



**WORLD
WATER
WEEK**
in Stockholm,
August 16–22, 2009

PRESS INFORMATION

Michael McWilliams, SIWI
Phone: +46 (0)8 522 139 89
michael.mcwilliams@siwi.org

Press kit: www.worldwaterweek.org/media

World Water Week opens with discussions on water's role in peace, economic development, and public health

High level panel explores the impact of politics and power on transboundary waters; SIWI releases a primer on effective cooperation in transboundary basins.

Stockholm, Sweden, August 17, 2009 - The 2009 World Water Week in Stockholm formally opened this morning with a plenary session addressing key facets of the week's central theme of *Responding to Global Changes: Accessing Water for the Common Good*. Most of the more than 2000 participants now gathered in Stockholm were on hand to hear leaders in science, government, and civil society challenge the world to think in new ways about the role of water in peace, economic development, and public health. Speakers for the opening plenary included

- Mr. Anders Berntell, Executive Director, Stockholm International Water Institute
- Hon. Gunilla Carlsson, Minister for International Development Cooperation, Sweden
- Mr. Sten Nordin, Mayor of Stockholm
- Hon. Rejoice Mabudafhasi, Deputy Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, South Africa
- Mr. Munqueth Mehyar, Chairperson and Jordanian Director, Friends of the Earth Middle East
- Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak, 2009 Stockholm Water Prize Laureate, Sulabh International Social Service Organisation, India
- Prof. Jan Lundqvist, Chair of the World Water Week Scientific Programme Committee, Stockholm International Water Institute
- Mr. Loïc Fauchon, President, World Water Council
- Mr. Jan Eliasson, Chair, WaterAid Sweden, President of the United Nations General Assembly 2005-2006
- Dr. Colin Chartres, Director General, International Water Management Institute
- Prof. Mohan Munasinghe, Munasinghe Institute for Development, Sri Lanka and Director-General, Sustainable Consumption Institute, University of Manchester, UK

"Water and sanitation must be given a higher priority in the governments, in the nations, in the municipalities, in the countries where the problems are," said Jan Eliasson, Chair of WaterAid Sweden and former President of the United Nations General Assembly. "We need to move from fact finding and early warning to fact facing and early action."

During the plenary, the 2009 Stockholm Water Prize Laureate Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak, spoke of his work as founder of the Sulabh Sanitation movement in India. "People started laughing when we suggested making toilets available in all important public places," he said. "Now we have installed more than 7,500."

An afternoon high level panel of experts addressed the complexities of politics and power in transboundary water basins. Explaining the contentious issues that often underlie inefficient or unequal management of water resources at the basin level, the panellists critically evaluated how effective cooperation can be implemented in transboundary river basins, especially in regions where political power is not divided equally. The panel included:

STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL WATER INSTITUTE, SIWI

DROTTNINGGATAN 33, SE-111 51 STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN ♦ PHONE +46 8 522 139 60 ♦ FAX +46 8 522 139 61 ♦ siwi@siwi.org ♦ www.siwi.org



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- Moderator: Dr. Letitia A. Obeng, Chair, Global Water Partnership (GWP)
- Hon. Ramesh Chandra Sen, Minister for Water Resources, Bangladesh
- Hon. Khempheng Pholsena, Minister of Water Resources and Environment Administration, Lao PDR
- Mr. Ján Kubiš, Executive Secretary of the United Nations, Economic Commission for Europe
- Hon. Rejoice Mabudafhasi, Deputy Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, South Africa
- Ms. Irene B. Brooks, Chair, U.S. Section, International Joint Commission
- Mr. András Szöllösi-Nagy, Deputy Assistant Director General for Natural Sciences, Secretary, International Hydrological Programme (IHP), Director, Division of Water Sciences, UNESCO
- Mr. Munqueth Mehyar, Jordanian Director, Friends of the Earth, Middle East, Jordan
- Mr. Akere Tabeng Muna, Vice-Chair of Transparency International
- Mr. David Grey, Senior Water Advisor (Africa and Asia), The World Bank
- Dr. Marwa Daoudy, Senior Lecturer, Graduate Institute for International Studies, Switzerland

The transboundary water theme continued at an afternoon press conference where the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) introduced a new report developed to serve as a primer on transboundary water management: *Getting Transboundary Water Right: Theory and Practice for Effective Cooperation*. Produced with support from The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the report challenges the international water community to integrate new conceptual thinking in the field with lessons learned from transboundary water basins around the world. The report is now available at the SIWI website: www.siwi.org. About The World Water Week in Stockholm

About the World Water Week

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.

The full World Water Week press kit, including thematic story development resources and expert commentators, is available at www.worldwaterweek.org/media.

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.