

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC WATER FORUM 3rd GOVERNING COUNCIL MEETING ON 23 JUNE 08, SINGAPORE

Summary

- The meeting reviewed the substantial progress achieved after the 1st Asia-Pacific Water Summit (APWS) held in Beppu, Japan, last December 2007. Each lead organization reported on their activities carried out in support of the concrete initiatives launched at the 1st APWS. A roadmap of activities in upcoming months was also proposed by the Secretariat.
- The first session of the 3rd Governing Council meeting on the morning of the 23rd of June 2008 was chaired by Prof. Tommy Koh, Chairperson of the Asia Pacific Water Forum (APWF) Governing Council (GC) while the afternoon's informal session was chaired by Mr. Ravi Narayanan, Vice Chairperson of APWF GC.
- The GC participants were each given a copy of the 1st APWS Proceedings which was sponsored by PUB.

Key points of the 3rd Governing Council Meeting of the APWF

Adoption of Agenda

- Chairman thanked the Secretariat, the Japan Water Forum and PUB for hosting the 3rd GC meeting and conveyed his appreciation to the members for attending the meeting. The agenda was adopted without amendment.

Agenda Item 3: Announcement and Roadmap towards the 2nd Asia-Pacific Water Summit: Vision and Strategy

- Chairman announced that Singapore has agreed to host the 2nd APWS in 2010. The 2nd APWS is meant to take stock of what was achieved in Beppu, consolidate those accomplishments, and take the priority accorded to water issues to new heights for the region.
- The Secretariat presented the Roadmap towards the '2nd Asia-Pacific Water Summit: Vision and Strategy', which was proposed and updated at an informal Governing Council on 3rd March 2008 (comprised of the Chair and two vice-chairs). The Secretariat and Governing Council members proposed to forward this programme of activities to the Lead Organizations for comments. The activities included following-up on the 1st APWS Priority Themes and Key Result Areas as well as the concrete initiatives. Also outlined were events that could serve as opportunities to further promote inter-regional cooperation.
- At the March 3rd informal Governing Council meeting, it was agreed that APWF serves as the regional coordinator for the 5th World Water Forum (5WWF). To this end, the Japan Water Forum, as Secretariat of the APWF, reported that preparation works have begun.
- It was proposed that the 4th Governing Council meeting be held in Tokyo alongside the 2nd Regional Preparatory meeting for 5WWF.

- GWP-CACENA raised the question of what might be the role of the subregions to collaborate in this process.
- FAO flagged the concern of adding the word 'sanitation' in the APWF vision, which in their view narrows the scope of the APWF to water and sanitation. It is making it difficult for FAO to justify putting resources into the APWF process. JWF responded that it is not the intent of the APWF to narrow itself to issues of water and sanitation. The Governing Council agreed that efforts would be made to guard against this, and be inclusive in its documents and activities to ensure a proper balance between all activities and recommendations of the APWF. It was agreed that these words be changed to 'water management and sanitation.'

Agenda Item 4: Follow-up of the 1st Asia-Pacific Water Summit

A) Follow-up Presentations from APWF Lead Organizations

Priority Theme A: Water Financing and Capacity Development

- ADB thanked the APWF for enabling its participation at the 1st APWS.
- ADB reported on their commitment to boost water investments in the region. The intended outcomes of the ADB Water Financing Program (WFP) Facility were presented in Table 1 of their submitted document. ADB extend its welcome to cooperate with JICA and JBIC, as well as other interested partners (member countries, multilateral agencies, etc.) through various financing mechanisms to achieve the objectives of WFP.
- ADB also reported progress on various collaborative initiatives with Singapore, including the Asia Training and Research Initiative for Urban Management (ATRIUM) and its support for APWF's KRA 1 on establishing a network of regional water knowledge hubs (see below).
- JICA presented on the progress of the activities carried out by JICA and JBIC after the 1st APWS. These activities involved contributions to several high-level domestic and international groups, supporting capacity development projects in Integrated Water Resources Management, developing a package of new loans for water and sanitation, as well as conducting surveys on Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF) in Nepal and Project Formulation in Climate Change in Tuvalu.

