

For press kit, background facts, photos and video, see: <http://www.worldwaterweek.org/media>

For more information and interview requests, contact:

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## Press release

# World Water Week Opens with Global Leaders Calling for Green Investments to Secure Water for Future Cities

**Stockholm, Sweden (2011-08-22) – Global leaders convening today at the opening session of the 2011 World Water Week in Stockholm called for increased investments in disaster-resilient infrastructure and smarter water management to avoid droughts, floods and pollution from further threatening the food, energy, and water security in a rapidly urbanising world.**

Over 2,500 politicians, business leaders, representatives from international organisations, scientists, mayors and water professionals are gathering in Stockholm for the annual World Water Week, which this year focuses on "Water in an Urbanised World."

The map of our world today is dotted with 50 "megacities" that already have passed the five million inhabitant threshold. The number of people living in cities is yet expected to reach to 80 per cent of the world's population by 2050, outnumbering the total world population of today. Most of this growth is happening in areas at risk of both water shortages and disastrous floods.

"More than 800 million people live in slums, where water related diseases, such as diarrhoea, malaria and cholera have devastating effects on the livelihood of families and the economies of their countries," – said Anders Berntell, Executive Director of the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI). He warned that "we run the risk of losing the battle on water and sanitation in many cities around the world, and that is a fight we cannot afford to lose."

In the over 100 sessions set to take place throughout the week, the convening experts will explore the best courses of action to ensure that limited water resources are allocated to meet the growing demands from municipalities, agriculture, industries, energy utilities and households, in balance with nature's capacity.

"Cities provide great economies of scale and offer excellent opportunities for effective infrastructure development, for increased re-use of water and waste, and for more efficient use of water and energy," added Mr. Berntell.

Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation, Gunilla Carlsson stressed in her speech that "increased access to clean water supplies and sanitation is an important catalytic force for development. The costs of *not* acting far exceed the costs of well-functioning, sustainable water resource management."

She also emphasised that "the efficient use of, and equitable access to, water and sanitation in urban areas must figure prominently at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in 2012." During the World Water Week, participants will be asked to endorse a Stockholm Statement aimed at putting water at the centre of the planning for a green economy at the Rio meeting.

Also speaking at the opening session, the 2011 Stockholm Water Prize Laureate, Professor Stephen R. Carpenter of the University of Wisconsin-Madison highlighted that producing food for more people and bigger cities will strain available freshwater resources. "We need an agriculture that can feed 9 billion people while maintaining the water supplies and other ecosystem services that people need. The connections between food and water security have never been more important," he said.

During the week, H.M. King Carl XVI Gustav of Sweden will present the prestigious Stockholm Water Prize to the Laureate for his distinguished work to protect lakes' ecosystems. Other prizes that will be presented during the week are the Stockholm Junior Water Prize and the Stockholm Industry Water Award.



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### **About the World Water Week in Stockholm**

The World Water Week in Stockholm is the annual meeting place for the planet's most urgent water-related issues. Organised by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), it brings together 2,500 experts, practitioners, decision makers and business innovators from around the globe to exchange ideas, foster new thinking and develop solutions. [www.worldwaterweek.org](http://www.worldwaterweek.org)

### **About Stockholm International Water Institute**

The Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) is a policy institute that contributes to international efforts to combat the world's escalating water crisis. SIWI develops and promotes future-oriented and knowledge-integrated policies, towards sustainable use of the world's water resources leading to sustainable development and poverty eradication. [www.siwi.org](http://www.siwi.org)

### **Notes to Editors**

The conference takes place at Stockholmsmässan, between the 21st and the 27th of August, 2011 in Stockholm, Sweden. For more information on events, speakers, and registration, visit [www.worldwaterweek.org](http://www.worldwaterweek.org)

To find relevant story ideas, please download the press kit: [www.worldwaterweek.org/presskit](http://www.worldwaterweek.org/presskit)

Download high resolution photos from the week: [www.worldwaterweek.org/photos](http://www.worldwaterweek.org/photos)

Watch live streaming from the week: [www.livestream.com/worldwaterweek](http://www.livestream.com/worldwaterweek)

Access video interviews of water experts: [www.thenewsmarket.com/siwi](http://www.thenewsmarket.com/siwi)

Watch interviews of water week participants: [www.watercube.tv](http://www.watercube.tv)

Engage at the World Water Week Social Media Hub: [www.watermedia.org](http://www.watermedia.org)

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