

Saturday, 18 March 2006

Mexico 2006
4th World
Water Forum



The following messages are based on the feedbacks of the Forum participants, who attended the various sessions of the morning and the afternoon of DAY 1. 300 questionnaires of the Voices of the Forum have been analysed.

Please note that you can react and add your voice at

www.worldwatercouncil.org

■ **Water security and development requires a minimum level of water infrastructure**

For developing countries, reaching water security should be the first priority. Although it is important to address the social and environmental damage related to water development, these concerns must not impede progress. As nations develop their water resources, they need to invest relatively more in the development of institutions to ensure for operations and maintenance than in infrastructure building

Water infrastructure development is especially key to Africa's development needs, and, when integrated in coherent regional strategies, it allows for integrated management and a sharing of cost and benefits.

The debate over dams should move beyond large versus small-scale infrastructure to consider all multipurpose options available while seeking a shift towards ecological oriented management. Nations can consider both large and small scale options to meet their needs at the lowest possible social and environmental costs.

■ **Financing water for development**

Water is a local affair - especially given the current trends in decentralisation processes. Finance needs to be brought to the local level and shifted from supply to demand oriented financing mechanisms.

Main sources of finance are tax payers and consumers. We need to balance the income and the cost for service provision. That can only be done if all stakeholders (central and local government, public or private service providers, consumers and financiers) work in partnership and decide on the level of services, technology selected, and cost recovery mechanisms including tariff structures and subsidy mechanisms.

Local actors should be empowered and their capacity should be strengthened, and developing local capital markets. Furthermore, access to finance needs to be increased for communities and local private sector by creating gender sensitive credit schemes like micro-finance.

■ **Clarify the roles and responsibilities of authorities and service providers.**

The mission of service providers have to be clearly specified. The public authority, responsible for the service, and the operator need to be separated even under public management to allow an easier and clearer definition of roles and responsibilities and setting public services goals that have to be achieved. The public authority has the freedom to choose the management mode and the operator of the service. The mode of management reversibility must be facilitated.

■ **Corruption is a barrier to reaching water security**

Transparency is essential to fight corruption and remove the barriers to development. Methodologies and monitoring systems need to be further developed and shared through networks, involving all stakeholders' experiences on how to fight against corruptors and corrupted.

■ The spiritual and cultural values of water should be respected in development.

Water is important in the indigenous culture and history. The spiritual value of water is as important as the utilization and social value of water. Indigenous people consider water as a common good that should benefit all and not as something that could be used to make benefits. They are worried about the fact that privatisation in the water sector may sometimes overlook the poor and marginalized. The public policy makers have to pay more attention to the indigenous right to water, respect their culture and to their knowledge of water sector.

■ Without participation, no sustainable development.

Projects have to be supported by local communities, indigenous people and other minorities, especially rural women. Not only by targeting them, they must also be empowered to take part in participatory processes and action. This also means supporting capacity building for local stakeholders.

Promoting the efficient use of water, which means obtaining the highest return in benefit of different uses, increases sustainability.

■ Waste water management to fight poverty

Raw waste water discharge is an obstacle to growth and development. It affects everybody's health of everybody and the economy of all sectors of activity, but treatment is expensive. Raising the financial resources can be facilitated by the adoption and effective implementation of the polluter pays principle.

Sustainable management of water provision and sanitation must be focused at the level of watersheds. It is a basic condition to optimize money involved and to spread benefits among the largest part of the population, for health and for agriculture and industrial sectors. Integrated management of watersheds is based on a multi-stakeholders partnerships in which local authorities of all level must play a key role.

HOW CAN YOU BE ONE OF THE FORUM VOICES?

This Forum is yours: as a participant you are invited to express your ideas, concerns, hopes or deceptions with your own words.

Voices of the Forum provides you with an additional opportunity to be listened to now and after the sessions.

*To do so, you first have to fill in the questionnaire **Voices of the Forum***

❖ **Where can you find the questionnaire?**

- *At the beginning of each session, the Forum Staff will provide you the questionnaire or will make them available at the entrance of the room. If you cannot find it, do not hesitate to ask a staff member to assist you.*
- *At the World Water Council stand at the entrance of the Water Fair.*

❖ **Where can you return the questionnaire?**

- *At the end of each session, a Conagua or Forum staff member will be in charge of collecting all the questionnaires*
- *At the World Water Council stand at the entrance of the Water Fair.*

❖ **What will happen with your questionnaire?**

Main topics and key messages of each session will be extracted from the collected questionnaires on a daily basis, and will be made available through this bulletin that you can find:

- *On the WWC website <http://www.worldwatercouncil.org/> and on the Forum website <http://www.worldwaterforum4.org.mx/>*
- *In the daily **Voices of the Forum** bulletin that can be found at each information point or at the WWC stand in the Water Fair.*

Thank you for your appreciated participation!