

**Title: Eye on Asia: Regulating Asia's Water Quality Management-
Stockholm International Water Week (SIWW), 8 September 2010**

Summary of Eye on Asia Sessions

Convenors: Asian Development Bank (ADB), Asian Pacific Water Forum (APWF), Global Water Partnership (GWP), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), Korea Water (K-Water), Network of Asian River Basin Organizations (NARBO) and National University of Singapore (NUS)

Eye on Asia 2010 featured four sessions, ten presentations and three panel discussions.

The opening sessions, on Water Sufficiency through Improved Water Quality, addressed the challenges of ensuring drinking water of good quality. Presentations analyzed clean water legislation for several developing Asian countries compared with a best practice framework to identify gaps. Policies were generally found to be sound except for non-point source pollution and transboundary water management; however, effective implementation is the key constraint to water quality management. Lessons from successful water quality improvement programs were presented with regard to implementation in selected Asian countries in the areas of command and control regulation, public disclosure, user charges, and integrated river basin management among others. Based on the lessons and identified gaps, best practices approaches were presented with respect to policies, planning, and institutional aspects of implementing clean water programs in Asia. Low-cost methods for monitoring drinking-water quality from Nepal, a comprehensive basin scale river health monitoring in Queensland, and a new index of drinking water adequacy derived from the Asian Water Development Outlook (2007) were also presented.

The side event at lunch was an announcement of a new book to be published in October 2010 by ADB and IUCN focused on key issues in river basins in the Asia Pacific region and innovative approaches being developed in the region to manage these. A lively discussion of the issues dealt with in the book and the means to reach leading decision makers outside the water sector took place. A general consensus emerged that the book is timely and that water quality and transboundary water management issues will become even more important in the coming years.

GWP started the afternoon sessions illustrating work by GWP Bangladesh, GWP Pakistan and GWP China on improvement of water quality on improved legal and administrative frameworks and the roles of governments and civil society. A common theme from these experiences is the importance of effective engagement of stakeholders in the search for and application of solutions to improve water quality. Each illustrated different methods of participatory approaches to mobilize broad engagement with rehabilitation issues in the Wei River in China, the water ways of Dhaka in Bangladesh, and in Manchar lake, Pakistan.

The Eye on Asia sessions were rounded out with a discussion of New Policy Initiatives in Water Security in the Asia-Pacific Region by the Asia-Pacific Water Forum (APWF) water leader's dialogue. A key note speech by Mr. Suwit Khunkitti, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand, who announced that Thailand will host the 2nd Asia-Pacific Water Summit in 2012, was followed by a panel debate. At the panel it was pointed out that among important topics for ministerial meetings are, transboundary water issues, local water leadership, greater transparency and information-sharing, water pricing, water quality and wastewater reuse.

The overall messages from the sessions are: (i) data is the foundation for improved water management; (ii) improved education about water is essential for public and decision makers alike; (iii) champions will play a critical part in the transformational changes required in the water sector; (iv) strong leadership and sustained efforts will be required to secure access to adequate and good quality water; (v) effective engagement with stakeholders with community participation is essential; (vi) management of extremes is of increasing importance; and (vii) incremental steps are required to bring about the necessary changes in water resources management and provision of water for all.