Priority Theme B: Water-Related Disaster Management

- ICHARM presented their activities which included its role as Regional Knowledge Hub on Water-related Disaster Risk Reduction, advanced early warning system, local practices programs, capacity development programs and international flood initiative.

Priority Theme C: Water for Development and Ecosystems

- FAO shared that a number of the countries in the region are being hit by the food crisis and food security, which was not mentioned in the Message from Beppu, was coming back to the forefront and would be tabled at the G8 Summit. FAO underscored the need for new investments to be

accompanied by reform to render them more effective, and that the recently adopted Rome Declaration would provide the needed directions on this front. FAO highlighted the need to reestablish the link between food security, water management, agriculture and climate change. FAO reported that it would submit an expanded version of the Policy Brief Theme C recommendations to the next Regional Conference of the Ministers of Agriculture of the Asia-Pacific. FAO presented progress on the development of and resource mobilization for the FAO-IWMI Follow up Initiative and also mentioned progress on the IWMI knowledge Hub on Irrigation Services Reform, of which FAO will be a key partner. With new interesting findings emerging from its forest and water programme, FAO mentioned that they will tie in with ICHARM in order to develop sensible flood and drought strategies for the region.

Key Result Area 1: Developing Knowledge and Lessons

- On behalf of KRA 1, PUB presented the APWF's Network of Regional Water Knowledge Hubs (called APWF *KnowledgeHubs* for short) which will be launched at PUB Singapore's WaterHub on 26 June 2008. The proposed secretariat office will be set up in Waterhub as in-kind contribution by PUB. Two secretariat staff will be recruited and funded by ADB and UNESCO-IHE. UNESCO-IHE has also helped set up the website at www.apwf-knowledgehubs.net.
- All APWF members were invited to join *KnowledgeHubs* as partners and clients. The APWF network was also called upon to help identify candidate hubs for a few of the remaining priority themes, including sanitation.

Key Result Area 2: Increasing Local Capacity

- UN-HABITAT reported on the work they have been doing throughout the region as a follow-up to the KRA2 recommendations issued in the APWF Policy Brief. Priority has been given to the activities which included capacity building training in peri-urban areas, new Regional Center for Urban Water Management that will serve as a capacity building hub in Iran, training programmes in South Asia, the international Mayors Conference in China in September 2008, and partnership with UN-WATER for leakage control and local governments. UN-HABITAT communicated their intent to focus on enabling capacity building hubs at subregional levels and at the national levels, with e-learning training materials currently being developed for this purpose.
- SOK reported on their progress in mapping of institutions involved in capacity development throughout the region so as to build dissemination pathways for materials developed by other partners. SOKs work has been carried out in partnership with other organizations such as SUSANA. SOK mentioned the launch of the Global Sanitation Fund by WSSCC as a point of interest to other members of the APWF. SOK also reported that they are currently building a database of producers and small businesses involved in promoting sanitation. Other initiatives carried out by SOK included the WASH Practitioners Fair (Bangladesh), the partnership with AquaJaring, a course on sustainable sanitation approaches (as part of IYS), and a workshop on rainwater harvesting.

- SOK highlighted the fact that following the Philippines' Minister's participation in Beppu, he had agreed to be chair of the next SEAWater Forum in Nov 2009 and invited the APWF to the preparatory meeting.

Key Result Area 3: Public Outreach

- JWF reported its progress on the airing of the ABU TV Documentary and a renewed version of the Water Web Projects on Google Map - "World Sanitation Project Map" which will be available at <http://www.sanimap.net/> in August 2008.
- JWF also reported on the progress of the Asia-Pacific Water Museum, and stated that the National Science Museum (NSM) of Thailand, UNESCO and JWF were proceeding according to the MOU signed in Beppu. UNESCO presented its progress on the concept of the Asia-Pacific Water Museum. The Chair remarked that the NSM, as lead institution on the project ought to make the progress report at the next Governing Council meeting.

Key Result Area 4: Monitoring of Investments and Results (MIR)

- UNESCAP reported on the progress made for KRA 4 since the 1st APWS which included convening a ministerial conference on MIR and expanding current framework towards the development of a Council of Ministers on Water Resources for Asia-Pacific. UNESCAP also shared its interest to be a knowledge hub on transboundary water resources management.

