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> Mexico in Figures

- **115** million inhabitants
- **1/3** of the population is not connected to a sewage network
- **An additional 1/3** is connected to a sewage network without treatment
- **Water covered area:**
20,430 m²
- **Freshwater extraction:**
747.6 m³/capita/year
17.81% water stress
- **Water price:**
0.49 USD/m³ (the cheapest of all OECD countries)
- **127 km** of water pipelines in the Cutzamala System pumps 14,900 L/s of water up to Mexico City

Editorial

More than 1,000 cities have signed the Istanbul Water Consensus pact

On 1400 participants from 60 countries, over 500 local elected officials, including 250 mayors, governors and presidents of public authorities, are much more present than in previous forums on the process of local and regional authorities (LRA). The mobilisation of international associations, including UCLG, is the main reason.



In 2006, the Mexico Forum has allowed to consecrate local authorities as the relevant level for water services and sanitation management. The Istanbul Forum in 2009 went even further through the creation of the Istanbul Pact that allows LRA to commit to the principles of sustainable management of water resources but also on quantified and verifiable targets.

LRA have the opportunity to discuss on various themes and benefit from best practices of local authorities present in Marseille. Water is a strong cultural element, inseparable from the issue of governance. The inclusion of this dimension, often overlooked, is one of the success factors of a smart and participative water policy. Finally, solidarity and cooperation are a great way to improve and accelerate access to safe water and sanitation. We will address this matter and others in terms of solutions. This is both our roadmap and our responsibility.

Rio+20 approaches. LRA are increasingly present and active in international debates on sustainable development. Their voice carries farther. Governments have understood this, and have enrolled their major role in the Ministerial Declaration of this 6th Forum.

The water, global issue, calls for local solutions. Tomorrow and after tomorrow, the local authorities will show that they have more than a role to play, they have solutions and they are a part of the solution to water challenge. ●

The coordinators of the process LRA

*Serge Lepeltier, former Minister and Mayor of Bourges
and Pierre Victoria, World Water Council*

Geolide, the largest underground waste water treatment plant in the world

Geolide, the largest underground waste water treatment plant in the world. The Communauté Urbaine Marseille Provence Métropole and SERAM (Société d'Exploitation du Réseau d'Assainissement de Marseille) are proposing to participants a visit of Marseille's "Géolide" waste water treatment plant, on March 13 and 15 2012.

Capable of treating waste water of 1,860,000 inhabitants, Géolide is the biggest subterranean waste water purification plant in the world. Situated in the city centre, this underground cathedral is odourless, silent and quasi invisible.

WAT-A-GAME (WAG) presentations

Cemagref and CIRAD are expected to present WAT-A-GAME (WAG) on March 14 and 15, starting 4 p.m. in the Cityhall of the Village of Solutions. WAT-A-GAME comprises simple bricks and a software for designing and using interactive games for water management, policy design and education. Different stakeholders can use it for various water related issues and at multiple scales. Based on WAG, new decision can be taken and new policies can be invented and tested, focusing on the household economy and satisfaction and the welfare of the surrounding ecosystems.

Water management hesitates Between Public and Private

Public or Private? That is the question which opposed the pro "public water management and sanitation services" to the liberal approach holders the 13 March during the 6th World Water Forum.

David Boys, "Public Services International" utilities officer pledges for water management to remain public. According to him, this system guarantees access to water for all thanks to social fares. Moreover, there is no commercial secret and transparency has become a well known reality in public management. "Public and private water and sanitation operators are facing similar problems", moderates Gérard Payen, President of Aquafed, The International Federation of Private Water Operators. And he added: "water supply and management induce minimum costs that need to be financed especially through fares which cover the costs: no money no water!" Marie-Hélène Lauron, "Water for people" network coordinator testifies of the Philippines experience in the private water management. In 2007, she observed that commitments defined in contracts signed in 1997 were not respected. According to here, "reality is harsher than fiction". Water prices have increased from 45% to 80% which excludes entire communities from accessing drinkable

water, whereas water cuts are still extensive and recurrent. Furthermore, quality is insufficient. From a social perspective, several water supply company employees have lost their jobs due to profitability motives. Marie-Hélène Lauron goes one step further "water is not an economic commodity (...)" its management should remain within the public sector."

Half way between public and private, moderates Mamadou Dia, Sénégalaise des eaux Director General. As a national public operator, he entrusted the private sector with water management services. "The mode of water and sanitation service management used is only a tool amongst several to reach the targets set by the State. The main objective is to satisfy users, secure water access and guarantee acceptable social fares to populations". Access to water services in Senegal has increased by 120% between 1995 and 2011 due to joint co-operation between public and private actors.

