



GLOBAL INTERNATIONAL WATERS ASSESSMENT

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Dear GIWA friends,

Through the work of more than a thousand experts worldwide the GIWA assessment on environmental problems in international waters is coming to the finalizing stage. We have now produced the first volume of our report on three diverse water regions in the world. I am proud to see the impressive amount of important information in these reports and I expect it will lead to wise decisions by stakeholders engaged in the future for the involved countries.

The GIWA assessment has brought together many experts across national borders for the future of water, which has become one of the major goals of international work, highly prioritized in the Millennium Development Goals and at the WSSD meeting in South Africa last year. By supporting GIWA the Swedish, Finnish and Norwegian governments also shares the concern for these efforts to reduce water stress in the world. GIWA will now carry on presenting important results region by region, primarily for water areas in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The methodology used is permitting our experts collaborate for the water issues, overruling the national interests, and I am certain that this network will continue also after the regional GIWA assessment is completed.

Africa is a continent where water stress affects more people than in the rest of the world. The GIWA assessment done in the water areas of Sub Saharan Africa is now being concluded and we will bring forward these reports shortly. It is our sincere hope that our network of experts and the clear methodology used to identify the problems, to find the root causes and to present policy options will bring solutions to the many Africans suffering from too little or bad water.

Dag Daler, Scientific Director

Three regions complete

- **The Amazon Basin, the largest drainage basin on the planet, shared by seven countries.**
- **The Caspian Sea, the largest land-locked water body on earth, bordered by five countries and influenced by three more in the catchment area.**
- **The Indian Ocean Islands, includes four island states and one of two oceanic assessment areas.**

These three geographically and socially diverse regions are the first to have completed the Global International Waters Assessment and their results were presented during the Stockholm Water Symposium.

– I am pleased to present the results from this global assessment, says Dag Daler, Scientific Director at GIWA. This is the first time that the entire world's waters are judged by the same criteria. Since water issues are at of priority concern in international work today the GIWA results are welcomed by many.



Stephen Lonergan, UNEP-DEWA Director, the new Chairman of the GIWA steering group, said water issues must be addressed from multiple perspectives.



Dag Daler, GIWA, (second right) proudly introduced the first GIWA report to Dr Javier Aparicio, Professor Olof Lindén, Professor em. Gotthilf Hempel and Director Stephen Lonergan.

The results from other water regions in Africa, Asia and Latin America will be finalized by GIWA within a year. Around 1000 experts around the world are contributing to the GIWA assessment.

Swedish Minister visits GIWA

Jan O Karlsson, the Swedish Minister for Development Cooperation, Migration and Asylum Policy, visited GIWA in Kalmar recently. Minister Karlsson met members of the Core Team and learned about the GIWA methodology and the first regional results. He expressed satisfaction for the holistic approach the assessment takes. He also said Kalmar Municipality and the University of Kalmar are excellent hosts for the Coordination Office.



The Swedish Minister Jan O Karlsson had fruitful discussions with GIWA Co-ordinator Juan Carlos Belausteguigoitia.

Experts welcome the GIWA results

Experts from different parts of the world participated when GIWA held a seminar during the World Water Week in Stockholm on August 15. The importance of dealing with transboundary water issues was underlined by the speakers, who all welcomed the results of the GIWA assessment.

-If we don't meet the Millennium Development Goals with respect to water and sanitation we don't meet the other goals either, said Stephen Lonergan, new Director of UNEP-DEWA and also new Chairman of the GIWA steering group.

He stressed that water issues must be addressed from multiple perspectives and discussed water projects he has worked with in the Middle East.

Dr Javier Aparicio from the Mexican Ministry of Environment confirmed that transboundary waters need the results from GIWA to establish priority concerns for actions. Colorado River between Mexico and the US is one of the most exploited rivers in the world and according to Dr Aparicio GIWA will give important policy options for the future of this river and others along the border.

Representing one of the regions in the first volume of the GIWA assessment was Dr Rolph Payet from the Ministry of Environment in the Seychelles. The Indian Ocean Islands is an



Edgar Arias, Maria Albar, Rolph Payet and Carlos Brieva, four GIWA experts, presented the assessment in their regions.

oceanic area and Dr Payet stated that unsustainable exploitation of fisheries is the major area of concern.

Francisco A. Arias-Isaza from Colombia, participating in the Caribbean Sea assessment, said habitat and community modification is the prime concern there. In the Gulf of Guinea, presented by Per Bogelund Hansen from UNEP Collaborating Centre on Water and Environment, the assessment places freshwater shortage as the major problem. Carlos Brieva spoke on the assessment in the Patagonian Shelf where exploitation of fisheries and loss of ecosystems are major concerns. Maria Albar from the World Wildlife Fund for Nature in Mexico represented the Gulf of California underlined the need for policy option concerning water rights.

In the following discussion chaired by the GIWA Ambassador Professor Emeritus Gotthilf Hempel issues concerning the dissemination of results were discussed. The panel included the speakers and also professor Jing Zhang from East China Normal University in Shanghai, Dr Seng-Keh Teng, Coastal Management Center in Singapore, Amadou Saine from Gambia and Niel Henrik Ipsen from UCC Water and Environment. The three coordinators at the GIWA Core Team Elina Rautalathi-Miettinen, Juan Carlos Belausteguigoitia and Edith Mussukuya all agreed that the global GIWA network of experts must continue.



Professor Jing Zhang from Shanghai and Dr Seng-Keh Teng from Singapore discussed during a coffee break.



Global Databases

Two GIWA experts in GIS applications are Niklas Holmgren at the Core Team in Kalmar and Carlos Brieva, Instituto Argentino de Recursos Hídricos, working with the assessment in the Patagonian Shelf. When meeting in Stockholm for the GIWA seminar in August how to use the databases to be included in the region 38 report.

High quality mapping and geographical information systems (GIS) are important in the finalizing stage of the GIWA reports. Large amounts of information is assembled in databases and presented for each region in maps and other graphics.

Free global data suitable for all kinds of large scale assessments for GIS (Geographic Information Systems) and statistics are now collected and linked through www.giwa.net. Examples are river discharges, fish catches, pesticide consumption, topology, population density, illiteracy, GDP and eco-regions for all parts of the world.

Internship

Millicent Mrema from Tanzania, studying Water Resources Science at the University of Minnesota in the USA has worked as an intern at the GIWA Core Team during the summer.

Upcoming events

15-18 September, St Michielsgestel, The Netherlands: MTM IV Monitoring Tailor Made IV

4-5 November, Stavanger, Norway: Water for the Poorest - Conference

9-14 December, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Pan-African Conference on Water

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