

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ASIA PACIFIC WATER FORUM 5th GOVERNING COUNCIL MEETING ON 26 JUNE 09, SINGAPORE

Summary

- The meeting, held at the Singapore Marina Barrage, provided the opportunity for APWF members to report progress and updates to the Governing Council on key APWF initiatives.
- The Secretary General of the Japan Water Forum (Secretariat of the APWF) conveyed greetings from the President of APWF, and also reported that Mr. Mori had asked the Secretariat to initiate the process for finding a host country for the 2nd Asia-Pacific Water Summit.

Key points of the 5th Governing Council Meeting of the APWF

Acknowledgements

The chair informed the members of Ms. Taeko Yokota's departure from the APWF Secretariat, expressing the Governing Council's gratitude for her contributions and wishing her well in her new position.

Agenda Item 1: Chairmanship of the Meeting

- The 5th Governing Council meeting was chaired by the APWF Chair, Prof. Tommy Koh. APWF Vice-Chairs, Mdm. Erna Witoelar and Mr. Ravi Narayanan were both in attendance.

Agenda Item 2: Adoption of the Agenda

- The chair thanked the Secretariat and PUB for hosting the 5th GC meeting, greeted members and welcomed observers to the meeting. The agenda was adopted without amendment.

Agenda Item 3: Progress and Update of Concrete Initiatives

Priority Theme A: Water Financing and Capacity Development

- ADB reported that it had continued to boost its investments in water sector projects through the Water Financing Program 2006-2010, securing more than 20% of ADB's portfolio of ongoing projects. While the current financial crisis was constraining investment demand, ADB's expectations were to continue increasing water investments and to cover more ground in rural water services, climate change adaptation, and disaster risk management. As 2010 is fast approaching, ADB announced it would soon be assessing its Water Financing Program in order to map out the next phase, and welcomes comments from APWF members for financing and capacity development for the next five years.

- The chair brought the following three issues, based on outcomes of the recently concluded Water Leaders Summit, held in parallel to the SIWW 2009:
 - 1) From the ADB President and the World Bank representative: experience showed that it was difficult to raise private credit. ADB and the World Bank had both promised to redouble their financing effort in our sector
 - 2) In an effort to combat the 2009 financial crisis, with countries enacting economic stimulus packages, it was identified that there was a need to devote a part of that money to the water sector. The official from the People's Republic of China had mentioned that they were indeed targeting some of their stimulus money to water supply and sanitation.
 - 3) In thinking for next year's SIWW, the chair advised that we should be thinking long-term, since this financial crisis would be over soon. The chair emphasized that those representing government needed to create conducive conditions for the private sector to play a role in water supply and sanitation.
- JICA reported that the creation of the new JICA was a big step forward in increasing investments and capacity building for reaching the MDG, Target 7, with USD 1 billion committed to water supply and sanitation projects annually. Some projects pursued included, increasing capacity of provincial water authorities in Cambodia, utilizing the existing capacity of the famed Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority. Having identified the most difficult issue in water financing as that of mobilizing local financing for water, a project in the Philippines aimed to mobilize local banks resources to finance local municipalities' water supply projects. JICA also intended to support the Japanese Knowledge Hub on sanitation, namely to work on the issues on sanitation ranging from basic sanitation.(toilet), on-site treatment technologies to the cleaning of the public water bodies like rivers by the sewerage system.,

Priority Theme B: Water-related Disaster Management

- ICHARM reported that the main gap it had identified was how to apply and translate technologies to local conditions, targeting flood management practitioners, policy makers and local decision-makers. Recent activities had focused on research, training and information networking, serving as topic coordinator for the 'managing disasters' topic at the 5th World Water Forum, and reported collaborations with WWAP/UNESCO and ADB.

Priority Theme C: Water for Development and Ecosystems

- FAO reported on FAO's new Medium Term Plan and strategic priorities for water, and on its 29th Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific, which was conducted in March 2009 at which regional responses to water scarcity were adopted within the regional priorities, and irrigation reforms and investments determined as tasks to be carried out by member countries, among others. Tasks committed to by FAO at the Conference at the request of member countries include support to countries/basins to develop systemic responses to water scarcity in agriculture by providing a comprehensive suite of tools, improving the productivity of agricultural water management systems, multisectoral strategic planning in water resources and monitoring of investments and results in agricultural water management, in

cooperation with UNESCAP, strengthening regional capacity in modernization of irrigation systems and supporting regional communities of practice and networks of centres of excellence. Member countries expressed support for the launch of a regional initiative on reinventing irrigation and agricultural water governance in Asia and the Pacific in partnership with IWMI.

- The chair commented that at the 2009 Water Leaders Summit, last year's recipient of the Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize had been asked if he were to start his life again, what would he dedicate it to – to which he had answered, agriculture. The chair pursued stating that with less than 50% of water used in irrigation reaching the roots of plants, a breakthrough in irrigation efficiency could revolutionize the water landscape. GWP CACENA added that irrigated agriculture produced only some 40% of the food we consumed. FAO welcomed this new attention to agricultural water management issues and highlighted the need for well-informed policies on water conservation. In closing river basins, most of the water supposedly "wasted" or "lost" by agriculture is in fact already reused. Proper water accounting is thus one of the key tools FAO will disseminate in the region.

