

Window on the World

This edition of Window on the World presents a survey of the key websites dealing with Water, from research institutions to water fora and networks. Organizations promoting campaigns against water privatization are highlighted as well as alliances for the defense of women's rights for water. Networks and trans-boundary coalitions are also key in solving and tackling conflicts around water scarcity.

I. Gender and Water

Gender and Water Alliance

www.genderandwater.org

Created at the Second World Water Forum (The Hague, 2000), the Gender and Water Alliance (GWA) is a global network that aims to promote women's and men's equitable access to and management of safe and adequate water for domestic supply, sanitation, food security and environmental sustainability. During its first phase (2000–2005), GWA was hosted by the International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC) at Delft, the Netherlands, and focused on enlarging its membership and preparing advocacy and training materials to promote its goals.

Today the GWA has more than 800 members from 101 countries, including organizations and individuals from NGOs, donor agencies, government water bureaucracies and grassroots groups. About 40 percent of its members are men: despite a large part of the GWA's focus on women as water users and managers, as they have been historically disadvantaged, it strongly believes that sustainable social change is only possible if both women and men are involved in decision-making on water governance. In 2006, the GWA was registered as an independent association under Dutch law and has a small secretariat in Dieren. This is supported by an elected and regionally representative Steering Committee that provides policy and strategic direction for the network under the framework of the Strategic Plan for 2006–2010.

Main features of the strategic plan

The Strategic Plan lays out five key output areas for the GWA:

- *Strengthening of the network itself*: Through the GWA listserv and website in five languages – English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic as well as regional workshops and the development of regional strategic plans,
- Disseminating and sharing of knowledge and information on gender mainstreaming policies, practices and tools: Through the resource guide on gender mainstreaming in Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) (also in five languages), case

studies, collaborative reports, contributions to IRC's Source Bulletin, travelling exhibitions on gender and water issues,

- Increasing the capacity to mainstream gender in IWRM: Through regional ToTs and capacity building with strategic partners such as the UN-Habitat Water for African Cities (WAC) Programme or Cap-Net for developing training resources and e-learning modules,
- Incorporating gender concerns in the development and implementation of national water-related policies: Developing advocacy skills and providing training materials for partners who want to mainstream gender in national water policies and programmes, particularly partners linked to UN-Habitat's WAC initiative; and
- *Reinforcing the profile of gender-equity issues at international water-related conferences:* Organizing panels and facilitating workshops at national and international forums such as the annual Stockholm Water Week or the tri-annual World Water Forums to increase the visibility of gender-equity issues at all levels.

Sara Ahmed, Chairperson of the global Gender and Water Alliance

Challenges for GWA

As the GWA grows in size and scope of work, demonstrating that more equitable and gender-sensitive IWRM is not only possible but also desirable, we continue to face several challenges. Let me outline some of these challenges that I hope our work over the next few years will focus on:

1. The challenge of understanding gender, and by extension gender mainstreaming, as not simply a question of numbers (e.g., women on water committees) but of *transforming*, indeed setting the agenda for our water policies, bureaucracies and agencies.
2. The challenge of access to low-cost and culturally appropriate water and sanitation facilities, particularly for poor women and girls, in rapidly growing urban environments and emerging peri-urban centres.

3. The challenge of understanding climate change or variability and what it means for our water resources, food security and adaptive strategies of the poor and vulnerable living in areas prone to increasingly intensive floods or pervasive drought or coastal surges and storms.
4. The challenge of HIV/AIDS and how it continues to devastate poor families, women and community water supplies, especially in the African continent.
5. The challenge of good water governance, which is accountable to poor women and men, ensures transparent decision-making processes and provides genuine *space* for the powerless to participate, to voice their concerns and help build empowered and sustainable community institutions.

As gender advocates, we work at many institutional levels with a very clear mandate that gender for us is more than simply the social relationships of power between women and men, but also encompasses a broader understanding of diversity and social inclusion. We bring a range of skills and experiences to our strategies on capacity building, knowledge management and policy advocacy, learning from each other in enabling environments that facilitate collaboration and partnerships. However, it is the silent majority around the world, the individuals, households and communities that we work with and to some extent 'represent', where I personally feel that the challenge of mainstreaming gender-equitable and sustainable water management lies.

Women's Environment and Development Organizations

<http://www.wedo.org/>

Founded in 1991, the Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO) is an international organization that advocates for women's equality in global policy. Working in key global forums such as the UN, WEDO advocates for and seeks to empower women as decision-makers to achieve economic, social and gender justice, a healthy, peaceful planet and human rights for all. WEDO organized a collection of case studies

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written by women around the world that articulate the struggles associated with water procurement in different countries. Everyday, the woman's task of providing her family with water is complicated by privatization, environmental degradation, interference by the World Bank and IMF, unresponsive water authorities, and so on – with innumerable consequences ranging from thirst to disease to domestic violence. These narratives can detail the successes of women's solidarity and cooperation or the misfortune of disempowerment, but all underline the important and central role that women play in the provision of water to people.

