

\*\*\*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\*\*\*



**CALL TO G8 LEADERS:**  
**WATER SECURITY CRITICAL TO CLIMATE CHANGE, FOOD SECURITY, HEALTH AND**  
**ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Water problems of the Asia-Pacific region are solvable with strong political will, leadership, and commitment, and a call to action from the G8 leaders will help in boosting progress in countries across the region.

The Asia and the Pacific has taken on water security and sanitation challenges head on. Seven months ago, 10 Heads of Government and 36 ministers convened in Beppu, Japan at the 1<sup>st</sup> Asia-Pacific Water Summit. Under the chairmanship of former Prime Minister of Japan Yoshiro Mori, participants of the Summit deliberated during two days on the critical water issues for the region: water financing and capacity development, water-related disaster management, water for development and ecosystems, among others.

On the occasion of the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit, we, the Asia-Pacific Water Forum (APWF) family, seize the opportunity to highlight some key facts facing water security in the region, and the recommendations that were issued at the 1<sup>st</sup> Asia-Pacific Water Summit:

- Water is intricately linked to humanity's critical challenges, namely, climate change, food security, health and economic growth.
- The Asian continent supports 60% of the world's population with only 36% of the world's water resources.<sup>1</sup>
- 655 million people are still without safe drinking water and 1.9 billion without access to basic water sanitation in our region.<sup>2</sup>
- Between 2001 and 2005, 62,000 people were killed annually by water related disasters in the Asia-Pacific region (compared to 13,000 people killed by such disasters in the rest of the world).<sup>3</sup>
- 524 million, or 61%, of the world's 854 million malnourished are in the region<sup>4</sup>. Agriculture consumes over 80% of the region's renewable water resources and faces the challenge of doubling food production by 2050.
- Investing in water is to invest in poverty reduction: \$1 spent on improving water supplies and sanitation buys the poor at least \$6 in time and health savings.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The United Nations World Development Report

<sup>2</sup> Meeting the MDG Drinking Water and Sanitation Target: The Urban and Rural Challenge of the Decade

<sup>3</sup> EM-DAT: The OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database – [www.em-dat.net](http://www.em-dat.net) – Universite Catholique de Louvain

<sup>4</sup> The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2006 <http://www.fao.org/docrep/009/a0750e/a0750e00.htm>

- In some of the major breadbaskets of Asia, such as the Punjab in India and the North China Plain, water tables are falling 2 to 3 meters a year<sup>6</sup>, with serious consequences for agriculture and food security. Other critical systems, the tropical deltas, face degradation, sea level rise and water shortage. Water productivity of food production is low overall.
- Glaciers in the Himalayas are receding faster than in any other part of the world.<sup>7</sup>
- Asia's rivers average 20 times more lead than the rivers in the industrialized world, and average 50 times more bacteria from human feces than WHO guidelines allow.<sup>8</sup>
- Tuvalu has become one of the first countries to relocate some of its citizens because of rising sea levels.

The APWF calls upon the G8 leaders and the Asia-Pacific region's leaders to recognize the new regional movement and commitment generated by the 1st Asia-Pacific Water Summit to cope with the increasing challenges in water resources management and support efforts to integrate the following recommendations to give water security and sanitation a higher priority on the local, national, regional and international agendas (from the APWF 2007 Policy Brief, available at [www.apwf.org](http://www.apwf.org)):

#### 1. Water Financing and Capacity Development

- Define policies that target the specific needs and opportunities of the poor for enhancing human security through improved access to water supply and sanitation
- Broaden the range of technology and management choices to include the development of innovative, low-cost technical choices that can be implemented in poor communities
- Establish more effective and diverse credit and financial management systems that are accessible and affordable to the poor; and develop regulatory regimes that encourage investments by the private sector, and especially by local small-scale entrepreneurs.
- Carry out reforms that include capacity building, introduction of more appropriate management systems, and more effective institutional coordination between all players

#### 2. Water-Related Disaster Management

- Integrate water-related Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) into national development plans
- Recognize the importance of IWRM for water-related DRR
- Establish national and local goals/targets for water-related DRR
- Develop preparedness indices for water-related DRR
- Develop water-related disaster warning systems and human capacities

