



Focus on transboundary waters

A large number of water stakeholders learned about the GIWA project when participating in the 3rd World Water Forum in Japan recently. GIWA held a session under the theme "Water for peace" and presented its work with an exhibition.

The session on transboundary water resources was opened by Dr. Klaus Töpfer, UNEP Executive Director, and Viveca Bohn, Swedish Ambassador for the Environment.

In his opening remarks Dr. Töpfer emphasized the importance of early warning mechanisms in order to prevent problems. Prognosis based on systematic overviews should be used to stimulate political action that averts high environmental and socio-economic costs. He also stressed the value of GIWA as a priority setting instrument to help allocate resources to the GEF international waters projects.

Ms. Bohn stated that the divergence of interests among users of shared resources inevitably creates disagreements, but disagreements can lead either to constructive cooperation or to destructive disputes. She pointed out that the challenge is to strengthen institutions in order to facilitate cooperation. Dr. Töpfer and Ms. Bohn recognized the need for the periodical assessment of international waters and will consider the transformation of the GIWA into a continuous program.



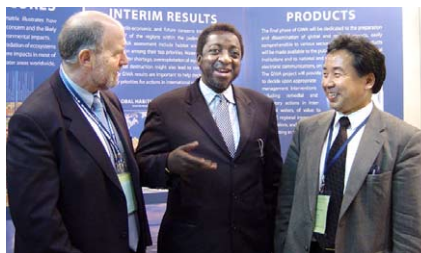
The GIWA session was opened by UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer, here discussing with GIWA's Dag Daler (left) and UCC's Niels Ipsen (right) who chaired the session.

Dag Daler, the Scientific Director of GIWA, presented different aspects of the GIWA project, and Juan Carlos Belausteguigoitia, coordinator for the Southern Hemisphere, discussed the issues of water and conflict prevention. The GIWA focal points for Brazil Current, East African Rift Valley Lakes and Patagonian Shelf, Marcia Marques, Eric Odada and Ana Mugetti, made presentations that stressed the innovative methodology and the collaborating process that GIWA is promoting.

GIWA presented an exhibition explaining the mission, the tools and the extent of its network. Visitors included government officials, academics, students and NGOs members.



Preparing for the GIWA session: Jakob Ström from the Swedish Ministry of Environment, GIWA Director Dag Daler and GIWA focal points Ana Mugetti, Argentine, and Marcia Marques, Brazil.



UNEP representatives Steve Halls, Halifa Drammeh and Masa Nagai were pleased with the GIWA booth at the Stakeholder center.

Dear GIWA friends,

I am just back from the 3rd World Water Forum in Kyoto. Dr. Klaus Töpfer, ED of UNEP, gave the opening speech to the GIWA session where he stressed the importance of water and environment improvements as a mean to achieve sustainable development. He also underlined GIWA's importance for UNEP's work in the field of water. Knowledge and early warning is the basis for targeted ac-

tions. In this respect he also stated clearly the importance of continuing the assessments of GIWA after the completion of the project period. This is an important message and an inspiration to everybody working with the GIWA assessment, in the Core Team in Kalmar and in all the GIWA task forces around the world.

Dag Daler, Scientific Director



The GIWA Core Team in Kalmar has two new interns: Anna Thestrup from Lund University in Sweden and Fabian Franke from the University of Konstanz in Germany. Elisabeth Andersson is the new administrative assistant.

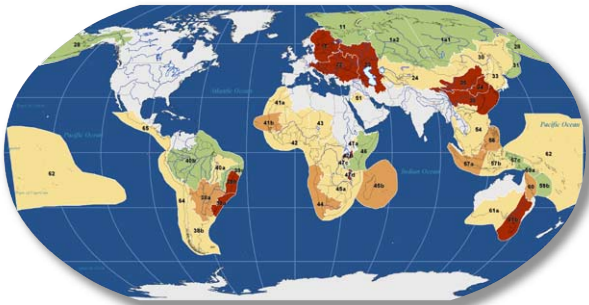


Severe pollution impacts

Pollution is among the two top priorities in close to half the currently assessed GIWA sub-regions. Of the eight GIWA pollution issues, eutrophication and suspended solids have been assessed as severe in more sub-regions than any other pollution issues. Eutrophication is largely caused by the inflow of excess nutrients from land-based activities while the increased load of suspended solids is a result of changed land use practices.

