

2007/03/29

Asia-Pacific Water Forum

## “PREPARATIONS UNDERWAY FOR THE 1<sup>ST</sup> ASIA-PACIFIC WATER SUMMIT”

Mr. Yoshiro Mori, Former Prime Minister of Japan and President of the Asia-Pacific Water Forum chaired the 1st Steering Committee meeting of the 1<sup>st</sup> Asia-Pacific Water Summit, in Tokyo on March 29, 2007. The meeting was attended by 16 committee members, an eminent group of national and international persons, and more than 110 observers from the media, embassy officials, government officials and other water related stakeholders.

Senior government officials of countries across the Asia Pacific region, along with distinguished delegates from concerned organizations and development agencies, gathered today in Tokyo to deliberate on the details of the first Asia-Pacific Water Summit, under the chairmanship of Mr. Yoshiro Mori, former Prime Minister of Japan and President of the Asia-Pacific Water Forum. The meeting was attended, among others, by Prof Tommy Koh (Ambassador-at-large of Singapore and Chair of APWF Governing Council), Mrs. Margaret Catley-Carlson (Chair of Global Water Partnership), Mr. Liqun Jin (Vice-President of Asian Development Bank), Han Seung-Soo (President of Korea Water Forum and Former Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea), Yoshinori Imai (Executive Director of NHK Japan Broadcasting Corporation) and Masae Wada (Councilor of Housewives Association of Japan).

The proposed summit, to be held in Oita Prefecture, Japan, in December 2007, will focus on measures that will ensure the effective delivery of adequate and safe water supply to critical areas in the region and increase capacity in water-related disaster preparedness, mitigation and recovery. The summit's priority themes will be water financing, water-related disaster management and water for development and ecosystems.

According to the Asian Development Bank's latest *Asia Water Watch 2015* report (2006), about 669 million people in the Asia Pacific region are still without access to safe drinking water and 2 billion people lack access to improved sanitation facilities. The region also suffers unproportionately from water-related disasters whereby, between 2001 and 2005, approximately 62,000 people were killed annually from water-related disasters in the region—compared with some 13,000 such deaths in the rest of the world (source: [www.em-dat.net](http://www.em-dat.net)).

The objective of the 1st Steering Committee meeting was meant for members to establish contact

and initiate the preparatory process for the 1st Asia-Pacific Water Summit (APWS). All members of the Steering Committee expressed their commitment and support towards organizing the APWS. The summit organizers hope to encourage governments in the region to make water a top priority in their national agendas.

Among the activities of the day, the Steering Committee members had the honour of being received for an audience with His Imperial Highness The Crown Prince of Japan, who graciously reiterated his support to water resource issues and confirmed his participation at the summit in December.

As Mrs. Margaret Catley-Carlson stated in her opening statement to the meeting, “the legacy of the summit will be determined by what actions are taken by participants, and in creating the enduring habit of working together.” And according to Professor Tommy Koh, “we live in a region that is prosperous. We live in a region where our institutions are vibrant and our civil societies are pushing for water as a fundamental aspect of human security. I believe that the summit can make a major contribution to achieve water security in the Asia-Pacific region.”