A. *Locked in the UN basement;*
- B. *Retired to Siberia with a bottle of Vodka and a lifetimes supply of Marlborough;*
- C. *Setting up UN-theme singles bars on the Lower East side...based on partnerships.*

*Further suggestions are welcome and will be run in future issues. Contact the editor*

In the meantime, for those of you with fond memories of Andrey, this week we will be producing a series of unique Vasilyev memento's. We start today with your very own cut-out and keep 'pop-up' Andrey



Fold Tab

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# MONDAY'S DIARY

10:00-11:30	Conference Room 1: Opening
11:30-1:00	Conference Room 1: Statements - Overall Review
1:15-2:45	Conference Room 1: GEF projects and conservation of fresh water biodiversity
1.15-2.45	Conference Room 6: Water for Birds, Water for People
1.15-2.45	Conference Room D: Inter-American Water Resources Network - A Valuable Tool to Promote Communications Among Partners
3:00-3:40	Sustainable Cities Initiative
3:00-6:00	Conference Room 1: Thematic Discussions on Water
3:00-6:00	Conference Room D: Learning Centre - How to Implement National Sustainable Development Strategies
3:45-4:25	Conference Room 6: Sustainable Rural Development and Ecovillage Training Program
4:30-5:10	Conference Room 6: Local Environmental Planning and Management (EPM)
5:15-6:00	Conference Room 6: Water For Asian Cities, Water for African Cities
6.15-7.45	Conference Room D: A Crises in Global Governance - The Challenge of Achieving the Millennium Development Goals
6.15-7.45	Conference Room 2: Cross sectoral Linkages and Enabling Conditions for Sustainable Development
6.15-7.45	Conference Room 1: Environmental Services Payment Programme - An Integral Response to the Challenges of Sustainable Development

*Outreach 2005 has been made possible due to the support of the following sponsors*



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