Follow-up Presentations from Implementing Organizations

- ICIMOD reported on their work carried out following their session held at the 1st APWS and thanked the APWF community for the high-level commitment they garnered at the Summit. Among other activities, they plan to develop data sharing mechanisms among their member countries to bridge the gap between scientific data and information, with the goal of reducing risks associated with glacial melting and floods.
- SOPAC presented their numerous programs on IWRM, which they deem to be the most comprehensive strategy for climate change adaptation. SOPAC invited all members of the APWF to attend the 3rd Steering Committee meeting of the Pacific Partnership Initiative on Sustainable Water Management which will take place in Samoa on 10 September 2008.
- GWP CACENA presented their subregional process in Central Asia for the 5WWC and their ongoing dialogue among the Central Asian countries on issues of water security.
- Asia Society presented their new initiative on Environmental Change and Water Security to build on the Message from Beppu. The Asia Society intends to use their convening power in the region to put together a high-level task force for the initiative to reach out to local leaders to identify and disseminate best practices.

- In the absence of a member of the UN Global Compact, the Japan Water Forum presented progress on the CEO Water Mandate which included the issuance of a letter from CEOs of the Water Mandate to leaders of the G8 calling for their attention to water issues.

Agenda Item 5: Schedule of the Asia-Pacific Water Forum in 2008-2009

- The schedule of the APWF was distributed to all in attendance, and comprises of activities at the SIWW (Mr. Mori's opening speech and the official launch of the 1st APWS Proceedings), Stockholm World Water Week (17-23 August 2008) and the 5th World Water Forum, for which APWF acts as the regional coordinator. The APWF members were invited to attend the 1st Regional Meeting of the 5WWF which will take place on 27th June at PUB Singapore's Waterhub.

Agenda Item 6: Other Matters

- Each member in attendance received a copy of the 1st APWS Proceedings which are sponsored by PUB.
- PUB has also arranged to distribute the 1st APWS Proceedings to all the participants at the Singapore International Water Week Water Leaders' Summit.

Agenda Item 7: Closing of the Session

- Chairman closed the meeting at 1300hr. The APWF Governing Council agreed to have an informal meeting in the afternoon of 23rd June 2008.

Key points of the Informal 3rd Governing Council Meeting of the APWF

- The informal meeting was chaired by Mr. Ravi Narayanan, vice-chair of the APWF Governing Council.
- The Secretariat presented the 5WWF regional process and requested for inputs and comments from the subregions and lead organizations. GWP-CACENA highlighted their interest to be involved in the 5WWF regional process as they have close subregional ties to the host country of the 5WWF.
- UN-HABITAT informed members that they were coordinating the team on Topics 4.4 and 4.5, those of governance and management. FAO informed that as UN-Water chair, they would be coordinating Theme 2 and convening Topic 2.4 of the 5WWF. ICHARM and JWF would be jointly coordinating Topic 1.3.
- Chairman congratulated the members for their work and proposed that, in light of the substantive work being carried out by all members, the Secretariat keeps a running record of the expanding scope of the APWF's progress. The Chairman suggested that the Secretariat propose thematic groupings for the

