

World Water Week Daily

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Asia leads the world in water partnerships



The panel highlighted innovations in Asian partnerships

Water partnerships in Asia are becoming models for the rest of the world to follow, particularly in Africa and Latin America, delegates heard at the *Eye on Asia* seminar.

“Despite the enormous challenges that Asia is facing with growing demand on water supplies, I see a fantastic future there,” said Paul Reiter, Executive Director of the International Water Association. “The most innovative things are happening in Asia in regards to water.”

As the country with the highest urbanisation rate in the region, China was showcased as a leader in building effective partnerships across all sectors, in agriculture, industry and between cities.

Using the economic benefits for cities of cleaner water was highlighted as a way to move mayors to invest further in this area. Andre Dzikus from UN-HABITAT said that in Nanjing, China, after two years of cleaning its river system, economic development through tourism and riverside activity had increased to USD 600 million.

“We say to mayors, you have this asset [rivers] right in front of you, look what can happen when you invest in water and

sanitation,” said Dzikus. “In the last twenty years there have been great achievements in partnerships with water utilities, academics, peer to peer and national governments.”

Japan, through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), has been assisting Cambodia and Vietnam through training for water distribution and management. With the support of JICA, Yokohama, Japan, has shared knowledge and experience with Hue, Vietnam, in water security. “This knowledge has now been redistributed by the newly trained Hue water operators to 13 other cities and municipalities,” said JICA’s deputy director general, Katsuyoshi Sudo.

The need to link water provision with the food production industry was raised by Arjun Thapan, Chair of the World Economic Forum Global Council for Water Security. “People’s diets change when they become part of the urban environment, and more often than not, these new diets require more water to produce food,” said Thapan. “Technology is a key determinant in overcoming this.”

While technology is improving, the panel agreed that in many cases it is still far too expensive for developing countries. Amy

Leung, from the Asian Development Bank, stressed that despite this there are still innovative ways to adapt methods from high-tech to low-tech, including making use of the region’s vast human resources.

Reiter summed up the optimistic feeling on the panel by saying that the region is “showing there are new solutions to old problems and one way to promote this is to highlight, as we have seen here today, that there is money to be made from this”.



Katsuyoshi Sudo, Japan International Cooperation Agency:

“Japan has been assisting Cambodia and Vietnam through training for water distribution and management”

The challenge of financing sustainable water services

Speakers at the workshop on financing urban infrastructure stressed the importance for utilities to be able to recover costs sustainably in order to maintain service quality and extend services to the poor.

G rard Payen, chair of the session and president of Aquafed, said: "Without sustainable costs recovery, the right to water is an empty promise."



G rard Payen, Aquafed

In the opening presentation, Anthony Cox, from the Environment Directorate at the OECD, emphasised that to improve financial stability for operators you need to agree on an adequate mix of the three Ts (taxes, tariffs and transfers). "Regulatory certainty is key and you also need to put a price on water and back it up with appropriate agreements," said Cox.



Anthony Cox, OECD

Magnus Rystedt, Managing Director of Nefco, which specialises in investments in eastern European water and wastewater projects, said that for smaller municipalities, tariffs should at least cover operating and maintenance costs. "In some cases it may be necessary to join cities and service areas together but that is not always politically easy to do," explained Rystedt.

When you are looking at financing infrastructure in municipalities, this needs to be tailored to the specific urban context, said Monica Scatasta of the European Investment Bank. "Municipalities vary greatly because of their social fabric," said Scatasta.

In terms of setting tariffs, if the tariff level is too low, this harms the poor especially in areas of low connection rates. According to Scatasta, it is a misconception that poor people will not pay for services and they in fact end up paying far more. "To extend access to services goes well beyond the issue of sustainable costs recovery: it is a question of political will," said Scatasta.

Stockholm Junior Water Prize



H.R.H. Crown Princess Victoria with the 2011 Stockholm Junior Water Prize winner Alison Bick, US

Stronger links between water and climate change needed



Experts said water needs a bigger role in climate change talks

Water must be given a higher profile in global climate negotiations, delegates were told yesterday during a high-level panel discussion on water and climate.

