



News Release

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

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EX-JAPANESE PM MORI LAUNCHES REGIONAL NETWORK TO TACKLE WATER ISSUES

MANILA, PHILIPPINES (27 September 2006) – Former Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori today led the launch of a regional network dedicated to tackling the most pressing water related challenges facing Asia and the Pacific.

Launched at ADB's Water Financing Program Conference, the Asia-Pacific Water Forum (APWF) will contribute to sustainable water management and attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Asia and the Pacific. It aims to achieve this by capitalizing on the region's diversity and rich history of experience and by boosting investments, building capacity, and enhancing cooperation in the water sector at the regional level and beyond.

In launching the network, Mr. Mori - the new president of the Japan Water Forum (JWF), which serves as secretariat to APWF - paid tribute to the work of Japanese former Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, who died in July this year.

"He concentrated all his efforts on water issues after retiring from politics," Mr. Mori said. "I firmly believe that we must not waste either the extraordinary efforts he put forth toward the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Water Forum or his legacy or persistent and indomitable spirit in solving global water problems."

Mr. Mori said one of the most important roles of APWF will be to organize the Asia-Pacific Water Summit, in cooperation with the Japanese Government, where leaders from government, private sector, and civil society from the region can share a common understanding of water issues and reaffirm their determination to address these issues. JWF Secretary-General Kotaro Takemura announced the venue for the summit as Beppu City, Oita Prefecture, Japan.

In his welcoming remarks, ADB President Haruhiko Kuroda said that the forum comes at an important time when developing Asia is striving toward achieving the MDGs.

"Not only is water essential for life, it also provides an enabling environment for achieving higher levels of health, income, education, and food security," Mr. Kuroda said.

"ADB is particularly pleased to see the forum focus on the role of water resource management in achieving the MDGs. In order to secure safe and adequate water services, nature's freshwater resources in the river basins must be protected and managed in integrated ways."

APWF's creation was announced at the 4th World Water Forum in Mexico in March by Mr. Hashimoto, who was then JWF President, and supported in a joint declaration by ministers of seven countries: Bangladesh, People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Mongolia, New Zealand, Pakistan, and Palau. The initiative is also backed by ADB, which provided support to JWF in the preparations for the formation and launch of APWF in Mexico and Manila.

ADB has been designated as the lead organization for the Forum's Priority Theme of water financing, which aims to increase investments for water infrastructure and human resource development.

In response to international calls for increased financing, ADB's Water Financing Program 2006 to 2010 will deliver "a substantial package of investment, reform, and capacity development from which the forum will be able to leverage several lessons and opportunities," Mr. Kuroda said.

"We welcome the launch of the Asia Pacific Water Forum, and the opportunity it provides to share knowledge and strengthen commitments toward sustainable solutions for the sector."

ADB, based in Manila, is dedicated to reducing poverty in the Asia and Pacific region through pro-poor sustainable economic growth, social development, and good governance. Established in 1966, it is owned by 66 members – 47 from the region. In 2005, it approved loans and technical assistance totaling \$6.95 billion and \$198.8 million, respectively.

View updated information on APWF at its web site: <http://www.apwf.org/>

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