Gender in Water Partnership - Asian Development Bank

<http://www.adb.org/Water/Gender/>
The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the GWA work together to mainstream gender considerations into the water sector operations of ADB's developing member countries. The partnership's goal is the achievement of universal access to safe water and sanitation for all, with special emphasis on the needs of women.

Women for Water

<http://www.womenforwater.org/>
Sharing and exchange of knowledge, experiences and expertise constitute the backbone of successful cooperation. Since 2004 the Women for Water database is online, showcasing the vast number of initiatives and activities already in place and providing a tool to match demand and supply in community-based IWRM. This partnership is engaged in a joint commitment to ecological and equitable sustainable development wherein women's organizations, local governments and private sector representatives participate on an equal footing!

II. Rights for Water

The Blue Planet Project

<http://www.blueplanetproject.net>
The Blue Planet Project is an international civil society movement started by The Council of

Canadians to protect the world's fresh water from the growing threats of trade and privatization. The movement works with organizations and activists in both South and North, and is affiliated with international networks including Friends of the Earth International, Red Vida (the Americas Network on the Right to Water) and the People's Health Movement.

Blue Planet is currently working with partners worldwide on using a human rights framework to protect water for people and nature for generations to come. This includes working with local organizations and activists on grassroots struggles to protect democratic, community control of water, and building a movement to secure an international treaty on the Right to Water. In 2005, Blue Planet Project founder Maude Barlow was awarded the *Right Livelihood Award*, often referred to as the *alternative Nobel Prize*, which honours those 'offering practical and exemplary answers to the most urgent challenges facing us today'.

Contratto Mondiale sull'Acqua/World Water Agreement

<http://www.contrattoacqua.it>
In Lisbon, on the initiative of the Lisbon Group of the Mario Soares Foundation, the 'Water Manifest' is drawn up and launched. Mario Soares is named Chairman of the International Committee and Riccardo Petrella coordinator of the Committee. The campaign intends to launch a series of initiatives aimed at spreading information and raising awareness with regard to the struggle to combat new sources of water pollution, the structural reform of irrigation systems in intensive and industrial agriculture, the 10/15 year moratorium on the construction of large new dams, the establishment of a World Watch for human rights to water access.

III. Water Networks

World Water Council

<http://www.worldwatercouncil.org/>
The World Water Council is an international multi-stakeholder platform. It was established in 1996

on the initiative of renowned water specialists and international organizations, in response to an increasing concern about world water issues from the global community. The World Water Council's mission is 'to promote awareness, build political commitment and trigger action on critical water issues at all levels, including the highest decision-making level, to facilitate the efficient conservation, protection, development, planning, management and use of water in all its dimensions on an environmentally sustainable basis for the benefit of all life on earth'. By providing a platform to encourage debates and exchanges of experience, the Council aims to reach a common strategic vision on water resources and water services management among all stakeholders in the water community. In the process, the Council also catalyzes initiatives and activities, whose results converge toward its flagship product, the World Water Forum.

International River Network

<http://www.irn.org/>

International Rivers Network (IRN) protects rivers and defends the rights of communities that depend on them. IRN opposes destructive dams and the development model they advance, and encourages better ways of meeting people's needs for water, energy and protection from damaging floods. IRN seeks a world in which rivers and the ecosystems they support are valued, and the importance of the links between healthy environments and healthy societies is understood. To achieve this mission, IRN collaborates with a global network of local communities, social movements, non-governmental organizations and other partners. The primary focus of IRN's work is in the global South. It has adopted a two-pronged approach, combining work on changing global policies with campaigning on specific key projects around the world, and working with environmental and human rights groups in cooperative campaigns for community-based river development.

Inter-American Water Resource Network (IWRN)

<http://www.iwrn.net/>

The IWRN is a network whose purpose is to build and strengthen water resources partnerships among nations, organizations and individuals, to promote education and the open exchange of information and technical expertise, and to enhance communication, cooperation, collaboration and financial commitment to integrated water and land resources management within the context of environmental and economic sustainability in America.

IV. Campaigns for Water

Food and Water Watch

<http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/>

Food and Water Watch challenges the corporate control and abuse of our food and water resources by empowering people to take action and by transforming the public consciousness about what we eat and drink. The organization works on food safety, agriculture, fisheries and water rights in a four-pronged effort: public and policymaker education, lobbying, media and Internet activism. Food and Water Watch moves citizens to speak up, get involved at the grassroots level and push for change in their communities.

Blue October

<http://www.blueoctobercampaign.org/>

Blue October is an international month of action to challenge corporate control of water and to protect water as a shared natural resource available to all. On 31 October 2004, the people of Uruguay voted to amend their constitution to recognize this fundamental right. Blue October celebrates this historic move by challenging corporate control of water through global action!

