

# Outputs from the World Water Week

Photo: Stephanie Blenckner, SIWI

The 2007 World Water Week featured a number of new agreements, initiatives, launches and celebrations. A sampling is below:

- To strengthen the capacities of the public water operators that provide more than 90 percent of water and sanitation services in developing nations, UN-HABITAT, the United Nations agency working with human settlements, launched the Global Water Operators Partnership. For more information, visit [www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org).
- 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". Download them at [www.siw.org](http://www.siw.org).
- The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) launched the Global Water Tool, a free and easy-to-use tool for companies and organisations to map their water use and assess risks relative to their global operations and supply chains. For more information, visit [www.wbcd.org/web/watertool.htm](http://www.wbcd.org/web/watertool.htm).
- Professor Perry L. McCarty of Stanford University received the 2007 Stockholm Water Prize worth USD 150,000, for "outstanding achievements" from the hands of H. M. King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden.
- The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) and SIWI announced the opening of the nomination period for the WASH Media Award. For more information, visit [www.wsscc.org/en/media/wash-media-awards](http://www.wsscc.org/en/media/wash-media-awards).
- British charity WaterAid launched its report "Global Cause and Effect: How the Aid System is Undermining the Millennium Development Goals," which argues international donors must replace their pursuit of

single issue "global causes" with systems of aid that are built to respond to the complex needs of poor communities. Download the report at [www.wateraid.org](http://www.wateraid.org).

- The Global Water Partnership announced Letitia A. Obeng as the new Chair of GWP. GWP also released the policy brief "Climate Change Adaptation and Water Management," as well as the book "Sustainable Sanitation in Eastern and Central Europe." For more information, visit [www.gwpforum.org](http://www.gwpforum.org).
- The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida, released a position paper, "Natural Resource Tenure," which shows how development priorities such as pro-poor growth, gender equality, democratic governance, peace and security are all related to and impacted by tenure. Download the report from [www.sida.se](http://www.sida.se).
- The Asian Development Bank released the report "Dignity, Disease and Dollars: Asia's Urgent Sanitation Challenge," outlining its aims to provide 200 million people with sustainable access to safe water supply and improved sanitation and double its pipelined USD 2.2 billion worth of sanitation and wastewater projects between 2006-2010. Download the report at [www.asiandevbank.org/Water/Operations/Sanitation/](http://www.asiandevbank.org/Water/Operations/Sanitation/).
- The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) South Africa presented new technology for removing heavy metals and subsequent radioactivity from mines. For more information, visit [www.csir.co.za](http://www.csir.co.za).
- The Co-operative Programme on Water and Climate (CPWC) presented its new resource centre on water, climate, risk, adaptation and mitigation and released the report "Water, Climate, Risk and Adaptation," which discusses conceptual issues, strategic responses and practical cases in climate change adaptation from a

risk management perspective. For more information, visit [www.waterandclimateinformationcentre.org](http://www.waterandclimateinformationcentre.org).

- The World Water Council (WWC), the General Directorate State Hydraulic Works for Turkey (DSI) and the Secretariat of the 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum released the First Announcement of the 5<sup>th</sup> Forum, titled "Bridging Divides in Water," to be held in Istanbul, March 15-22, 2009. For more information, visit [www.worldwaterforum5.org](http://www.worldwaterforum5.org).
- Borealis and Borouge became a Founder of the Stockholm Water Prize. For more information, visit [www.borealisgroup.com](http://www.borealisgroup.com).
- The International Institute for Environment and Development issued two briefing papers that summarise new research on payments for watershed services in developing nations. For more information, visit [www.iied.org/pubs/newpubs.html](http://www.iied.org/pubs/newpubs.html).
- The International Foundation for Science released its new report on "Strengthening Capacity for Water Resources Research in Countries with Vulnerable Scientific Infrastructure." For more information, visit [www.ifs.se](http://www.ifs.se).
- 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. For more information, visit [www.worldwatermonitoringday.org](http://www.worldwatermonitoringday.org).
- The Water Integrity Network launched its new website to fight corruption in the water sector. Visit it at [www.waterintegritynetwork.net](http://www.waterintegritynetwork.net).



Photo: SIWI

# Smarter, Better, Faster

## Wisdom from the World Water Week

Over 2500 participants from 113 countries gathered in the Swedish Capital for the 2007 World Water Week in Stockholm to attend the exciting series of plenary sessions, workshops, seminars and side events. The week, hosted by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), featured over 140 collaboration organisations. The conference placed focus on numerous issues, such as: addressing the critical lack of sanitation, water scarcity, transboundary water governance, and building capacity to empower communities. On “Water and Climate Day,” special attention was placed on the key role adaptive water resources management and governance plays in facing the realities of present and future changes in the climate system.

With the cross-cutting theme “Progress and Prospects on Water – Striving for Sustainability in a Changing World,” the World Water Week confronted the challenges we face to secure and improve livelihoods in an ever more rapidly transforming planet.

As the week began, Mr. Anders Berntell, Executive Director of SIWI, challenged all those in attendance and leaders around the world to ask themselves: Why is water, which stands unquestionably at the centre of all development and sustainability initiatives, still not high enough on the political agenda?