Eutrophication

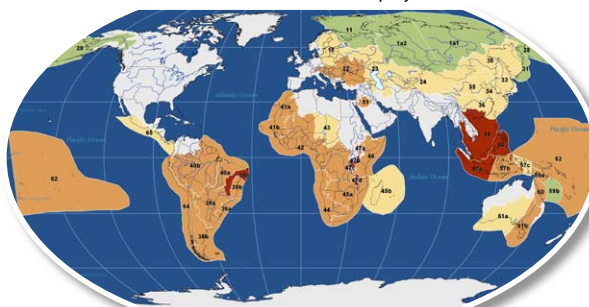
Interim results of the GIWA project.



Eutrophication is a severe environmental problem in the coastal areas of Brazil, Australia and East Asia, the semi-enclosed basins of Europe and the Rift Valley Lakes Victoria and Malawi. Eutrophication is caused by the introduction of excess nitrogen and phosphorus to the water body from land-based activities. Agriculture, deforestation and untreated municipal sewage are some of the main sources of these nutrients. The nutrient enrichment has altered the physical aquatic environment and led to loss of algal beds, extended hypoxic conditions, increased algal blooms and disrupted food chains.

Suspended solids

Interim results of the GIWA project.



Suspended solids are a severe environmental problem in the Rift Valley Lakes, Northern Brazil, South China Sea and Indonesian Seas. Erosion due to deforestation is the main cause of the increased amount of suspended solids in the aquatic environment. The transportation of higher loads of suspended solids by rivers to the coastal waters has resulted in increased turbidity and sedimentation, causing changes in biodiversity as well as loss of habitats.

Environmental impact is rated on a regional scale.
Local deviations are not shown on the map.

● No known impact
 ● Slight impact
 ● Moderate impact
 ● Severe impact
 Regional assessments not finalized.

GIWA experts lecture

GIWA has joined forces with its host, the University of Kalmar, again to raise awareness of water issues in the coastal zone. The University of Kalmar, in conjunction with Prof. Olof Lindén and David Souter of the GIWA Core Team, has recently completed a course focusing on the management of tropical coastal ecosystems through integrated coastal zone management. The course, which runs for 10 weeks, incorporates lectures and information from a wide variety of disciplines ranging from marine ecology to maritime law and has used considerable expertise from within the GIWA network of experts. This year as part of the course, the students were fortunate enough to travel



Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute scientists explain to the students the importance of mangroves in tropical coastal ecosystems and show them a mangrove rehabilitation site at Gazi on the southern coast of Kenya.

to both Kenya and Seychelles where they were hosted by Dr. David Obura, a member of the Somali Coastal Current task team, and Rolph Payet, GIWA focal point for the Indian Ocean Islands sub-region. In both countries, the students were able to experience first hand some of the issues and pressures, such as tourism, coastal development, pollution and fishing, that affect these fragile tropical coastal ecosystems and learn how these might be managed in a sustainable way.

Symposium...

15 August 2003; UNEP/GIWA Seminar in Stockholm (the 13th Stockholm Water Symposium)

18–20 August 2003; The on-line registration is now open for the symposium on Transboundary Waters, to be held in Kalmar. Symposium conveners are GIWA, University of Kalmar and International Ocean Institute. The program and registration form are available at www.giwa.net/symposium

Upcoming events...

Internal GIWA Workshops:

7–9 April 2003, Hermosillo, Mexico; SR 27 (Gulf California)

9–11 April 2003, Vladivostok, Russia; SR 33 (Sea of Japan)

28–30 April 2003, Santa Marta, Colombia; SR 3 (Caribbean Sea)

If you are interested, please contact the GIWA Core Team.