"Water, in all its unique aspects, needs to move up the agenda on climate negotiations otherwise we will fail," said Anders Berntell, Executive Director at the Stockholm International Water Institute. Panellists agreed that water is the primary medium through which climate change will affect humans and the environment and it relates to every objective under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

"The water community and climate community speak different languages, so we need to bridge that gap," said Hannah Stoddart from the Water Climate Coalition. She said that there is a need to link policy with those working on the ground to create better all round understanding.

Proposals were also put forward to try and tap into the new Green Climate Fund to move water up the agenda in the global climate debate.

New programme to promote water security in Africa



Letitia Obeng, Global Water Partnership

The Global Water Partnership (GWP) and the African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW) yesterday launched a joint programme to support water and climate change adaptation in Africa. Dr. Letitia Obeng, GWP Chair and the Honourable SS Nkomo Minister of Water Resources and Development, Zimbabwe, unveiled the *Water, Climate and Development Programme*.

The programme is an initiative that will contribute to AMCOW's work on climate change. The objective is to promote Africa's water security as a key part of sustainable development and to contribute to climate change resilience for economic growth and human security.

Many countries in Africa lack adequate water infrastructure and have climates that are among the most variable in the world on seasonal and decadal time scales. Floods and droughts occur in the same area within months of each other, often leading to famine and widespread disruption of GDP and socio-economic development.

The aim is to reduce the risks that climate change brings, especially the increasing risks of droughts and floods and to develop water resources in a way that builds resilience to disasters while developing strong economies.

New initiative launched to help countries achieve water and sanitation goals



Dominick de Waal, Water and Sanitation Program

The global partnership, Sanitation and Water for All, has launched a new initiative – the National Planning for Results Initiative – to assist countries which are off-track in terms of achieving the Millennium Development Goals for water and sanitation.

At the session on developing water and sanitation services in fragile and post-conflict countries, Henry Northover of WaterAid explained that water practitioners are facing up to a vicious circle: on the one hand, developing country governments are making too small a budget allocation for water, and are giving too little priority to the sector; and on the other hand, donors and the private sector are reluctant to invest in risky programmes and risky countries. “At country level, the National Planning for Results Initiative is trying to turn that round,” explained Northover. The initiative aims to drive countries to adopt clear, actionable and accountable plans for access to water and sanitation, and then to try and match those plans to large scale finance.

An example of developing a country plan with accountability is the Liberian Compact. According to Moses Massa from the Liberian Ministry of Public Works, Liberia was a post-conflict country moving from recovery to development with very weak governance in the water and sanitation sector. To address this, the Compact sets out a list of commitments by

Liberia including strengthening of its water institutions with the establishment of a National Water Resources and Sanitation Board, and setting up a detailed prioritised sector investment plan. “It is very important to get political buy-in,” said Massa noting that Liberia’s President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf had taken a personal interest in driving forward the Compact.

One of the keys to developing access to services in fragile, post-conflict states is to develop a detailed capacity plan to manage those services. As Dominick de Waal of the Water and Sanitation Program explained, a shortage of engineers or financial managers will undermine any plan to move countries to recovery and then reconstruction. He cited the example of Liberia where the Ministry of Finance did not have enough accountants. “A college was set up [in Liberia] to bring through 30 chartered accountants per year to build capacity in the financial sector so perhaps the water and sanitation sector needs to think about that?”

Liberia has already moved swiftly on its commitments in the Compact with the executive order for the National Water Resources and Sanitation Board drafted and ready for signing by the President. Monitoring of the Compact both for Liberia and other countries, which need to set up development plans for water and sanitation, will be crucial for those countries which need to get back on-track for the Millennium Development Goals.

What do you personally do to improve the water situation?



“I try to save household water and even when I am at work I aim to reduce my water usage.”

Jie Gao, Chinese Academy of Sciences, China.



“Day-to-day through my job I work on advocacy to ensure that people pay more attention and give more money to sanitation, especially in the countries that need it the most.”

Amanda Marlin, Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council, Switzerland.



“I live in New Delhi so the water supply is not continuous and from filling one household tank to another the basic thing is to keep the water from not overflowing. I also ensure taps are turned off and not leaking.”

Verma Monish, InCircle Research, India.



