

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ASIA PACIFIC WATER FORUM 6th GOVERNING COUNCIL MEETING ON 30 NOVEMBER 09, SINGAPORE

Summary

- The meeting, held at the Singapore PUB WaterHub, provided the opportunity for APWF members to report progress and updates to the Governing Council on key APWF initiatives including one new initiative presented by WHO.
- Implementation of the “Ministers for Water Security” initiative, which was announced at the 5th World Water Forum, was reviewed and planned activities were discussed.
- The selection process of the host country for the 2nd Asia-Pacific Water Summit was explained by the Secretariat and confirmed.

Key points of the 6th Governing Council Meeting of the APWF

Tribute to Prof. Tommy Koh

The Secretary General of the Japan Water Forum (Secretariat of the APWF) conveyed congratulations on behalf of the Secretariat of APWF to Prof. Tommy Koh for his conferment of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star from the Japanese Government.

Agenda Item 1: Chairmanship of the Meeting

- The 6th Governing Council meeting was chaired by the APWF GC Chair, Prof. Tommy Koh. APWF GC 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 6th GC meeting, greeted members and welcomed observers to the meeting. The agenda was adopted without amendment.

Agenda Item 3: Asia-Pacific Water Ministers Forum (APWMF), Singapore, 28 June 2010

- PUB shared the outcome of Singapore International Water Week (SIWW) 2009 and the programme for SIWW 2010 such as, date, theme, venue, and sponsors/organizing partners.
- PUB presented the proposed program and expected outcome of the Asia-Pacific Water Ministers' Forum (APWMF).
- The chair commented on PUB's proposed program saying that 10 minutes-speeches by more than 10 ministers is rather unrealistic and advised that a creative program should be further devised to produce optimal outcomes. A good facilitator of the program, good questions and good speakers will make a fruitful session.
- GWP CACENA raised concerns regarding financial as well as other difficulties for securing the participation of the ministers from his country and asked if would also be possible for the organizer to invite water-related specialists other

than the ministerial-level. PUB responded that such invitations could be arranged and welcomes recommendation on suitable speakers.

- Bangladesh Water Partnership recommended to invite at least two Ministers from Bangladesh (Environment Minister –lead Ministry for climate change and Vice Minister for Water Resources –lead ministry for IWRM) when they have approached the ministers already.
- Mdm vice-chair stressed the importance of incorporating the issue of Climate Change to encourage the participation of ministers.
- The Secretariat presented the proposed concept of the presentation by the Governing Council at the APWMF. The semi-final version of the texts will be circulated among the APWF members for comments in April 2010.

Agenda Item 4: APWF previous and future activities to promote concrete initiatives

- Progress update in support of several APWF initiatives by ADB: ADB reported that a successor program to its Water Financing Program 2006-2010 is being considered, in line with ADB's long-term strategic framework called Strategy 2020. The successor program is expected to have a 10-year time frame from 2010 to 2020, and the design of the program offers a good opportunity to review and strengthen collaboration with APWF. With regard to the APWF *KnowledgeHubs* initiative, since its launch in June 2008, 600 prospective clients have joined regional launch workshops of knowledge hubs, including 300 ADB project clients.
- The Asian Water Development Outlook (AWDO) 2010 team held its 5th meeting in November, which was chaired by the vice-chair (Mr. Narayanan) and Mr. Lincklaen Arriens, with participation from several lead organizations of the APWF and knowledge hubs. The meeting discussed five key dimensions of water security, such as satisfying household needs, supporting productive economies, managing vibrant and livable cities, restoring healthy rivers, and building resilient communities, as well as improving governance as a cross-cutting priority for water security.
- The vice-chair gave supplementary explanations on AWDO 2010's water security theme and its idea which is to be able to measure the water security based on the five index dimensions. Balancing precision and the diversity of the region is very difficult, but these index numbers should provoke leaders to work on the water issues.
- Promotion of the Ministers for Water Security Initiative by the Secretariat and Bangladesh Water Partnership: The Secretariat reported on the objective, targets and concrete actions of the Ministers for Water Security Initiative and why the ministers' list for the Initiative is needed and how to complete the list. Bangladesh Water Partnership reported on the Bangladesh case study at country level on successful outcome of gaining water-related ministers across the government to commit towards future water security in Dhaka city by bringing down ground water use from 87% to 50% and increased use of surface water by making the surface water pollution free and augmentation of surrounding rivers in Dhaka city from big rivers
- International Year of Sanitation follow-up meeting: The APWF Secretariat reported on the objective, dates, venue, organizers, agenda and topic sessions of the conference. The general participation policies and the possibility of financial support to participants will be confirmed by the Government of Japan, as organizer of the meeting.
- Ramon Alikpala gave an update of the work of the knowledge hubs as newly appointed Manager of the KnowledgeHubs Secretariat. Interim secretariat of the Knowledge Hubs Network has been established. The secretariat is hosted by ADB, not of ADB. Future setting of the secretariat, including its venue, will be

coordinated among lead organizations of KRA1 (PUB and UNESCO) and supporting organizations, including ADB and UNESCO-IHE.

