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Commission launches water currents policy series

The Water Research Commission (WRC), in collaboration with the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and research institution Trade and Industrial Policy Strategies International, has launched the WRC Water Currents Policy Series as part of the WRC Dialogues, which focus on topical water issues affecting the public and aim to serve as a platform for exchanging ideas and opinions related to water.

The launch, which was attended by industry specialists, took place in conjunction with the first dialogue in the series, which focused on water-related job and asset creation in community-driven development, infrastructure and employment programmes to enhance access to water for domestic and economic use in a holistic and sustainable manner.

"A principal gap in the South African fabric is an insufficiency of solutions-orientated discussions in addressing our challenges. We have a rich repository of smart people in our science and technology system, who need to be consulted in [the application of] their research capability beyond the laboratory. For this reason, the WRC has launched the WRC Water Currents Policy Series," said WRC CEO **Dhesigen Naidoo**.

The WRC and the IWMI have been inspired by India's National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS), through which government provides employment for 55-million households.

This programme entails communities deciding on how to use available labour and IWMI research has found that communities prioritise water asset creation in more than 60% of the projects. Further, various other government programmes coordinate with the NREGS to offer integrated public support to achieve holistic bottom-up water management and droughtproofing.

The first dialogue focused mainly on learning from the Indian experience and exploring practical ways of enhancing the creation of water-related employment in the South African context by strengthening synergies between the water sector and participatory rural development programmes for job and asset creation, infrastructure development, sustainable land and water management, as well as conservation.

As part of the WRC Dialogues, Wat-Indabas, which are facilitated sessions aimed at providing a safe and protected space for knowledge sharing between stake-holders with unequal relationships or significant conceptual gaps, will also take place in the near future.

The third part of the dialogues is the Khuluma Sizwe Series, which is an open lecture platform where high-profile speakers are invited to comment on water issues affecting the South African public. The first lecture in this series will take place in September.

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GIS Intermediate short course presented by the Water Institute of Southern Africa (WISA). 24 - 26 October 2012

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FRESH WATER GOVERNANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 5 - 7 November 2012 : Champagne Sports Resort, central Drakensberg, South Africa

EC JRC Project: International Workshop

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