David Boys pledges for water public services.



Ministers commit to accelerating access to safe drinking water and sanitation

On 13 March, ministers from participating countries to the 6th World Water Forum made a common Declaration, based on preparatory discussions.



©Photo 6th Water-World Forum /Christophe Tamourte

The Ministerial Conference reminds that we have to consider water in all dimensions.

This declaration emphasises the acceleration of the implementation of obligations linked to Human right to water and sanitation, the guarantee of everyone well being and health, focusing on the most vulnerables. They insisted also on improving waste water management.

A global approach towards water, energy and food security is a guarantee of a sustainable economic growth and job creations. This cross-cutting approach allows a good functioning of ecosystems linked to water, a maximisation of public policies, the creation of synergies and a minimisation of competition between different economical sectors.

The Ministerial Conference reminds that we have to consider water in all its dimensions: economical, sociable, environmental, building on a good financial, governance and cooperation framework. Ministers want successful experiences to be promoted and integrated to reach Millenium Development Goals by 2015 and to be continued after that.

The identification of solutions

Ministers agree that Ministerial Conference High Level Roundtables offer the opportunity to identify solutions and commitments about water issues.

They support that partnership, at the same time political and operational, made with parliaments and local authorities, have a central role about these questions. These partnerships should be continued, linked with thematic and regional processes, also with the "Grassroots and citizenship" commission of the 6th World Water Forum.

By this declaration, the Ministerial conference wishes solutions and commitments to be consolidated and spread, their implementation to be followed and evaluated by proper authorities, to contribute to the work of next World Water Forum .

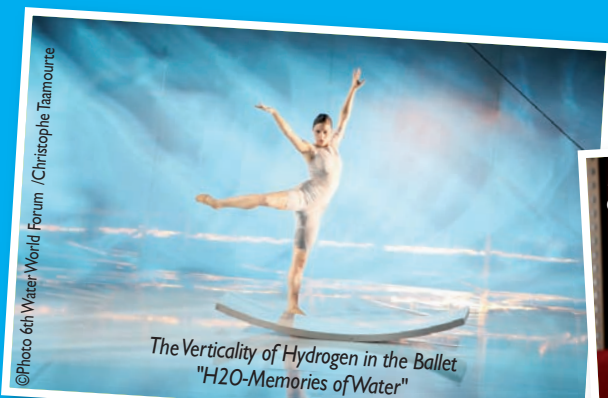
The European Union (EU) commits even further to water challenges

On Tuesday 13 March, Janez Potočnik, European Commissioner for the Environment, introduced the "Blueprint to Safeguard Europe Water Resources" to be published next November. It defines new strategical orientations. The Blueprint strengthens EU efforts towards water 'prevention and preparedness', with particular attention to people and natural ecosystems and the balance between demand and supply. In the afternoon, Janez Potočnik endorsed the Declaration on Water challenges during the Ministerial Conference.

Gender equality promoted by UNESCO report

For the launch of the 4th UN World Water Development Report (WWDR4), Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO, presented the chapter on mainstreaming gender in water resources management. This is the first time since the launch of the first report in 2000 that this concept is explicitly taken into account. Various speakers stressed the importance of strengthening the decision-making power of women in the field of management and use of water. Equally women's participation in all levels of water governance as well as information dissemination to stakeholders were emphasised.

Portfolio



Idriss Deby Itno, president of the Republic of Chad signs the declaration for financing the access to water and sanitation for all people living thanks to the waters from Lake Chad.

©Photo 6th Water-World Forum /Christophe Tannourte

The actress Famke Janssen is the new "ambassador of the water" from NGO the Green Cross International.



Rémy Uno, local artist, symbolises the importance of water for future generations.



Salam Fayyad, prime minister of Palestine, with Dr Shaddad Al Attill, Palestinian water minister and Rebhi Al-Sheikh, deputy head of Palestine water authority.



Evan Abramson and Carmen Elsa Lopez, film makers, presenting Carbon for Water with their baby Luz Immanuel.



Artist Gris I (left) from Lyon puts water at the heart of the issue; Heng (right) from Marseille illustrates the need for a balance between civilization on the surface and the water that flows beneath us.



Meet the Solutions provider at the Village.



Price of water, a scenography made by Sylvain Massot, Finance Pavillon (Village of Solutions)



Zaffar Adeel (director of UN University), Christian Severin (GEF programme manager) et Alex T Bielzak INWE



At the library, ideas



Photo Laurene Ghiglia



Volunteers welcome participants from all over the world



The well-known photographer Yann Arthus Bertrand presented his film, A Thirsty World, yesterday evening.



