



International Hydrological Programme

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UNESCO-IHP INVOLVEMENT IN THE 5TH WORLD WATER FORUM

Item 10.3 of the provisional agenda

SUMMARY

The 5th World Water Forum will be held in Istanbul, Turkey, on 15-22 March 2009 and the overall process leading to the Forum and the programmatic aspects are now well on the way. This document reports on the main preparatory activities carried out to date and on the status of UNESCO-IHP's involvement.

The Bureau may wish make some comments and suggestions regarding the current and potential role of IHP in the Forum.

BACKGROUND

1. UNESCO-IHP, along with WWAP and UNESCO-IHE, has had strong showings in the foregoing World Water Fora, particularly in the 3rd in Kyoto-Osaka-Shiga in Japan (March 2003) and in the 4th in Mexico City (March 2006). This has been as a consequence of the priority status accorded to water and associated ecosystems at UNESCO for the last 6 years. UNESCO's presence has strengthened its international role in the pursuit of sustainable water management and of the fulfillment of the MDGs. The scope of UNESCO's participation in the two previous World Water Fora was reported in documents IHP/Bur-XXXV/21 (2003) and IHP/IC-XVII/Inf.13 (2006).

2. The World Water Fora have become the premium global freshwater events with major goals of raising awareness about the pressing freshwater issues and achieving widespread political visibility. This is a needed complement to the technical, scientific, educational and cultural water-related activities of UNESCO, as their relevance is highly dependent on timely awareness of their outputs that can be used by Member States and other stakeholders. The presentation of the World Water Development Report (WWDR) has now become the central event of the Fora. The presentation of the 1st and 2nd editions of the WWDR has been made by the Director-General of UNESCO at the Japan and Mexico fora. The 4th Forum had the added feature that UNESCO was the lead agency for the celebration of World Water Day 2006, having the theme "Water and Culture", thus UNESCO led a major double event session on 22 March 2006.

3. At the close of the 4th World Water Forum in Mexico City, the World Water Council (WWC) in a meeting of its Board of Governors endorsed Istanbul, Turkey as the venue of the next Forum pending final negotiations between the WWC and the Government of Turkey. On 18 January 2007, in Ankara, Turkey the Turkish Government and the WWC signed the official agreement for the organization of the 5th World Water Forum, to be held in Istanbul in March 2009.

4. The overarching theme adopted for the 5th Forum is "*Bridging Divides for Water*" to emphasize the need for interaction, intercommunication and functional harmonization of the various entities making up the water domain, whether physical, institutional, social, legal or otherwise. It also alludes to the nature of Istanbul, bridging Europe and Asia over the Bosphorus. DSI, the General Directorate of the State Hydraulic Works, the organization that will lead the Forum preparation, expects that the 5th Forum will clearly signal the period "before Istanbul" and "after Istanbul" in water affairs

PREPARATIONS TO DATE

5. The two-year preparatory process involving representatives from numerous international institutions and governments has started at the Kick-off meeting for the 5th Forum held on 19-20 March 2007 in Istanbul. There were exchanges, roundtable discussions, workshops and brainstorming sessions, designed to provide ideas and elements for shaping the 5th Forum. More than 300 participants from nearly 50 countries attended the meeting, which was organized with three main objectives: (i) get feedback on the 4th Forum and build upon its strengths; (ii) exchange about priority thematic issues for the 5th Forum; and (iii) discuss the various processes to be put in place for preparing and executing the Forum. Additionally, as part of these initial preparatory events, the International Congress on River Basin Management was held from 22 to 24 March 2007 in Antalya, Turkey, organized by the Turkish authorities in charge of organizing the 5th World Water Forum. This international congress congregated representatives of international organizations, river basin management experts, academicians, public and private sector representatives, to exchange experiences and knowledge concerning river basin

management. The outcomes of the Kick-off events were reported in document IHP/Bur-XL/13.

6. The First Announcement of the Forum was issued in September 2007 (later updated in February 2008). The full announcement may be found at the Forum web site at: http://www.worldwaterforum5.org/fileadmin/WWF5/Library/Publications/1st_announcement_5th_world_water_forum.pdf. The programmatic structure of the coming Forum was outlined showing the linkages to the overarching theme "*Bridging Divides for Water*". There will be six main themes as given below and each has several topics under which the individual sessions will be implemented (more about this later):

- **Theme 1:** Global Change & Risk Management
- **Theme 2:** Advancing Human Development & MDGs
- **Theme 3:** Managing and Protecting Water Resources
- **Theme 4:** Governance and Management
- **Theme 5:** Finance
- **Theme 6:** Education, Knowledge and Capacity Development

On 5-6 November 2007 the 1st Meeting of the Thematic & Regional Coordinators was held in Istanbul, in which a core group of organizations convened to examine and build upon the programmatic structure of the Forum within a shared vision for the 5th Forum, clarifying the preparatory process and exploring means for an active engagement of all key stakeholders.