Key Result Area 1: Developing Knowledge and Lessons

- Celebrating the launch a year ago of the APWF *KnowledgeHubs* (KH) Network, ADB in its capacity as supporting organization reported that the first annual progress review meeting had recently been held in Singapore, with 30 members. Five workshops with hub clients had been held throughout the year, with regular updates uploaded to the KH website. PUB also reported that WaterHub continued to share its knowledge, having hosted 1000 participants from 45 countries to date. The KH Secretariat was expected to be established in the 3rd quarter of this year. Additional KHs are still being identified.

Key Result Area 2: Increasing Local Capacity

- UN-HABITAT reported that the publication on good practices in water supply and sanitation in the region had been completed. Future activities included identifying a capacity building hub somewhere in the region and expanding the Water Operators Partnerships program, namely through close collaboration with the KH network to increase partnership for local capacity building.

Key Result Area 3: Increasing Public Outreach

- ADB reported on its collaboration with Japan Water Forum, the Asian Broadcasting Union, and others to increase public outreach throughout the region. ADB also reported that work is ongoing to prepare an *Asian Water Development Outlook 2010*, which is expected to inform the 2nd Asia- Pacific Water Summit.

Key Result Area 4: Monitoring Investments and Results

- UNESCAP's identified gap was having to make sure that the APWF and APWS ought to be linked to concrete policy and decision-making processes throughout the region, which required the establishment of a mechanism linking APWF to decision-making, development of monitoring tools, and identification of accelerating priority actions. In referring to the progress on the Ministers for Water Security initiative launched by APWF Secretariat in cooperation with ADB and UNESCAP at the 5th World Water Forum, UNESCAP announced that a high-level official meeting to examine mechanisms to operationalize the new ministerial initiative had been called for in Bangkok, 27-29 October 2009, now rescheduled for 4-6 November 2009.

APWF Concrete Initiatives

- UNESCAP reported follow-up activities on the International Year of Sanitation (IYS) 2008, including main outcomes of UNESCAP's survey on IYS and ensuing recommendations.
- UNESCO reported having published the IWRM Guidelines, endorsed by UN Water.
- UNESCO-Jakarta reported on the progress of the Sustainable Urban Management Initiative (SWITCH-IPA), informing that there were plans to host a regional conference before end of year.
- The APWF Secretariat reported progress on :
 - ICIMOD Climate Change, Glaciers and Water Resources in the Himalayan Region, and its international, regional and national activities, namely, participation at 5WWF, risk assessment plans for the Hindu Kush-Himalaya region, field investigations, and training workshops;
 - establishment of the Pacific IWRM Resource Centre by SOPAC, which provided from technical support, a toolkit for practitioners, information clearinghouse functions, etc;
 - UN Global Compact's work on the CEO Water Mandate and other water-related projects;
 - launch of the Asia Society's report on Water Security in Asia, which had been launched in several centres throughout the region along with its accompanying online resource; and
 - JWF Sanimap interactive web-based project on Google Map/Earth, informing that an upgraded version was to be released in October 2009.

Central Asia and Caucasus Region

- GWP CACENA reported results of the Meeting of Presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, and informed of its further plans, namely that of supporting policy dialogues among the eight countries of the region on water-related issues in response to a decision by the Head of Central Asian States.

Agenda Item 4: Collaboration with Global Water Partnership

- Following a meeting between several APWF members and GWP in Indonesia last April, GWP had identified five key areas for potential collaboration, namely: climate change, food security, Ministers for Water Security Initiative, river basin management, sharing IWRM knowledge. GWP proposed furthering collaboration through the establishment of a joint working group of partners , which would among other things develops a road map with clear milestones on areas where the partners feel collaboration is possible. GWP also reiterated its earlier commitment to work with the APWF, ADB to fundraise for possible joint application activities to be confirmed through the Regional Water Partnerships and that work identified for cooperation is within the RWP work programmes.
- GWP South Asia reported on the state of sub-regional collaboration based on the consensus achieved on its regional action plan, and a regional initiative on food security, among others.
- GWP Southeast Asia reported on the various upcoming activities within its member countries, and called for other organizations to participate in its September 2009 regional river basin management workshop to be held in Indonesia.

- The vice-chair commented that the APWF welcomes collaboration with GWP to maximize synergy and impact and avoid duplication.

