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Coordinated efforts urged to solve water issues

The "2009 World Water Week" forum, which formally opened in Stockholm, Sweden on August 17, is still in session. Those who are partaking in the week-long forum have appealed for all nations to beef up their coordination and cooperation in a joint endeavor to cope with the water issues.

The week-long forum is hosted and organized by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), a policy institute that contributes to international efforts to combat the world's escalating water crisis; it is attended by more than 2,000 government officials, enterprise representatives and researchers from over 130 countries and regions. The theme for 2009 is Water – "Responding to Global Change: Accessing Water for the Common Good – With a Special focus on Trans-boundary Waters".

The World Water Week forum, commenced in 1990, is one of the most important forums to look into and cope with water constraints. Gunilla Carlsson, Swedish minister for international development cooperation, said at the ongoing forum that approximately 4 million people worldwide die each year of water- and hygiene-related diseases. Ms. Carlsson appealed for universal access to water supply, sanitation and hygiene. She also suggested that the relevant government departments in different countries and regions to go in for the essential "coordination and cooperation" for providing safe water to their populations.

It is reported that 87 percent of the global population uses drinking water from improved sources today, up 10 percent from 1990. Nevertheless, one billion people worldwide still lack access to safe drinking water, and about half lack adequate sanitation. In 2006, only 58 percent of Sub-Saharan Africans had access to safe drinking water. The World Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimated that by the year 2025 there will be 1.8 billion people lacking access to clear water.

The population in Asia, however, is projected to increase by 1.5 billion people by 2050, and its food and feed demand is expected to double by then, according to a report released by the FAO and the [International Water Management Institute \(IWMI\)](#) on Tuesday, August 18.

So, the report pointed out that governments in Asian countries have to speed up cooperation between the enterprises and scientific researching institutes, improve irrigation for farmland, promote water-saving irrigation and transform farmland with low or middle yield.

There was a "Green Revolution" in Asia during the 1960s and 1970s by using high-yield seeds that require heavy irrigation and chemical fertilizers, recalled Colin Chartres, the [IWMI](#) director general. The "green revolution" focused on the tremendous development of agriculture and food production to keep pace with the fast population growth.

Today, Chartres acknowledged, Asia should launch a "blue revolution" aiming to improve the economic value of water use to produce more pollutant-free and higher quality natural foods.

At the current World Water Week forum in Stockholm, special focus has been laid on the cooperative use of trans-boundary water. The [IWMI](#) on Monday, or August 17, issued a primer concerning the trans-boundary water management: "Theory and Practice for Effective Cooperation".

Citing as concrete water management examples in varied Trans-boundary areas around the world as the teaching material, the primer calls on the international community to draw on both experience and lessons from the trans-boundary river basin management, to renew the concept on the use of Trans-boundary water and formulate viable, effective plans for development paths that are appropriate or suitable for their own national conditions.

By People's Daily Online

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