7. The 2nd Meeting of the Thematic and Regional Coordinators took place in Istanbul on 7-8 February 2008, gathering more than 400 representatives from approximately 200 organizations. One of the major objectives was to elaborate further the content of the topics; the participants according to their particular interest, split into 22 topic working groups within six thematic groups. At the end of the meeting, the topic groups completed reports that sharpened the aims of the topics, provided session ideas and identified stakeholders.¹ The main purpose of the coordination meeting was to confirm the thematic content of the forum, identify potential sessions and to confirm/appoint the Theme Coordinators and topic coordinating groups. The starting point of the discussions was the Topic Scoping papers drafted by pre-identified parties in the previous coordinating meeting. The proposed potential sessions had to be clearly placed within the framework of the topics and in total they should number no more than one hundred for the whole forum; the call for interest in the sessions would ensue and before finalizing the format and content of the sessions. This is a departure in procedure from the previous fora, where there were an exceedingly large number of proposals within the main themes and they either were accepted uncritically (Kyoto, 3rd World Water Forum, 330 sessions) or they had to be merged with no clearly predictable results (Mexico, 4th World Water Forum, 180 sessions resulting from about 550 proposals).

UNESCO-IHP INVOLVEMENT

8. UNESCO has been present and active in the preceding 5th Forum preparatory meetings cited above. More recently it took part in the 2nd Thematic and Regional Coordinators Meeting, 7-8 February 2008 (see paragraph 7), as well as in the 4th

¹ The initial topic scoping papers, the full topic roundtable reports and the summary of the topic roundtable reports may be obtained at the Forum website at: http://www.worldwaterforum5.org/fileadmin/WWF5/Preparatory_Process/Prep_Meetings/7-9_Feb/topic_development_summary_08.02.2008.pdf and <http://www.worldwaterforum5.org/index.php?id=2096>

International Steering Committee Meeting of the Forum, 9-10 February 2008, that followed. While the first meeting was open to all stakeholders, the second one was limited to the members of the International Steering Committee, along with its components of the Programme, the Political Process and the Communications Committee. These preparatory meetings confirmed that UNESCO plays a leading role in the Forum, with numerous foreseen interventions including the presentation of the third edition of the World Water Development Report and leading the celebration of World Water Day 2009 with the Theme "Shared waters" (this latter with UN Economic Commission for Europe). UNESCO clearly has the greatest presence in the Forum among the UN system agencies.

Thematic Programme

9. As a result of the discussions in the preparatory meetings, UNESCO has a clear placement within numerous themes/topics. The Annex shows the themes and topics as they stand after the preparatory meeting on 7-10 February 2008 in Istanbul; basically it meant the addition of two new topics under Theme 6 *Education, Knowledge and Capacity Building*. The following comments apply with respect to UNESCO involvement:

- **Theme 1 *Global Change and Risk Management*:** UNESCO has a firm foothold in topic 1.1 Adapting to climate change (part of the topic coordination group) and in 1.3 Water related hazards (ICHARM category 2 centre is the topic coordinator).
- **Theme 2 *Advancing Human Development and the MDGs*:** it concentrates on infrastructure, energy health and food, thus does not offer a natural niche for UNESCO; however, there are opportunities for collaboration, such as in Topic 2.2 *Water for energy, energy for water*, where the International Hydropower Association, a UNESCO partner, is the topic coordinator.
- **Theme 3 *Managing and Protecting Water Resources*:** In Topic 3.1 *Basin Management and transboundary waters*, UNESCO is the topic lead, and is currently working with French and Japanese partners in a related project aimed at the Forum; in Topic 3.4 *Managing and protecting surface and groundwater*, UNESCO is strongly linked to the topic lead; there are strong opportunities for collaboration in the other topics.
- **Theme 4 *Governance and Management*:** In Topic 4.3 *Ethics, Transparency and Empowerment of Stakeholders*, the IHP-HELP Centre for Water Law, Policy and Science (Dundee) has the lead.
- **Theme 5 *Finance*:** UNESCO is not involved in this theme.
- **Theme 6 *Education, Knowledge and capacity building*:** UNESCO holds the theme lead (strong collaboration of IHP and IHE); in session 6.1 *Education, Knowledge and Capacity Development Strategies* (new title), UNESCO-IHE is the lead organization; in 6.2 *Water Science and Technology*, UNESCO-IHP is co-lead. Exceptionally under this theme, two new topics were created: 6.4 *Data for All* and 6.5 *Water and Culture*; UNESCO-IHE is the lead for Topic 6.4 and UNESCO-IHP for Topic 6.5. It should be noted that Topic 6.5 *Water and Culture* was introduced at UNESCO's behest rectifying an important omission.