“We wash the dog in the river and we never wash our car, which leaves it in a state. In my work, I ensure that environmental considerations are incorporated more effectively into the design of water systems.”

Ken Caplan, BPD Water and Sanitation, United Kingdom.



“I give talks to government decision makers to try and ensure more money goes to sanitation and water.”

Ebele Okeke, WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) Ambassador to Nigeria, Nigeria.



“We go to different areas to ensure the water quality is sufficient and also educate people about the importance of water and sanitation.”

Uttam Chand Sharma, Centre for Natural Resources Management, India.



“I’m engaging with the African continent to share our skills and expertise to help improve their water conditions.”

Joy Thihe, Rand Water, South Africa.



“On a personal level, I always try and reduce my use of water to essential things and on a professional level, I handle water issues at the embassy, as water is a big issue in the Philippines.”

Lilibeth Almonte, Embassy of the Philippines, Sweden.

Making money from waste

Speakers at the seminar *Recovering Nutrients, Water and Energy from Waste: A Business Perspective* emphasised the need for a new breed of sanitation entrepreneurs that can take advantage of the opportunities of making money out of waste.

“There is a need for a paradigm shift in waste management from treatment for disposal to treatment for reuse,” said David Molden of the **International Water Management Institute (IWMI)**. “We are currently lacking the private sector in this area but waste really can be a business opportunity. Some people are making a business out of waste.”

Rapid urbanisation has resulted in a significant increase in the amount of waste produced. Organisations are now exploring social and economic business models for the recovery of water, nutrients and energy from domestic and agro-industrial waste. This will help them to increase the viability of the sanitation services chain, while addressing water shortages and increasing fertiliser prices.

“I think the economic benefits of waste reuse can be leveraged as a really convincing and compelling argument as to why we should be designing sanitation systems around reuse,” said Ashley Murray, founder of Waste Enterprises Ltd., a company that operates waste recovery businesses in Ghana. “Reuse can be used to reduce the cost of



Ashley Murray, Waste Enterprises Ltd.

wastewater treatment and perhaps more interestingly can be used to pay for the cost of sanitation, thereby reducing the financial burden on households, governments and donors, which many of us know is a bottleneck to sustaining long-term operational needs.”

Waste Enterprises operates and maintains a commercial fish farm in one of Ghana’s government-owned wastewater treatment plants. Catfish are stocked and harvested in the last phase of the facility’s waste stabilisation pond system. The fish farm supplies a new, reliable revenue source that will ulti-

mately pay for a full-time groundskeeper. Nutrients in the wastewater support the fish, so no external food is added. Other inputs and fish density are also carefully limited to avoid compromising water quality or degrading the environment.

“Name a waste medium and we’ve got a way to reuse it in agriculture whether we are talking about urine, faecal sludge or wastewater,” said Murray. “The informal reuse that is happening all around us is often shunned and we are far from integrating strategic reuse into the planning of large scale municipal sanitation systems.”

Cities must involve citizens in planning for water



Cities are working to introduce sustainable water systems

Experts at the session *Cities of the Future – Sustainable Urban Planning and Water Management* described how cities of the future must not only link urban spatial planning with developing sustainable water systems but must also ensure that their citizens fully understand and appreciate the importance of water.

“I would like to stress the importance of including citizens in the planning of cities

and the treatment processes so that they can see the effects of reducing water consumption and understand the significance,” said Brita Forsberg from the City of Stockholm. “Water is such an important part of people’s lives. They should know about water, they should understand water, they should like water and they should think water.”

Together with Brita Forsberg, presentations were also given by Hubert Klumpner

from the Swiss Institute of Technology, Professor Xiaochang C. Wang from the Xi’an University of Architecture and Technology in China, and Steve Moddemeyer of Collins Woerman, USA.

Moddemeyer highlighted how the city of Seattle has been progressing with its urban planning and sustainable water systems towards attaining a net zero carbon footprint by 2030. Green storm water infrastructure has been implemented across the city, resulting in almost no run off rainwater and savings of between USD 100,00 and USD 250,000 per city block compared to traditional curb and gutter infrastructure.

“Water should be at the centre of the community, while it is important to join land use planning with water planning,” said Moddemeyer. “We must create cost effective strategies that facilitate change towards resilience and adaptability.”