

## **Summary of Proceedings 2nd Joint Executive Committee Meeting of the 4th Asia-Pacific Water Summit**

### **[Outline of the Meeting]**

Time & Date: 16:30 – 18:13, Wednesday, May 13, 2020

Venue: Web Conference

Ensuing the secretariat's remarks regarding the following items, a variety of opinions were expressed by the participants.

1. Postponement of the 4th APWS and the way forward
2. Ideas of the outcome document of the summit (The Kumamoto Declaration) and the parallel thematic sessions (tentative)
3. The official logo mark of the summit

### **[Summary of Comments by Committee Members]**

#### **(Comments on the Postponement of the 4th APWS)**

- Support the 4th APWS Secretariat's suggestions to take a safe approach which might organize it in a year. It will also give us time to prepare many things. We should take advantage of the situation to make sure we use the extra time for a well-prepared program to ensure the highest level of participation. (Alternate Committee Member Zahedi, and Committee Members: Bamsey, Narayanan, Panella, Watanabe, and Others)
- It will be a very, very crowded agenda next year as there are many postponed meetings from this year. It is important to make sure there are no major clashes with the dates of other important meetings. It will be important to watch the other events to ensure the 4th APWS will contribute to making a real impact on the global water agenda. It's important to keep an integrated perspective. (Alternate Committee Member Zahedi and Committee Member Bamsey)
- I suggest that we should not just wait for the dates for the summit and the summit itself to happen. On the way, we should have some webinars on the areas of science and technology, Research & Development, and the lessons to learn what the communities have done, what the partner organizations are doing. (Committee Member Khan)
- We should not stick to the habit of the Japanese fiscal year in 2021. (Committee Member Oki)

- I understand the situation of the 4th APWS is fluid and the date will come when it's convenient and safe for all universal support. (Committee Member Panella)

**(Comments on Lessons Learnt from COVID-19 Pandemic)**

- We would strongly recommend a dedicated summit which adds a pillar on COVID-19. This reinforces the key messages of the summit. (Alternate Committee Member Zahedi, and Committee Members Bamsey, Oki, Imai, Amano, and Others)
- In many areas across the region, very simple measures like hand washing, which is the number one recommendation, are simply not possible. A session related to COVID-19 could explore the linkages between access to WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene), and the COVID hotspots, and look at whether or not some of the stimulus the recovery actions have been directed towards the acceleration of WASH infrastructure. (Alternate Committee Member Zahedi)
- It should include the impacts on water sectors and the ways of coping with the process from water sectors. Water is fundamental in the response of the COVID-19 (Committee Member Bamsey)
- Refugees, immigrants, people with low incomes, slum dwellers, and others, in developing countries, are at significantly increased risk for the infection of COVID-19, as they do not have appropriate social security, medical systems, and due to their lack of access to public services, knowledge and means. Slums are likely to experience explosive COVID-19 outbreaks that are difficult to contain once infections set in. People who have to rely on unstable informal economics and incomes tend to lose their jobs and shelter, and require adapted responses. In addition to Official Development Assistance (ODA), it is important to extend direct support to socially vulnerable people, particularly for those who will face these aggravated circumstances.
- As the East Asian countries, including Japan, draw international attention as successful examples in containing the COVID-19 spread, we need to work together to collect, consolidate, and share a number of our experiences in the water and sanitation sectors, including the technology and practices that seem to be effective in preventing and containing COVID-19. It does not necessarily have to rely on premium technologies; mid-level technologies are also good. It is important to compile and share information as common lessons to be discussed at the 4thAPWS. (Committee Member Koresawa)
- What we have learned from the COVID-19 pandemic is the importance of partnership and working together. (Committee Member Narayanan)
- The COVID-19 gave us some thoughts about the further discussion about water and poverty. In the 4th APWS, we can think about the synergies and trade-offs among the

health, poverty, and water nexus, not only about water, energy, food nexus in the 4th APWS. The risk management of COVID-19 should cover the discussion about resilience and the concept of “build-back-better” in the course of water and COVID-19 issues. (Committee Member Oki)

- We should reflect on the lessons from COVID-19 explicitly and the way COVID-19 is strengthening resilience with which water sectors have been dealing in the 4th APWS. I would like to propose one of the thematic parallel sessions or a special session should include not just the health impacts but the economic and social impacts. (Committee Member Panella)
- We can cooperate through the WWC and with all the organizations and countries, together, for water security as well as to ensure other securities. From China, we will be able to contribute to the pandemic effectively by sharing information not only regarding medicine and health, but also with technical and economic support to other countries, as required by other countries. (Committee Member Shi)
- I would like to call for a discussion on better ways of combatting infectious diseases. (Committee Member Aso)
- We should actively call on businesses and industries to participate in the 4th APWS, as they are among the sectors most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. (Committee Member Imai)
- We should send out a message as soon as possible that lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic will be compiled at the summit. (Alternate Committee Member Amano)
- It is important to prepare for infectious diseases to ensure stable food supplies in developing countries. Therefore, we would like to discuss the importance of the development and improvement of water-related facilities in rural agricultural areas. (Committee Member Watanabe)
- It is said that the reason for the relatively small number of fatalities in Japan is because of our hand-washing practices in daily life. Though this theory requires further verification, I recommend sharing the importance of such practices. I think it is necessary to send out such messages to the post-COVID-19 world that will give people hopes and dreams. We also need to spread information about the latest technological developments, which will enable us to tackle post-disaster restoration work and flood protection activities during disasters, involving the smallest possible number of people or using unmanned technologies. (Committee Member Yamada)
- The COVID-19 pandemic has occurred even in countries with good water and sewerage systems and where the population has an adequate supply of drinkable tap water. Japan, China, and South Korea have just barely succeeded in keeping infections under control,