Political Process

10. Four political processes of the 5th Forum will actively encourage bridging of the divides between technical professionals, political leaders and other stakeholders involved with and using water resources, in line with overarching 5th Forum theme *“Bridging Divides for Water”*. Heads of State, local elected officials, parliamentarians, and ministers will meet to discuss “Water Management Adaptation Strategies for Global Changes, including Climate Variability/Change”. The 5th Forum will offer opportunities for participants in these four political processes to interact with each other as well as with professionals and stakeholders engaged in the thematic conference. The main objectives of the Political Process of the Forum are to raise awareness at the political level and to create political will with a view to setting a political agenda to provide new and concrete answers to the current water issues facing the world. The 5th Forum seeks to influence water policy-making at local, regional, national and global levels through this innovative exchange and enhanced understanding amongst water users, decision makers and civil society.

11. Whereas in the past, the World Water Fora have focused on reinforcing already stated norms at the Ministerial level, the 5th Forum will create multiple outputs at different governmental levels; all related to the topic “Water Management Adaptation Strategies for Global Changes, including Climate Variability/Change”. The process for the 5th Forum will also be primarily driven by the Thematic Programme of the Forum described above. This is very much different than in the past where the Political Process and the Thematic Programme have not worked parallel with one another. As Co-Chair of the Political Process Committee of the 5th World Water Forum, the IHP Secretary has led the efforts in driving a multi-governmental level, multi-stakeholder process forward. UNESCO will host the 1st Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) Meeting in September, which will launch an intergovernmental process aimed at creating a “Ministerial Agenda for Water Management Adaptation Strategies from Global Changes including Climate Variability/Change”.

12. An important event contributing to the political process was the Asia-Pacific Water Forum (Beppu, Japan, 2-3 December 2007), in which UNESCO had an active involvement. Some of the more significant forthcoming events along the political process are listed below.

Select Events for the Political Process of the 5th World Water Forum:

Event	Date	Location
African Water Week	25-28 March 2008	Tunis, Tunisia
CSD-16 Side Event	15 May	New York, USA
African Water Summit	8-11 July 2008	Cairo, Egypt
Stockholm’s World Water Week	17-23 August 2008	Stockholm, Sweden
1 st PrepCom	11-12 September 2008	Paris, France (UNESCO)
Arab Water Forum	November 2008	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Water Forum of the Americas	24-25 November 2008	Iguazu, Brazil
2 nd PrepCom	November 2008	Geneva, Switzerland (WHO)
3 rd PrepCom	January 2009	Rome, Italy (FAO)
4 th PrepCom	February 2009	Istanbul, Turkey
5 th World Water Forum	16-22 March 2009	Istanbul, Turkey

13. As part of the UNESCO overall preparatory effort leading to the 5th World Water Forum, coordination between the UNESCO-IHP Secretariat, WWAP and UNESCO-IHE has already started in an integrated way. This was already evident in the 2nd Meeting of the Thematic and Regional Coordinators where there is evident cooperation in themes, topics and sessions and where promising partnerships were identified. More concrete efforts in earnest will ensure the “calls of interest” that is due to come out in the 2nd Announcement of the 5th Forum on 22 March 2008. The professionals at the IHP Secretariat in UNESCO Headquarters and at the Regional Offices will collaborate in this effort. The very high status achieved the World Water Development Report was underscored by the fact that the presentation of WWDR3 by the Director-General will take place in the opening of the 5th Forum in plenary on 16 March 2009, which is exceptionally preferential placement.

14. The Bureau may wish to make comments and suggestions regarding the UNESCO-IHP involvement in the 5th World Water Forum process, considering as well the regional processes and the type of contribution the IHP National Committees and the other components of the UNESCO Water Family could make in this respect, in particular the network of the water related category 2 centres.

ANNEX
**Themes and Topics of the 5th World Water Forum
(as of 20 March 2008)**

THEMES/ TOPICS
<p>1. Global Change and Risk Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1.1 Adapting to climate change in water resources: understanding the impacts of climate change, vulnerability assessments and adaptation measures1.2 Water related migration, changing land use and human settlements1.3 Managing disasters
<p>2. Advancing Human Development and the Millennium Development Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">2.1 Ensuring water, sanitation, and hygiene for all2.2 Water for energy, energy for water2.3 Water for food for ending poverty and hunger2.4 Multiple use and functions of water services
<p>3. Managing and Protecting Water Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">3.1 Basin management and transboundary water cooperation3.2 Ensuring adequate water resources and storage infrastructure to meet agricultural, energy and urban needs3.3 Managing and protecting Water and their supply systems to meet human and environmental needs3.4 Managing and protecting water resources
<p>4. Governance and Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">4.1 Implementing the right to water and sanitation for improved access4.2 Improving performance through regulatory approaches4.3 Ethics, transparency and empowerment of stakeholders4.4 Optimizing public and private roles in water services4.5 Institutional arrangements for efficient and effective water management
<p>5. Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">5.1 Sustainable financing for the water sector5.2 Pricing strategies for a sustainable water sector5.3 Water for poverty
<p>6. Education, Knowledge and Capacity Building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">6.1 Education, knowledge and capacity development strategies6.2 Water science and technology: appropriate and innovative solutions for the 21st century6.3 Using the assets of professional associations and networks to achieve the MDGs6.4 Data for all6.5 Water and culture