Agenda Item 5: New concrete initiatives

- Global Framework for Action (GF4A) by WHO: WHO reported on the GF4A framework, its focus on drinking water supply and sanitation and its aim at meeting the MDG 7 target C. The high level meeting will be held in April, 2010 by UNICEF.
- The chair raised a question regarding the framework on GF4A asking why the high level meeting next year will not be held by the UN Secretary General when the low political priority is said to be the problem in addressing the water issues.
- Following the chair's question, WHO answered that the GF4A involves many groups of people other than the UN organizations such as UNDP and UN-Water and that its next challenge is to make the developing countries to sign up. It has been working closely with UNSGAB and its chair, the Prince of Orange. It is still an option to include the UN Secretary General (such as by presenting his message) at the next high level meeting.
- The vice-chair commented that there is some overlapping sanitation content between GF4A and AWDO and that GF4A ought to keep the AWDO team updated on their events and activities.
- KWF reported on the water-related news in Northeast Asia including their president's recent election to the Board of Governors of the World Water Council. KWF emphasized the need to create a stronger linkage between Korea, China, Japan, Mongolia and Asia-Pacific friends through some kind of platform.

Agenda Item 6: Preparation for the 2nd Asia-Pacific Water Summit (2nd APWS)

- The Secretariat reported on the selection process of the host country for the 2nd APWS. Three countries had confidentially submitted their expression of interest in hosting the 2nd APWS and they have been requested to submit a planning paper by January 8th, 2010. The final selection will be made by consensus of the APWF Governing Council in the spring 2010. The roadmap towards the 2nd APWS was also presented.

Agenda Item 7: Discussion on agenda 3. to 6.

(Agenda 4. and 6.)

- Mdm vice-chair raised a concern regarding the organization of the future ministerial-level forum saying that the biggest challenge is to organize all the ministers from different countries and to ensure that they will interact with each other.
- ADB mentioned that the need for intersectoral cooperation facilitated by national water apex bodies had been discussed at the recent regional consultation workshop organized by the Institute of Water Policy of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, in its capacity as regional knowledge hub for water governance. Subsequently, Mdm vice-chair favored the idea of the ministerial-level forum to be formed within the apex bodies framework.
- IWP made the point that the actual implementation of concrete actions needs to be better endorsed by the region's governments and that the APWF should be the one to keep the continuity of the water mission in the region since all the ministers have limited terms of office.

- Mr. Kulwant Singh (UNHABITAT) made a reference to the case of India in which the department of Science and Technology of India has been appointed by the Supreme Court to address the country's drinking water supply problems. Mr. Singh further suggested that the establishment of a national water body should be one of the agendas in the initiative and also that targeting one aspect, such as improving drinking water, works better in order to identify related ministers in each country.
- Dilasa Janvikas Pratishtan commented that not only the drinking water supply aspect should be targeted, but that a holistic approach to the water problem is necessary. They also suggested that the APWF considers the use of NGOs for experimentation.
- FAO stressed the importance of also targeting the productive and environmental uses of water, such as agricultural use.
- The vice-chair clarified that the 2nd APWS will have three themes that include productive and environmental uses of water, not just drinking water because they are all equally important. The vice chair also referred to the suggested partnership with NGOs saying that NGOs should first be active with *KnowledgeHubs* to share their activities with the APWF.
- ADB made a comment on the NGOs involvement in the APWF and that the APWF format is very original, different from other inter-governmental organizations, as it includes government, civil society and private sector organizations. Therefore, it is important for the APWF to learn how to use this format and consider how to expand the involvement of civil society in the future. This will also help to tap into local knowledge.
- The Secretariat mentioned that the 2nd APWS could include the issue of climate change and its adaptation. The main components of sustainable development are water, food and energy. At the grass-roots level, there are many NGOs other than those involved in water and sanitation that work in various fields, such as in education, health and peace-keeping. Those organizations should be considered to be included in the summit.
- The vice-chair further added that it may be helpful to list up the activities from the last two years in order to see which theme and area of water have been most discussed and worked on.

Agenda Item 8: Other matters

- No other matters were presented.

Agenda Item 9: Closing of the session

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