

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 1st ASIA PACIFIC WATER FORUM GOVERNING COUNCIL MEETING ON 21-22 FEB 07, SINGAPORE

Summary

- The mood of the meeting was warm and cordial. The meeting discussed the proposed concept notes and progress made under each Priority Theme and Key Result Area (KRA). The meeting also discussed how the input from the activities of the APWF could be organised and presented at the 1st Asia-Pacific Water Summit on 3-4 December, 2007, in Oita, Japan.
- On the whole, the Governing Council was pleased with the overall progress of the Forum but acknowledged that much still needs to be done to meet the objectives of the forum. The lead organizations for PTB and PTC have been asked to make clear their focus and desired outcomes. The Secretariat will review the proposed overall theme for the APWS “Water secured world for human development” and look into securing some funding support for APWF activities under the PTs and KRAs. The funding issue will be further discussed at the upcoming 1st APWS Steering Committee meeting scheduled on 29 Mar 07 in Tokyo.
- The Rules and Procedures of APWF were adopted. The meeting also agreed to have the next APWF GC meeting in Jun/Jul 07 in Singapore.
- The meeting received good coverage by the local and international media.

Key points of the 1st Governing Council Meeting of the APWF

Adoption of Agenda

- Chairman thanked Japan Water Forum (JWF) for serving as Secretariat and PUB for providing the venue for the 1st GC meeting. The proposals to include in the meeting agenda a presentation by the regional coordinator for GWP CACENA as well as discuss the proposed financing of APWF activities were adopted.

Agenda Item 2: Concept Notes on PTs & KRAs

PTs – Key points

- PT A : ADB’s proposed activities included a three-pronged approach focusing on infrastructure, reforms and capacity development, and mentioned that rural water services, basin water management and urban water services as the

three major areas of investment. ADB's initiatives include ADB's water financing programme (2006-2010), water financing partnership facility and a flagship report called Asian Water Development Outlook to increase public outreach.

- Concept for PTB and PTC were general in nature. Lead organizations were advised to make clear the focus and desired outcomes.

KRAs – Key points

- PUB shared its proposals on developing knowledge and lesson (i.e. offering WaterHub as a knowledge hub and conducting training programmes). Responding to queries on whether there were plans to go beyond urban water management to cover rural and river basin knowledge hubs, PUB said that its expertise lay mainly in urban management. As the world was becoming more urbanised, PUB could share its experience and expertise in this area. As for the other areas, PUB welcomed other partners (e.g. those with expertise in rural and river basin management) joining us in KRA 1 and serve as hubs in these areas.
- UN Habitat commented that the lead organizations of KRA 1 and KRA 2 could try to see if there are overlaps and synergies since both had a capacity development angle in the proposals.
- Under KRA 3, ADB shared its proposal for a flag-ship Asian Water Development Report for the APWF which could be used as a reference for the leaders at the Asia Pacific Water Summit in Dec 07. ADB also proposed a water prize for the APWF, which was meant as an encouragement for “water champions”, and not as recognition for contributions at the end of a career like the other water prizes being given out.

Asia Pacific Water Summit (APWS) – Key points

- JWF shared its concept paper for the APWS. WHO asked if sanitation was given sufficient priority. Chairman said that whenever water was mentioned, it was understood to include sanitation issues as well. This was stated in the opening paragraphs of the APWS paper. But if this was not clear enough, the Secretariat could make this point more explicit. For 2007, however, since there was not much time left before the Summit, the APWF could focus its activities more on water issues this year. Next year, the focus could be on sanitation since 2008 has been designated as the Year of Sanitation by the UN.

- Chairman also mentioned that the proposed overall theme for the APWS “Water secured world for human development” was not very inspiring. He asked the Secretariat to review this theme.

Agenda Item 5: Rules and Procedures of APWF

- Referring to the “Member Organizations” section of the paper, Chairman suggested broadening the definition of private companies which could be admitted into the APWF. Currently, only private companies “which contribute to water through corporate social responsibility activities” were able to join. This wording excluded water companies and companies intending to embark on water-related social responsibility activities in the future. Chairman suggested adding the word “including” i.e. “including those which contribute ...”. There were no objections to the amendment.

Agenda Item 6: Other Matters

- ADB gave a briefing on the Water Financing Partnership Facility (WFPP) it was establishing. The initial target of the WFPP was US\$100 million by 2008. According to ADB, 70% of the fund will be slated for water projects, while 30% was for knowledge, capacity and innovation services, engaging civil society, and regional cooperation.
- For the APWF in particular, ADB suggested setting up a US\$10 million trust fund to support APWF initiatives. JWF would try to approach Japanese companies to contribute but in the meantime urged each lead agency to source for its own resources to carry out their activities
- A few lead organizations (FAO, IUCN etc..) expressed concern over the possibility of not receiving financial assistance from JWF to carry out the activities for the APWF. They highlighted that since these activities went beyond their core budgets, they would not be able to carry out the programmes under the APWF if funding assistance was not forthcoming.
- Chairman suggested the Secretariat to look into securing some funding support for the APWF and asked for this issue to be put on the agenda for the APWS Steering Committee.

Follow-Up / Action Items		
	Action	Action By
1.	To fix a date in Jun/Jul 2007 for the next GC meeting to be held in Singapore.	Secretariat
2.	To table the funding issues for APWF activities at the 1 st APWS Steering Committee meeting on 29 Mar 2007.	Secretariat
3.	To add the word “including” under Member Organisations, line 7, ie “... private companies/corporations <u>including</u> those which contribute ...”	Secretariat
4.	To make clear the focus and desired outcomes for PTB and PTC	Lead Organisations for PTB and PTC

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Others

Press Conference

- The press conference at the end of the meeting was chaired by APWF Chairman Ambassador Prof Koh. It was well attended by both local and international press.
- The APWF GC meeting received good coverage in the media.