

Challenges in Bridging Science and Policy Making – From Stockholm to Johannesburg

The annual UN World Water Day on March 22 has passed. On that day, UN agencies, scientists and several organizations around the world drew attention to the current state of the world's water resources. The same day is also the day for the announcement of the Stockholm Water Prize Laureate.

That day also saw the closing of the UN's Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico. A number of different organizations, including within the UN, have concluded that neither the current level of ambition nor the commitments in Monterrey will be sufficient to reach the targets agreed in the Millennium Declaration.

Water is the Key to Sustainable Development

What the conference in Monterrey failed to realize was that water, itself, is the key to socio-economic development and quality of life. The Stockholm International Water Institute has had this concept as the overarching theme for the Stockholm Water Symposium since 1998.

The International Conference on Freshwater which was arranged in Bonn in December 2001 as a preparation for the Johannesburg process also highlighted this point by choosing as the theme for the conference "Water – a Key to Sustainable Development". The result from the discussion at the Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, however, did not succeed in lifting forward this connection.

Massive Investment Requirements to Reach Millennium Goals

In September 2000 the world's state and gov-

ernmental chiefs declared in the so-called Millennium Declaration to cut in half by 2015 the total number of the world's population who are poor, undernourished, and without access to freshwater. The intention of the top meeting in Johannesburg is to bring about measures to reach this goal.

There are 1.1 billion people who today lack satisfactory access to safe drinking water and another 2.5 billion without adequate sanitation. As a direct result, some five million people die each year from water borne diseases – 10 times the number killed in wars around the globe. One-third of the world's population live in countries currently facing a water shortage, a number that could increase to two-thirds (or about 6 billion people) by 2025.

Estimates indicate that 105 billion dollars in investments are needed in the water sector in developing countries. No individual financial source can alone cover this need. The contributions within developing countries in the water sector must increase as well as private investments within the framework of each country's own firm regulations and control.

In the international co-operation it is entirely necessary that water be given an appreciably higher priority in bilateral aid and the international financing institutions. Such an indication would even encourage other financiers to follow suit.

Fruits of Water Sector Investment

Investment in the water sector will help remedy maladies such as

- The closure of social and economic development to women and children who right now must spend up to six hours per day simply to fetch water.
- Sickness or early death in the working-age population caused by poor water and sanitary conditions. Water is the basis for health and thus the best guarantee for a population that can contribute to the family's and the country's development.
- Overuse and pollution of ecosystems on land and in lakes and water courses. Such ecosystems are decisive because they preserve necessary functions and processes in nature. The cost to the society to recreate these can be immense.
- Pollution caused by inefficient small-scale industry. Such industries should prevent pollution rather than relying on expensive remediation.

Johannesburg Remains

The World Summit on Sustainable Development begins just days after the 12th Stockholm Water Symposium ends. Along with like-minded organizations, SIWI will be involved in the activities in Johannesburg. During this year's symposium, SIWI will prepare a Stockholm Statement together with all participants, summarizing the conclusions from our discussions in recent years, and direct this statement to the World Summit.

There, water must be acknowledged properly as a central key to sustainable social and economic development and quality of life.

Anders Bertell

New SIWI Chief Director is Anders Bertell

Mr. Anders Bertell is the new Chief Director of SIWI. He was previously Water Director at the Swedish Ministry of the Environment and assumed his new position February 1, 2002.

Mr. Bertell, a biologist by training, has worked within the environmental field for more than 20 years. At the Ministry of Environment, he had overall responsibility for national and international water issues. His contact network in Sweden and abroad is therefore extensive.

Internationally, Mr. Bertell worked with overall policy issues within the water area and cooperated with environment ministries and water departments in different countries around the world, with the European Union,

and with organizations both inside and outside the United Nations system.

One of the most important tasks within the European Union was to represent Sweden in the negotiations on and implementation of the Framework Directive on Water. He has also been the Swedish representative in the informal group of EU Water Directors.

Mr. Bertell represented Sweden in the steering committees for two recent global water meetings, the 2nd World Water Forum in The Hague in March 2000 and the International Conference on Freshwater in Bonn in December 2001.

