

## The 6th World Water Forum - Marseille



### The 6th World Water Forum opens its doors

The 6th World Water Forum opened this morning in Marseille, on the Mediterranean coast. For one week, it will host water supply and sanitation sector professionals, come to discuss, innovate and commit to addressing the challenges of providing universal access to water and sanitation.

As Beneditto Braga, President of the International Forum Committee, stated, for the last two years, all stakeholders have been working on the Forum's four preparatory processes: Thematic, Political, Regional, Grassroots and Citizenship.

This Forum is of particular importance as, whilst it was announced last week that the MDG drinking water target has been met, sanitation remains a key priority up to 2030. The French Prime Minister, François Fillon, noted that France has the water and sanitation savoir-faire required to help address the technological and innovation challenges facing the sector. As energy and water are linked, Loïc Fauchon, President of the World Water Council, expressed the wish for this 'nexus' to be taken into account at the upcoming Rio+20 summit



on sustainable development; this wish was reiterated by Ban Ki Moon, United Nations Secretary

Civil society has its say!

The citizen coordination days, 'Water, Planet and Peoples', organized by the Danielle Mitterrand Foundation, France Libertés, as part of the Alternative World Water Forum in Marseille on 9 and 10 March 2012, brought together international civil society stakeholders to debate and construct participatory and concrete solutions for the effective implementation of the right to water and sanitation. The focus was on building a new, democratic and participatory model of society that is respectful of ecosystems. These discussions culminated in a final declaration and 17 concrete proposals.

For more information, visit: <http://www.france-libertes.org>

### French savoir-faire on display

The Espace France was opened by the French Prime Minister, François Fillon, and Henri Bégorre, President of the Partenariat Français pour l'eau. This exhibition space provides an opportunity for all French water and sanitation stakeholders to come together, in particular to share the innovative solutions



implemented both in France and around the world. There will be around forty events taking

place here throughout the Forum on a variety of themes, including that of decentralized cooperation.

## The Citizen's House for Water

Present at all World Water Forums, the Citizen's House for Water, set up by the International Secretariat for Water, is, above all, an interactive space for discussion and cultural expression. To encourage dialogue between the various water sector stakeholders, the Citizen's House holds meetings and debates within a more informal, discussion friendly environment. Throughout the week, the elected officials hall, the Agora, the International 'Water and Cinema' Events area and the Sails of Solidarity stopover area all offer a rich program that includes both debates and cultural events.

To inaugurate this space, prizes were awarded to the winning students from the National School of Architecture in Marseille of the competition to de-

sign the Citizen's House for Water. A further highlight of this opening day was the presentation of the six national water forums held in Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger, Togo, Senegal and Mali prior to the World Water Forum. This presentation session, coordinated by the NGO Eau Vive, was attended by institutional stakeholders, elected

officials, artists and civil society representatives.



## International 'Water and Film' Events

The International 'Water and Film' Events have been in place since the Mexico Forum (2006). This year, they have again met with considerable success with over a hundred films made, notably by young film-makers from Southern countries. On Sunday evening, in the magnificent setting of the Palais du Pharo, these film-makers were received by Martine Vassal, representing the city of Marseille and the Conseil Général, and Gaston Kaboré, director and observer from Burkina Faso. 20 winners were awarded their prizes and given the opportunity to have their work recognized during Forum week.

The winning films will be screened throughout the Forum, both in cinemas around the Marseille region and in the Pavillon de l'Eau in Paris.

For more information, visit: [www.riec-iwfe.org](http://www.riec-iwfe.org)

## Gender and water

Today, the tasks of obtaining, using and managing water are still predominantly carried out by women and young girls, also responsible for maintaining sanitation facilities and for hygiene education. Although they have now been widely recognized as users, women are still not sufficiently involved in the decision-making process and the management of facilities. The 6th World Water Forum provides a further opportunity not only to review and discuss this issue, but also to put forward concrete solutions to ensure greater involvement of women in local water governance bodies and, more generally, in water and sanitation projects undertaken in the South.