- next progress report (ie: work on climate change by ICIMOD, ICHARM and JICA) to maximize synergies so as to align to the intent of the APWF.
- It was agreed that all outreach documents published by the APWF needed to equally reflect the work of all PTs and KRAs, so that proper balance would be struck among all the Lead Organizations' work. In this respect, several LOs requested clarifications on whether APWF's lobbying at the oncoming G8 would be based on the selective Message from Beppu or on the more representative Policy Brief.
 - ADB offered that APWF's work is gaining momentum and that this year's work plan might be better served by reflecting on worthwhile initiatives (contents and products) rather than being events-driven. ADB also suggested further discussion on financing modalities to support the APWF's work.
 - UNESCAP endorsed ADB's comments in that the APWF should be more results-oriented. For instance, can the APWF elaborate on how members can cooperate to achieve the results and pool together to meet the goals commonly adopted?
 - FAO agreed but raised the question as to how the APWF develops the vision. Changing the vision without consulting the members was raising serious governance issues which needed to be addressed in the preparation of the 2nd APWS. FAO was also unhappy with the message from Beppu which ignored all the work done under Theme C and the way the policy brief was presented at Beppu. The subsectoral focus would make it difficult to justify spending resources on the APWF process if members' concerns were ignored. FAO would like to see also how, in return for calls for commitments by the LOs, the APWF bodies were committed to support the LOs' initiatives and all sectoral concerns.
 - The Secretariat specified that the joint vision presented earlier had been changed and agreed to by the three members of the Governing Council, not the Secretariat.
 - UNESCAP expressed the need to receive the Governing Council's support and commitment to the issues, on which the accountability of each member to report related progress of the implementation to the Governing Council was imperative to keep the momentum going institutionally. UNESCAP is of the view that commitment and support by the Governing Council will help mobilize resources and facilitate decision-making which would be more valuable than the modalities of APWF governance.
 - AquaJaring shared the view that it would be best to keep the APWF as informal as possible. To them, the greatest need was a mechanism to manage knowledge (ie: identify and disseminate), and that would be best accomplished through the issuance of operational guidelines for knowledge management.

- UN-HABITAT offered that while investments are important, they need to be accompanied by reforms, and that no targets should be fixed to mobilize political commitments. UN-Habitat also ventured the view that mechanisms for monitoring are more important than targets, and evolving mechanisms to achieve this monitoring are needed.
- Chairman summarized that the APWF is a pioneering initiative and that Asia and the Pacific is a diverse region and hence it would be difficult to achieve a unified approach. The Chair suggested that it might be worthwhile for the Governing Council to help facilitate some subgroups to concert efforts (such as on climate change). Regarding financial resources, while small pockets of funding might be available, it is the responsibility of each Lead Organization to find the resources to support their work. As the APWF evolves, the Chair suggested that the Governing Council might eventually have to re-engineer its governance structures, although that time had not yet come. The main goal for all was however to keep the momentum going at this point.
- GWP Bangladesh informed that in terms of basin management and transboundary cooperation, South Asia was obtaining support from the World Bank to address the political dimension of the issue.
- ICIMOD mentioned that as a regional institution they had launched an initiative in the 1990s with funding from a research foundation in Japan, which had eventually faded out. They were now approaching the World Bank for a Track 2 type cooperation initiative.
- Chairman offered the idea that it might be a good idea to develop a theme on cooperation eventually, but it was not yet the time to do that within the APWF.
- ADB suggested that the Governing Council could endorse a regular public progress report of the APWF, to keep track of the member organizations' commitments and progress in implementation.
- UNESCO provided insight into the 5WWF political process as Dr. Andras Szollosi-Nagy, Deputy Assistant Director-General of UNESCO is co-chair of the process, and shared that it was a good opportunity for the APWF to consider what is output of the 1st Asia-Pacific Water Summit and how to get it into the political process of the 5WWF.
- Asia Society offered its platform and their centres as means to disseminate the outputs of the APWF in order to raise awareness at the political and grassroots levels.
- SOK reflected on the progress reports presented at the 3rd GC meeting in that each one's presentation was from their own institutional angle. But how do we actually produce results collectively and brand them as an APWF output? Is there a way to do that in order to present our APWF results at the 2nd APWS?

- Chairman summarized the afternoon informal meeting by:
 - a) requesting all members to send their 3rd GC presentations to the Secretariat; and
 - b) articulating the three outstanding issues which should be kept in focus:
 - i) the political declaration from Beppu was broad and general but we needed to make sure that the agenda is being advanced step by step, so that the political dynamics would keep moving forward;
 - ii) at the operational level, APWF needs to keep track of the specific commitments and concrete initiatives made at Beppu and that some analysis would have to be performed to determine what impact they were having and which could be presented at the 2nd APWS. That would require developing some kind of monitoring and evaluation mechanism;
 - iii) the governance structure of the APWF needed to evolve in order to generate more focused interaction, improve our collaborative progress on the issues and bring our ideas and actions to fruition – with a great sense of optimism.

Notes taken by: The Secretariat of the Asia Pacific Water Forum