



PRESS INFORMATION

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Advanced river flow management vital to facing climate challenge

Improved river flow management will be vital to protecting communities from the worst impacts of climate change and to achieving international goals on poverty reduction, according to a new report issued on the eve of World Water Week.

Stockholm, Sweden, August 16, 2009 – Securing Water for Ecosystems and Human Well-being: The Importance of Environmental Flows also finds that river flow management to meet diverse environmental and human needs should be funded through appropriate valuation of the ecosystem services provided by healthy rivers. These include maintenance of groundwater levels, flood and drought mitigation, and contributions to human livelihoods, nutrition and health.

[Download the report here.](#)

The report, developed in collaboration between major global institutions including Water Week organizer the Stockholm International Water Institute, Swedish Water House, UNESCO-IHE, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), UNEP- DHI, Deltares and NGOs such as WWF, Conservation International and The Nature Conservancy, draws on the latest research and practices on environmental flows and their significance.

"Initially the emphasis in environmental flows was on the amount of water released down rivers," said one of the report's lead authors, Dr. Birgitta Malm Renöfält, Cluster group leader at Swedish Water House.

"Now we recognize the importance of different flow levels and the timing of flows to different river functions and understand that maintaining a healthy functioning ecosystem requires much more sophisticated river management.

"For example, base flows are vital to surrounding water table levels and soil moisture levels, pulse flows shape the character of river channels and large floods replenish nutrients and recharge aquifers over wider areas."

The report documents sensitive infrastructure development and operation and appropriate environmental flow management benefits for health and earnings in Kenya and Tanzania, Cambodia, China, Colombia, Iran and the Sudan.

With water availability expected to be one of the major and most severe impacts of climate change in many areas of the world, sufficient and equitable allocation of water will become more and more vital for both people and nature.

"The environmental community has critical tools to offer for climate change adaptation, and environmental flow regulation is an important part of the climate adaptation toolbox," said Dr. Mark Smith, Head, IUCN Water Programme.



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Notes:

Further information on this report will be available at the Swedish Water House Cluster group booth at World Water Week, at EH 0310, Stockholm International Fairs on 17.45 CET on 16 August 2009.

About The World Water Week in Stockholm

Organised and directed by [The Stockholm International Water Institute](http://www.siwi.org) (SIWI), The World Water Week in Stockholm is the premier meeting place for exchanging water-related views, knowledge, and experience between scientific, business, policy and civic sectors from around the globe. By harnessing and linking best practices, scientific understanding, policy insight and decision-making, the program aims to transcend rhetoric and provide real answers to the global water crisis.

Full details and resources are available at www.worldwaterweek.org.

SIWI – Independent and Leading-Edge Water Competence for Future-Oriented Action

The Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) is a policy institute that contributes to international efforts to find solutions to the world's escalating water crisis. SIWI advocates future-oriented, knowledge-integrated water views in decision making, nationally and internationally, that lead to sustainable use of the world's water resources and sustainable development of societies.