#### 3. Water for Development and Ecosystems

- Implement good governance at the basin scale

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<sup>5</sup> Asia Water Watch 2015

<sup>6</sup> The United Nations World Water Development Report 2

<sup>7</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, <http://www.realcities.com/mld/krwashington/17212911.htm>

<sup>8</sup> Kristof, N.D. 1997. New York Times 11-28-97, "Across Asia, a Pollution Disaster Hovers," p. A1

<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itgic/0399/ijge/gj-07b.htm>

- Adopt practical tools to improve economic, social and environmental outcomes of water management
- Re-invent and invest in agricultural water management to raise the productivity of water and decrease the environmental footprint of agricultural production
- Protect and restore urban environments
- Prepare for climate change impacts on water availability and adopt mitigation and adaptation strategies that provide benefits now

The recommended Guiding Principles to accelerate progress are:

- Decentralization with empowerment
- Partnership approach between local authorities, civil society (NGOs and community-based groups) and different service providers (public and private)
- Capacity development as an important area of investment
- Building knowledge platforms and supporting initiatives to accelerate progress

The Main Contributors to the APWF 2007 Policy Brief include: Asian Development Bank (ADB), The International Center for Water Hazard and Risk Management (ICHARM), The World Conservation Union (IUCN), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), PUB Singapore, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Streams of Knowledge (STREAMS), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), Japan Water Forum (JWF), Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and World Health Organization (WHO); and in consultation with sub-regional coordinators, namely Global Water Partnership (GWP), Executive committee of the International Fund for Saving Aral Sea (EC IFAS), Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) and Korea Water Forum (KWF). The APWF's Governing Council is chaired by Professor Tommy Koh, Ambassador-at-Large of Singapore.

The APWF is working to increase the region's access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, rehabilitate urban waterways, protect the environmental integrity of water ecosystems, improve water governance and increase the productivity of agricultural water management for food security, and reduce people's vulnerability to water-related disasters. The APWF champions efforts aimed at boosting investments, building capacity, knowledge sharing, increasing public outreach and enhancing cooperation in the water sector at the regional level. APWF members have launched a series of initiatives as a follow up to the Asia Pacific Water Summit to achieve these goals and the APWF calls on the G8, the international community and all development partners and governments to support these initiatives:

Concrete Initiatives	Implementing Organization
<b>PRIORITY THEME A</b>	
Financing Water and Sanitation and Strengthening Capacity	ADB, JBIC, JICA

Development	
PRIORITY THEME B	
Regional Knowledge Hub for Water-related Disaster Risk Reduction (ICHARM)	ICHARM
Adaptation to Climate Change concerning the impacts of glacier-melting in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan (HKH) region	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)
Pacific Partnership Initiative on Sustainable Water Management	Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC)
PRIORITY THEME C	
Asia Pacific community practice on environmental flows for water resources management at policy, river basin and local levels	IUCN, NARBO, IWMI
Re-inventing irrigation and agricultural water governance in the Asia Pacific to reach the Millennium Development Goals: a regional programme to support action at all levels through knowledge sharing, capacity building and implementation	FAO, IWMI
KEY RESULT AREA 1	
Initial Knowledge Hubs	PUB Singapore, UNESCO
Asia-Pacific Water Museum	National Science Museum of Thailand, UNESCO, JWF
KEY RESULT AREA 2	
Capacity Building Hubs and Policy Support for Increased Local Capacities	UN-HABITAT in collaboration with Streams of Knowledge
KEY RESULT AREA 3	
Asian Water & Development Outlook	ADB
Asia-Pacific Water Documentary	Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU), ADB, JWF
KEY RESULT AREA 4	
Regional network of water ministers to strengthen regional cooperation in water resources	UNESCAP
Regional water task force to support the strengthening of water resources management with emphasis on monitoring of investment and results in the water sector	UNESCAP
OTHER INITIATIVES	
Launching of the International Year of Sanitation 2008 in Asia and the Pacific	UNDESA, UNESCAP, JBIC and ADB
Water Web Project on Google map & earth	JWF
A Call to Action: Asia-Pacific Businesses to Address the Water Challenge	United Nations Global Compact

Aral Sea Basin Public Water Council	EC IFAS, ICWC, Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development, GWP CACENA
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