Joint commitments of nine states for the sustainable management of the Niger Basin.



André Flajolet, Co-coordinator of the Parliamentary Process for the Political Commission of the 6th World Water Forum



High level round table on transboundary waters.



Water commitment in the City Hall of the Village of Solutions

Photo th Water World Forum / Christophe Lamourre

Photo th Water World Forum / Christophe Lamourre

Photo Audrey de Bonneville

Maximizing Groundwater Potential

At the Forum, GRAPHIC scientists have presented case studies from the report *Climate Change Effects on Groundwater Resources: A Global Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations*. The UNESCO-IHP publication diagnoses the impacts of climate change on groundwater resources in various geographical contexts. Guillaume Favreau, investigator at the IRD (Institute of Research for Development), says "huge volumes of groundwater can be used" provided there is adaption. Policy recommendations for water managers and policy makers concerning aquifers are also provided. Among these solutions, depleted aquifers can be recharged with storm water through rain gardens specifically constructed for preferential infiltration or with surface water during the rainy season.

Sino-French cooperation in integrated water resource management

In closing the first day of the Forum, Chinese and French governments introduced a cooperation project in the field of integrated water resource management. The agreement focuses on sharing learnt experience around the watersheds of Seine Normandie and River Hai. Launched in Marseille, the second cooperation phase spans from 2012 to 2015. Chen Lei, Chinese Minister for Water Resources and Serge Lepeltier, French Ambassador for Climate Negotiations underline the strong potential for synergies between two regions that provide both countries' capitals with water.

France stresses water as Key factor for green growth

The French Ministry of Ecology discusses the sustainability of the current economic system and the solutions at the disposal of citizens, communities and companies to create a "green" economy.



Wetlands provide many services to society free of charge

©Photo: Franck André

Green growth is economic growth intended to use less and/or more effectively nonrenewable energy resources and raw materials. The management and safeguarding of water resources thus constitutes one of its principal aspects.

At the event held in the Espace Français du Forum on 13 March, Dominique Dron, the General Commissioner for Sustainable Development for the French Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transport and Housing (MEDDTL), illustrated the predominant role of water in green growth through three themes being developed in France: wetland management, evaluation of water footprint, and implementation of efficient private water management.

The question of the economic value of services provided by ecosystems was discussed using the case study of the Regional Natural Park of the Cotentin and Bessin Marshes located in the department of Manche in the northwest of France. Wetlands are a transition zone between land and water and cover 5.5% of the French territory and perform many services for society: water purification,

flood protection, recreation, etc. Since these services are free of charge, risks related to resource depletion are seldom considered. By calculating their economic value, wetland services are quantified, enabling communities to better understand their importance.

France, substantial importer of virtual water

To create general public awareness, calculating the water footprint is an essential step for promoting green growth. France has undertaken this with its own perspective (differing from the international WaterFootPrint approach) that incorporates large indirect quantities of water (virtual water) used in the service sector. France has emerged as a significant importer of virtual water, and encourages reflexion on how every country can reduce their water footprint.

To conclude, Dominique Dron singled out the industrial laundry company, Elis, as an example of good water management and environmental performance. The participation of private companies is seen as indispensable for dynamic green growth. ●

Niger River Basin : Nine countries make commitments

Nine countries bordering the Niger River make a series of commitments to improve access to water and sanitation. Over 100 million people are concerned.



100 million people live around river Niger.

©Photo Lee Cohen

Developing the right to water and sanitation, integrating priorities of access to water and sanitation in national budgets, optimising water consumption, and encouraging irrigation all represent firm commitments made on Monday 12 March 2012 during the 6th World Water Forum by Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Guinea Conakry, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Chad.

The Heads of State of the Niger River Basin, 4,200 km long and covering 210 million ha, look to establish a common vision for river basin development. Thus, they call for a strong favour access to water and sanitation and integrated water resources management. The Niger River basin assures the livelihood of around 100 million inhabitants distributed among the nine countries.

Joint commitments

Mahamadou Issoufou, President of the Republic of Niger, and Henri de Raincourt, French Minister of Foreign and European

Affairs and in charge of cooperation, presented a synthesis of the recommendations adopted during the forum "Solidarity for water in the River Niger Basin countries" held on 17 and 18 October 2011 in Bamako.

