

## Today's Snapshot



*All countries and all languages have something to say about water and water issues*

*Urban artists and their artwork in Istanbul*

You can follow the sessions in real time at:

[www.worldwaterforum5.org/index.php?id=2535](http://www.worldwaterforum5.org/index.php?id=2535)

### Training in water professions: young people take the floor!

On Tuesday, the French pavilion hosted a side event on building the capacities of water and sanitation sector stakeholders in countries of the South. Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi, Executive Director of United Cities and Local Governments of Africa ([www.uclgafrica.org](http://www.uclgafrica.org)) stated an indisputable fact: the needs in terms of

training in the water sector are huge, particularly within the technical departments of local authorities responsible for developing water and sanitation services. However, training courses do exist: training in leak detection (Marseilles Water Company), a Masters in "Water for All" (AgroParisTech), training of technicians and engineers (Office International de l'Eau). In particular, the latter, the OIEau ([www.oieau.fr](http://www.oieau.fr)) has supported the creation of technical training

centres in various countries (Mexico, Algeria, Saudi Arabia and Poland), centres linked since 2008 within the "international network of water training centres" to bring solutions adapted to local needs. Young professionals of the sector working in the field and represented by the network "Projection" ([www.reseauprojection.org](http://www.reseauprojection.org)), highlighted the importance of not limiting this capacity building to occasional thematic training courses, but to propose long-term support to municipal technical departments in order to supplement effectively the skills learned in initial training and further education courses.

## The right to water for the poorest

On the basis of five experiences (Africa, Latin America and South Asia), the network of civil society organisations, Freshwater Action Network ([www.freshwateraction.net](http://www.freshwateraction.net)), showed how the recognition of the right to water has a real impact on the poorest populations' access to water supply services.

Within a country, the constitutional recognition of the right to water, without a doubt, gives the people the means to exert pressure on those responsible for the services (national and local government) and on those in charge of supply (public and private companies alike) in order to obtain better conditions of access to drinking water. Nonetheless, in countries of the South, the concrete application of the right to water regularly comes up against a lack of political will and a lack of local and national financial resources. Fundamentally, the right to water is a tool that users can use to remind decision-makers of their obligations. For such an approach to work, it must be based on

wide-spread mobilisation, through lobbying in particular, which requires users to be informed and organised.

A complementary session to this one, led by WaterAid ([www.wateraid.org](http://www.wateraid.org)), illustrated by experiences in India, South Africa and Nigeria, demonstrated the significance of the right to sanitation. The case of the "Safai Karamcharis" in India ([www.nskfdc.nic.in](http://www.nskfdc.nic.in)) provides a particularly clear demonstration of how the job of collecting human excrements is an assault on human dignity that is no longer acceptable in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## Water in Emergency and Reconstruction contexts

Natural disasters and conflicts are brutal events that dramatically affect the social organisation of the areas concerned. Access to water and sanitation become vital issues. The logistical constraints (providing access within a very short time frame) are very specific and require appropriate expertise. At the French pavilion, NGOs presented their intervention protocols and tools: the rapid response mechanism of Solidarités ([www.solidarites.org](http://www.solidarites.org)); the emergency response teams of the French Red Cross ([www.croix-rouge.fr](http://www.croix-rouge.fr)) and; the rehabilitation of public infrastructures by Secours islamique France ([www.secours-islamique.org](http://www.secours-islamique.org)). Nonetheless, these actors face a recurring problem of how to render interventions, initially designed for emergency situations, more sustainable when structural security and peace do not come quickly and middle-term solutions are required. This hybrid problem, successfully tackled by emergency workers in many cases, and supported by the French Development Agency



([www.afd.fr](http://www.afd.fr)) and the Veolia foundation ([www.fondation.veolia.com](http://www.fondation.veolia.com)) has given rise to effective tools and methodologies which help to respond to contexts that fall in between emergency and long-term development.

## Involving citizens in measuring the quality of water services

The Citizens' House for Water is a place for interaction and dialogue, and the dissemination of results concerning local water management projects, designed and run by the International Secretariat for Water in the context of the forum.

The ISW coordinates the Blue Book initiative, a document drawn up on a national scale to provide an independent measure of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals for water and sanitation and to provide an objective view of sector strategies and policies. A special session revisited the Blue Book initiative, which is traditionally part of a global level monitoring approach but which aims to ensure considerable citizen involvement, a desire often expressed but rarely implemented. You can find out more at: [www.sie-isw.org](http://www.sie-isw.org).

*This newsletter was produced with the support of young professionals from the Projection network:*

[www.reseaprojection.org](http://www.reseaprojection.org)