and in some developing countries the pandemic has not yet seriously occurred. Though infrastructure development is important, we should review the conventional approach to improving the enabling environment advocated by the UN and other organizations, which usually relies on adding something new. Rather, we should seek a breakthrough approach to disaster prevention. (Vice-Chair Tambo)

- The 4th APWS needs to be rich in content that can attract global attention, such as our new relationship with water, including strategies to prevent infectious diseases, and those regarding the economy. (Vice-Chair Onishi)

#### **(Comments on Quality Growth)**

- The SDGs should remain the framework for the response on water-related issues, and all other issues. So the 4<sup>th</sup> APWS should focus on progress towards the SDG6, and water-related SDGs. Quality growth, even in the context of COVID recovery will be determined by how it fits into and contributes to accelerating the action from the SDGs in a broad sense including on poverty. (Alternate Committee Member Zahedi)
- Regarding the outcomes of the summit, it is very vital to contribute to the progress to improve the prospects of water secured world and the implementation of water-related agenda. Finance discussions during the summit are quite important. To contribute to the momentum of the global water agenda, the declaration document should be specific as possible and should include the needs of the implementation. (Committee Member Bamsey)
- The activities and lessons of the APWF members should be synthesized, consolidated, and reflect them into the concise discussions in the 4th APWS. The discussion's focus on 4th APWS should be a bit wider, including the circumstance that communities are in now, and their success stories and the biggest bottlenecks. The SDGs and the Sendai framework are also very important to consider how this interlinks with sustainable infrastructure and how water plays very important roles in the recovery. (Committee Member Khan)
- COVID-19 has exposed various social vulnerabilities of current societies. It is important to develop more sustainable societies without repeating the same mistakes. (Committee Member Koresawa)
- Discussion from the perspectives of governance, finance, and science & technologies is very important. The Finance discussion is particularly important for quality development for the economy of developing states as well as the achievement of their targets of the SDGs. (Committee Member Oki)
- The 4th APWS is focusing on best practices and the next generation so it would be useful

to incorporate youth, or young water leaders, explicitly into the program since they are the future, inheriting this difficult and challenging situation. They would benefit from the wisdom of the members who are attending the 4th APWS, and also share valuable insights on how they see the future to help us to shape water security in the Asia Pacific. (Committee Member Panella)

- Developed countries need to organize a cooperative system for the solution of a variety of issues in the Asia-Pacific region, to offer and implement concrete recommendations on infrastructure improvement for regional safety and a better environment. It is necessary to set a specific KPI (Key Performance Indicator) for each country, to share information on the percentage of improvement by the target year, and to set a specific stretch goal (a target intentionally designed to be difficult to achieve). (Committee Member Aso)
- I propose that we send out a message about the necessity of proactive prevention by showing that the construction of river embankments and dams was effective in preventing water-related disasters in Japan. (Committee Member Yamada)

(Additional Comments)

- I would like to propose essay and picture contests for children, leading up to the 4th APWS (Committee Member Koresawa)
- The Kumamoto Declaration should maintain a sense of continuity by referring to previous declarations. (Committee Member Narayanan)
- The Asian Water Development Outlook (AWDO) 2020, which the ADB is developing with APWF will be ready for sharing in the 4th APWS. This looks at water security across multiple dimensions. There is also a dedicated chapter on finance and governance that the ADB is preparing with OECD. The findings from this document will go into the parallel thematic sessions and throughout the program in the preparation of the 4th APWS. ADB will also be able to commit to providing technical support by conveying the thoughts of the ADB and its developing member countries to ensure the preparation of the 4th APWS. (Committee Member Panella)
- It is necessary to call for cooperation from the media across the Asia-Pacific region and to emphasize the importance of water issues. (Committee Member Imai)
- It is necessary to hold a thematic session on challenges regarding groundwater and a sound water cycle. Kumamoto's practice regarding the use and conservation of groundwater is a good example of a sound water cycle that needs to be passed on to the next generation. Therefore, good practices and accumulated experiences in groundwater use, not only in Kumamoto but from across Japan, should be one of the main topics for

discussion in the Asia-Pacific region. (Committee Member Watanabe)

- It is important to plan and manage in an integrated fashion, both the parallel thematic sessions of the 4th APWS as well as the side events and exhibition, which will be held concurrently. In Kumamoto, a broad range of groups and individuals are involved in water-related activities, based on a good relationship with the local governments. It is necessary to invigorate the 4th APWS throughout the region by extending cooperation with many other groups. (Committee Member Watanabe)
- To publicize the outcomes of the summit in a strategic way, it is crucial to strengthen links with future major water-related international conferences. (Committee Member Yamada)