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## Science and Technology in the Spotlight for the 7<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum: Korea Kicks off Preparation for 2015

- 11% of the global population, or 783 million people, are still without access to improved sources of drinking water;
- Water use has been growing at more than twice the rate of population increase in the last century;
- Since 1990, 1.7 billion people have gained access to safe drinking water;
- Science and technology can help pull developing countries out of poverty.

**Seoul, Korea 13 May 2013** - Around 500 water experts and high level representatives from around the world will gather in Daegu-Gyeongbuk, Republic of Korea, from 14-15 May to launch the preparation for the 7<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum in 2015. Tonight, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea, Chung Hongwon, will celebrate the Kick-off by offering the decisive support of his country as the host of the 2015 event. The World Water Forum is organized every three years by the World Water Council, together with a host country and host city, counting regularly over 20,000 participants.

While the international target to halve the number of people who do not have access to safe drinking water has been met, the Millennium Development Goal to improve basic sanitation is off track. The year 2015 provides a historical opportunity to firmly implant water across the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals and offer the international community a common platform to secure the future of water.

For the 7<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum, a new emphasis has been placed on science and technology. There are already many scientific and technological solutions for water-related challenges. However, without the bridge to political and economic decision makers, these solutions that have the potential to positively affect whole communities risk never seeing the light of the day. Through the design of an interface where scientists and engineers can interact with politicians and policy-makers, the 7<sup>th</sup> Forum will enable innovation in this field.

“Science and technology has an enormous potential to help developing countries pull themselves out of poverty”, said the **President of the World Water Council, Ben Braga**. “The world population continues to increase and strives for higher standards of living. This puts pressure on our limited usable water resources. As a consequence, we are failing to keep up with water demands for the most basic human needs and, at the same time, we need to start looking differently towards water as an engine for social and economic development,” said the President Braga. (More on this here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iVLkmo-1izM&feature=youtube> )

The World Water Forum is not just a week-long event – it is a two-year preparatory process for which the Kick-off is essential. This gathering provides an initial sampling of the global issues that should be addressed. Around 500 participants, representing more than 40 countries and 120 organizations, will take part in workshops during two days in Daegu-Gyeongbuk, Republic of Korea, to work on the water priorities and to debate what targets can be set and achieved.

“The key to the success of this Kick-off meeting is active participation, willingness to share tried-and-tested practical solutions and to generate momentum towards 2015,” said the **Co-chair of the 7<sup>th</sup> Forum International Steering Committee, Soontak Lee**. “The World Water Forum intends to bring politicians and decision-makers closer to water professionals and water users, and to raise awareness for the importance of water for the future of mankind. We can say over this last decade we have been rather successful, but we must stay in tune with the times and new technologies to implement solutions on the ground.”

**For more information:** <http://www.worldwaterforum7.org/en/> or [www.worldwatercouncil.org](http://www.worldwatercouncil.org)

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## **Information to Editors:**

### **The World Water Forum**

The World Water Forum is the largest water-related event in the world, aimed at putting water firmly on the international agenda. It is organized every three years by the World Water Council in collaboration with the authorities of the host country. A three-year preparatory process culminates in one week of sessions, debates and cultural activities, where water experts come together.

- 1<sup>st</sup> World Water Forum: Marrakech, Morocco in 1997
- 2<sup>nd</sup> World Water Forum: The Hague, The Netherlands in 2000
- 3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum: Kyoto, Japan in 2003
- 4<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum: Mexico City, Mexico in 2006
- 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum: Istanbul, Turkey in 2009
- 6<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum: Marseille, France in 2012

### **The World Water Council**

The World Water Council is a world-wide network of wide-ranging competencies and interests that facilitates important water policy dialogues and motivates actions. The Council currently has more than 300 international members who come from various sectors and disciplines. The Council is the creator and owner of the World Water Forum, which serves to bring together this great diversity of stakeholders and others striving for the same goals.

The Council's mission is to "promote awareness, build political commitment and trigger action on critical water issues at all levels, including the highest decision-making level, to facilitate the efficient conservation, protection, development, planning, management and use of water in all its dimensions on an environmentally sustainable basis for the benefit of all life on earth."

### **The 7<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum**

The World Water Council selected Daegu Gyeongbuk and the Republic of Korea to welcome the 7th World Water Forum in 2015, during its 43rd Board of Governors meeting organized on 14-15 November in Rome at the headquarters of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. The selection followed a rigorous evaluation process for the candidates, closed by a final vote of the Governors.