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World Water Week opens with discussions on water's role in peace, economic development, and public health

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### **World Water Week opens with discussions on water's role in peace, economic development, and public health**

Source: [World Water Week in Stockholm](#)

Aug. 19, 2009

High level panel explores the impact of politics and power on transboundary waters; SIWI releases a primer on effective cooperation in transboundary basins. The 2009 World Water Week in Stockholm formally opened this morning with a plenary session addressing key facets of the week's central theme of Responding to Global Changes: Accessing Water for the Common Good. Most of the more than 2000 participants now gathered in Stockholm were on hand to hear leaders in science, government, and civil society challenge the world to think in new ways about the role of water in peace, economic development, and public health. Speakers for the opening plenary included

- Mr. Anders Berntell, Executive Director, Stockholm International Water Institute
- Hon. Gunilla Carlsson, Minister for International Development Cooperation, Sweden
- Mr. Sten Nordin, Mayor of Stockholm
- Hon. Rejoice Mabudafhasi, Deputy Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, South Africa
- Mr. Munqueth Mehyar, Chairperson and Jordanian Director, Friends of the Earth Middle East
- Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak, 2009 Stockholm Water Prize Laureate, Sulabh International Social Service Organisation, India
- Prof. Jan Lundqvist, Chair of the World Water Week Scientific Programme

- Committee, Stockholm International Water Institute
- Mr. Loïc Fauchon, President, World Water Council
- Mr. Jan Eliasson, Chair, WaterAid Sweden, President of the United Nations General Assembly 2005-2006
- Dr. Colin Chartres, Director General, **International Water Management Institute**
- Prof. Mohan Munasinghe, Munasinghe Institute for Development, Sri Lanka and Director- General, Sustainable Consumption Institute, University of Manchester, UK

“Water and sanitation must be given a higher priority in the governments, in the nations, in the municipalities, in the countries where the problems are,” said Jan Eliasson, Chair of WaterAid Sweden and former President of the United Nations General Assembly. “We need to move from fact finding and early warning to fact facing and early action.” During the plenary, the 2009 Stockholm Water Prize Laureate Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak, spoke of his work as founder of the Sulabh Sanitation movement in India. “People started laughing when we suggested making toilets available in all important public places,” he said. “Now we have installed more than 7,500.”

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