Habib Ouane- Minister of Energy and Water of Mali, Michel Camdessus- Governor of the Bank of France and Marc Gentilini- General Delegate of the Chirac Foundation for access to quality health all reaffirmed the joint commitments for a sustainable management of the Niger River. "If it is difficult to starve to death, it is easy to die from thirst," mentions Professor Gentilini.

On behalf of the Niger Basin countries heads of State, Idriss Déby Itno- President of Chad and President of the Niger Basin Authority, assures that "the signature of these commitments marks the outcome of works made by politicians, experts and members of civil society during the 'forum de Bamako.'" The member countries also promise to further their commitments at the upcoming Rio +20 summit. ●

IUCN: a bridge for Water Without Borders

The BRIDGE project of the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) deals with the management of water in the transboundary hydrologic basins in Central America, South America, and in the Mekong Region of Asia. There are more than 270 transboundary water regions around the world.

According to Alejandro Iza, Director of the Center for Environmental Law of IUCN, "The rivers and streams often establish boundaries between countries and cultures. This causes water conflicts. Conversely, diplomacy and sound management of resources promote peace and cooperation". BRIDGE aims to establish transboundary management of water under the principle Water Without Borders.

EEA's new report highlights the necessity of a better water use efficiency in Europe

The European Environment Agency – EEA new report Towards Efficient use of water resources in Europe, launched on 13 March describes the state of Europe water resources and proposes mechanisms to increase the water use efficiency.

"Water resources are under pressure in many parts of Europe, and it is getting worse", says EEA Executive Director Jacqueline McGlade. Some vital efforts to avoid water scarcity in Europe are orientated to potential efficiency gains in irrigation systems and in the public water supply and the coordination between water and energy legislation.

A solution for a better water transboundary management

The UN University Institute for Water, Environment & Health (INWEH) presents IW:solution no. 3029. It consists of an online platform where 180 projects results (8 billion USD / 20 years of work) are assembled. These worldwide projects deal with transboundary management of freshwater and marine environments. This synthesis report can be used for better global policy guidance.

INWEH stands up for its solution during the roundtable Science and Water Policy Interface on March 14 at 11 a.m. in the Palais des Congrès. A conference will also be held in Bangkok in September 2012. www.inweh.unu.edu

Water Security in Asian Cities

Sanitation issues remain crucial in Asian countries. UN-Habitat and the Asia Pacific Water Forum invited different regional actors focused on finding solutions to take the floor. The sanitation network has been improved in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, by means of financial reassuring and local administration involvement. The population in Karnataka, India, has got continuous access to water due to an experiment implemented by Veolia Water India. The awareness campaigns conducted in Singapore on the reuse of treated water as drinking water are also included in this list of best practices.

4th World Water Development Report (WWDR4:) "A roadmap to move forward"

Ahead of the Rio + 20 Conference, the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) and UNESCO present the WWDR4: a new approach for reflecting on global water reality and future.



The 4th World Water Development Report (WWDR4) published at the 6th World Water Forum. (Photo MPM)

©Photo MPM

'Managing water under uncertainty and risk', is addressed in the report's first of three volumes. Its first section provides an overview of recent developments, trends and key challenges from different perspectives, and in the second, emphasis is placed on water management under risk and uncertainty. 'Knowledge Base', a collection of reports prepared by UN-Water members and partners, constitutes the factual base for the previous volume. Finally, 'Facing the Challenges' features 15 case studies describing the progress made in meeting water-related goals, as well as their successes, failures, and lessons to be learned.

Water as a factor in many global crises is a key message of the WWDR4. This "roadmap to move forward" (Irina Bokova, Director-General UNESCO), presented on Monday by speakers involved in its conception, represents the concerted efforts of 28 UN-Water agencies.

As with previous editions, the centrality of water is a driving force behind the report—however, the WWDR4 approach to exploring and analysing its global dimensions is different. During the launch, Olcay Ünver, WWAP Coordinator, discussed some of the triennial report's novelties. These included: 17 areas/topics/sectors, a new regional component, a look inside and outside the "water box", a glimpse of possible futures, and a gender-mainstreamed component.

"Water... is a common denominator for most of the world's challenges", Irina Bokova, Director-General UNESCO

The WWDR4 also underlined strengthened cooperation in water initiatives. When one considers that 40% of the world's population depends on transboundary water, and that projected population growth (70% by 2050) will lead to increases in global food demand (70% by 2050) and energy consumption (49% by 2035), it is evident that there must be a socioeconomic dimension considered when approaching water management. Managing competing water demand amidst increasing water scarcity, and achieving sustainable economic development: such is the WWDR4's vision for the world's collective future. •

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