Agenda Item 5: APWF Previous and Future Events

- a) Asia-Pacific Regional Session at the 5th World Water Forum in Istanbul, March 20th 2009: The Secretariat reported that the Ministerial session was the occasion for 18 ministers in the region and top officials from FAO, ICHARM, ICIMOD, IUCN and a representative of the G8 Experts Group on Water and Sanitation to confirm their support for the Ministers for Water Security in Asia-Pacific Initiative. The Regional Report was launched at the session and a panel discussion by ministers and leaders was also held at this session.
- b) The Pacific Islands Leaders Roundtable Meeting on Water and Sanitation in Tokyo, 20 May 2009: The Secretariat reported main points of interest from this meeting co-organized by the APWF and JWF in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the World Bank Tokyo Office, which convened seven heads of Pacific Island states and several more representatives, with Mr. Yoshiro Mori having presented his chair's summary personally to the Prime Minister of Japan at the conclusion of the meeting in advance of the PALM 5 Summit.
- c) 7th Ministers' Forum on Infrastructure Development in the Asia-Pacific Region in Singapore, 22 June 2009: The Secretariat reported on the main outcomes of the Forum, which aimed to provide ministers and senior officials with a unique platform to discuss development strategies and policies, exchange views and share rich experiences in infrastructural development.
- d) Stockholm World Water Week, 16-22 August 2009:
 - i. ADB reported on preparations for the *Eye on Asia* sessions on 18 August, and APWF reported on the high-level panel to support the Ministers for Water Security initiative, including private sector perspectives.
 - ii. UNESCO invited APWF members to the planned evening side event on the IWRM Guideline evening on 16th August.
- e) International Year of Sanitation follow-up meeting in Tokyo, January 2010 (tbc): The Secretariat informed members that as one of its follow-up activities to the International Year of Sanitation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan was planning to organize a follow-up meeting and was soliciting ideas and advice from the APWF. The Secretariat proposed to issue a calendar of planned events regarding IYS follow-up activities, integrating KH Sanitation and UNESCAP activities.
- f) Singapore International Water Week 2010: PUB announced that the next SIWW would be held in collaboration with an APWF Ministers for Water Security event, and that next year's SIWW theme would be 'sustainable water solutions for cities'.
- g) Other events: The Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy's Institute of Water Policy briefed members on the previous day's Water Policy Dialogue event and announced the upcoming workshop entitled, 'New Thinking in Water Governance', in celebration of the Institute's first year anniversary.

Agenda Item 6: Recommendations by the APWF KnowledgeHubs Initiative

- a) Candidate Regional Water Knowledge Hubs
 - Four candidate hubs were recommended by ADB (in its capacity as supporting organization) for endorsement by the APWF GC, following peer review of their

business plans: 1) The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) in India, for Water and Climate Change Adaptation in South Asia; 2) the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) in Japan, for Groundwater Management; 3) the Mekong River Commission Secretariat (MRCS) in Lao PDR, for Transboundary Water Resources Management; and 4) the Japan Sanitation Consortium (JSC) in Japan, for Sanitation.

- GWP South Asia recommended that TERI not only focus on climate change mitigation, but also give due attention to adaptation measures.
 - The Governing Council members unanimously endorsed the four recommendations, asking that the KH take note of GWP South Asia's comment.
- b) APWF Steering Group on Water and Climate Change
- The Governing Council members were presented with a recommendation for endorsement to establish an APWF Steering Group on Water and Climate Change, submitted by Professor Koike from the University of Tokyo and ADB. The recommendation resulted from 3 regional meetings with knowledge hubs, clients and partners since December 2008, during which Japan had been requested to chair the proposed Steering Group.
 - The Governing Council unanimously endorsed this recommendation.
 - ICHARM expressed its commitment to this Steering Group and its intent to contribute.

Agenda Item 7: New initiatives

- No new initiatives were presented.

Agenda Item 8: Discussion on agenda 3. to 7.

- GWP CACENA informed members that the host of the next World Water Forum was chosen to be Marseilles, France, and that the themes would be presented at the upcoming Stockholm World Water Week in August 2009.
- UNESCAP asked if there might be a target date for the 2nd APWS, to which the chair answered that the Secretariat was working on it and would surely report back as soon as a candidate host had come forth. The chair also emphasized the fact that the APWS and the Ministerial event planned in collaboration with SIWW 2010 were different products of the APWF.
- UNESCAP asked for advice on how APWF members could interact with the KHs and also raised the question of accountability of the KHs, to which the chair answered that the KHs were made to report to the GC. The APWF vice-chair added that an accountability mechanism was in fact under discussion. The chair requested that the APWF Secretariat produce a KH report to be submitted to the Governing Council. ADB underlined the need for KHs to work within a spirit of quality and accountability, following the 10 key operating principles for hubs, and confirmed that a KH Secretariat would be set up shortly in order to boost collaboration, exchange, and dissemination, and that a *KnowledgeHubs* steering committee had been elected during the first annual progress review meeting to guide the work of the hubs. The *KnowledgeHubs* website at www.apwf-knowledgehubs.net was already operational and would be further improved with support from ADB and UNESCO-IHE.

- Mdm vice-chair raised the question of how to ensure accessibility to the APWF materials, namely in terms of translating them into different languages so as to make them available to local leaders throughout the region. As funds are not available for this at the APWF Secretariat, the chair stressed the need for the APWF to rely on national leaders to support translations of APWF materials. The vice-chair and ADB emphasized the function of the KHS to connect people to solutions through knowledge networking.

Agenda Item 10: Closing of the Session

- The chair closed the meeting, thanking all participants for their attendance and contributions.