Participants of the week’s events took the question to heart, urging one another and all those working with water to enhance their ability to communicate the clear and urgent message to decision makers that the neglect of water issues is slowing progress towards achieving the Millennium Development

Goals (MDGs) and is crating unsustainable pathways of development.

This was evident in the World Water Week’s review of progress, which showed that internationally agreed goals and targets are not being reached. There is an even stronger need for improved monitoring and reporting systems, so we more accurately and uniformly know where we are at and where we are heading. In all these areas, there is progress, but there is still far too little action. The ongoing effects climate change has on the poorest and most vulnerable populations make achieving the MDG targets on sanitation and access to safe drinking water increasingly urgent. These efforts must be connected to, and can ill afford to be replaced by, discussions of global warming adaptation and mitigation.

During his speech at the opening plenary session, Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt exhorted those assembled to keep fighting and raise awareness of water issues. “It’s the drop that hollows out the stone,” he said before going on to challenge all important actors to take stronger steps to curb their carbon emissions.

During the high level panel debate on water, climate and vulnerability, the renowned set of speakers echoed this sentiment while making appeals for a shift in global attitudes, priorities and development models. They called on governments to take dramatic steps towards improving the adaptive capacities of the world’s poorest and most vulnerable populations, who are already being devastated by the increasing flooding, droughts and stronger but less predictable natural disasters

that result from the global warming.

To tackle such challenges, there must be an increase in political cooperation, efficiency, financing and capacity building in water governance and operations. Perhaps most importantly, however, the panel emphasised that the water implications of all planning measures need to be considered first in the decision making process. If we truly contend to strive towards sustainability, the promotion of energy solutions such as biofuels, whose potential future water demand may make it impossible to allocate sufficient water to sustain food production and functioning ecosystems, must be critically assessed.

Stockholm Water Prize Laureate Professor Perry L. 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. Using his impressive body of work as example, he stressed the vital need to not only reduce pollution but also transform the way waste is perceived, so that we can better renew and reuse precious water resources. “We simply cannot afford to lose what water we have available because of pollution,” he stated. “Protection and reuse are essential.”

### Climate, Sanitation in Focus

For the first time, the past World Water Week held a “Water and Climate Day” where the key linkages between the changes in the climate system and its impact on the overall water balance of the planet were put in focus. The week’s events pushed for immediate action to formulate and implement national strategies

for adaptation to climate change that pay particular attention to the water implications of the global warming. As former Stockholm Water Prize Laureate Sunita Narain put it during the high level panel debate, “its time to stop playing games with climate change.” Nice words and incremental progress without any real change to the “business as usual approach” to growth and consumption, she critiqued, will leave us far away from applying solutions to water problems that cannot afford to wait to be solved.

In preparation for the upcoming International Year of Sanitation 2008, 15 events during the 2007 World Water Week gathered leaders in the sanitation sector to promote plans to bring clean sanitation systems to the over two billion who lack this most basic necessity. H.R.H. The Prince of Orange Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands hosted multiple events during the week to devise strategies to catalyse financiers’ interest in the massive, and fundamentally necessary, opportunities for public and private investment in sanitation.

#### Keywords to Take Home

Discussions throughout the week emphasised the great modern challenge to navigate global change. Shifts in population, climate and resource availability will require that we adapt, but the means and ends of this adaptation process must be to enable all the world’s people to live in security and dignity. Innovation and improved management practices are constantly moving forward and can indeed provide the tools needed to shape a brighter future for both human development and the sustainable use of the planet’s precious resources. Humanity’s ability to adapt to climate change while providing food, sanitation and water security to the growing populations of the coming generations, however, will be decided by the choices we make as individuals, and the priorities we set as societies and as an international community.

“Even in the face of enlightened policies, technological innovation and deepened scientific understanding, human behaviour and consumption patterns will ultimately drive forward or derail our efforts related to water for food, energy, sanitation and any other number of other issues,” summarised Mr. Bertell.

The official 2007 World Water Week Synthesis will be published in November. This document will represent the World Water Week’s broader global water and development contribution. It will contain summaries of all seminars and workshops, an analysis of the week from the science, policy, non-governmental and business perspectives, and recommendations coming out of the week.



From top, Ms. Sunita Narain of India’s Centre for Science and Environment is interviewed by a journalist and below, closing synthesis panel participants. Photos: SIWI.

# WORLD in Stockholm, August 17–23, 2008 WATER WEEK

August 17-23, 2008, is the date for the 2008 World Water Week in Stockholm. The First Announcement and Call for Papers will be available at [www.worldwaterweek.org](http://www.worldwaterweek.org) in mid-November, with the printed announcement being mailed at the end of that month. The theme of the week is “Progress and Prospects on Water: For a Clean and Healthy World” with Special Focus on Sanitation. **The deadline for workshop paper proposals is February 1, 2008.**

To make sure you receive the announcement in printed or electronic form, add your name (or update your record) to the mailing list via the links at either [www.siwi.org](http://www.siwi.org) or [www.worldwaterweek.org](http://www.worldwaterweek.org).