Mexican Coalition in the Defence of Water

<http://www.comda.org.mx/>

COMDA is a Mexican coalition that rallies in the defense of water rights against corporate

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privatizations. COMDA, together with international organizations, has organized the International Forum in the Defense of Water.

Public Citizens – Water for All

<http://www.citizen.org/cmep/Water/>

As the world's water becomes scarce and corporations seek to exploit this scarcity for profit, people around the world are losing ownership and control of water resources on which they depend. Water is a human right to the extent one has the right to live, one has the right to water. Public Citizen's Water for All Campaign is dedicated to protecting water as a common resource, stopping water privatization and bulk water sales, and defending access to clean and affordable water around the world.

Water Justice

<http://www.waterjustice.org/>

Waterjustice.org was born at the fourth World Social Forum (Mumbai, January 2004). Inspired by seminars on alternatives to water privatization and how to finance public water, groups from around the world committed to intensify their cooperation on these key issues. One of the decisions was to develop waterjustice.org into a virtual resource centre and meeting place for exchanging experiences, debate and strategize.

V. Water and the Private Sector

The Water Dialogues

<http://www.waterdialogues.org/>

The Water Dialogues examine whether and how the private sector can contribute to the delivery of affordable and sustainable water supply and sanitation services, especially to poor communities. The Water Dialogues aim to contribute to meeting the Million Development Goals (MDGs) for water and sanitation. Lessons from The Water Dialogues generate information that can contribute to the development of sector strategies by governments and support for these strategies from international donors. To date, The Water Dialogues have

been established in Brazil, Indonesia, the Philippines, South Africa and Uganda. The Water Dialogues differ from previous international multi-stakeholder processes in that most activities take place at the national and sub-national levels, that is, at the level of implementation, where findings can be fed directly into existing national sector reform processes.

Watermark Initiative

<http://www.watermarkinitiative.com>

The company offers various services including 'Hydro Mediation' to resolve water disputes through legal and technical experts using an accountable and transparent process and 'Hydro Facilitation' that helps to make the best use of resources for time-constrained projects or soon-to-expire funding.

Earth Water

<http://www.earthwater.ca/>

Earth Water International is a bottled water company; a new type of corporation whose bottom line is to help save the lives of people in the most desperate of situations.

Earth Water works in support of the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) by donating 100 percent of its net profits to be used in water aid programmes in developing countries.

VI. Water in the UN

UN Habitat

<http://www.unhabitat.org/>

The highest priority for UN-Habitat's *Water and Sanitation programme* is improving access to safe water and helping provide adequate sanitation to millions of low-income urban dwellers and measuring that impact. World leaders meeting at the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000 committed themselves to attaining the MDG 7, target ten that aims to reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water by 2015. In 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg added

another target: to halve by 2015, the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation.

International Hydrological Program (IHP)

<http://typo38.unesco.org/index.php?id=240>
IHP is UNESCO's international scientific co-operative programme in water research, water resources management, education and capacity building, and the only broadly based science programme of the UN system in this area. Its main objectives are to act as a vehicle through which Member States, cooperating professional and scientific organizations and individual experts can upgrade their knowledge of the water cycle, thereby increasing their capacity to better manage and develop their water resources, to develop techniques, methodologies and approaches to better define hydrological phenomena, to improve water management, locally and globally, to act as a catalyst to stimulate cooperation and dialogue in water science and management, to assess the sustainable development of vulnerable water resources and to serve as a platform for increasing awareness of global water issues.

UN-Water

<http://www.unwater.org/flashindex.html>
In 2003, UN-Water was endorsed as the new official United Nations mechanism for follow-up of the water-related decisions reached at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Millennium Development Goals. It will support Member States in their efforts to achieve water and sanitation goals and targets.

UN-Water's work encompasses all aspects of freshwater, including surface and groundwater resources and the interface between fresh and seawater. It includes freshwater resources, both in terms of their quality and quantity, their development, assessment, management, monitoring and use (including, e.g., domestic uses, agriculture and ecosystems requirements).

The scope of the work of UN-Water also includes sanitation – encompassing both access to and use of sanitation by populations and the interactions between sanitation and freshwater. It further

includes water-related disasters, emergencies and other extreme events and their impact on human security. UN-Water serves as the common voice of the UN system on water and sanitation. UN-Water is responsible for organizing the annual United Nations World Water Day (22 March) and the up-coming United Nations Decade on Water 2005–2015.

Food and Agriculture Organization – AQUASTAT

<http://www.fao.org/nr/water/aquastat/main/index.stm>

AQUASTAT is FAO's global information system on water and agriculture developed by the Land and Water Development Division. It collects, analyses and disseminates data and information by country and by region. Its aim is to provide users interested in global, regional and national analyses with comprehensive information related to water resources and agricultural water management across the world, with emphasis on countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

VII. NGOs for water

WaterAid

<http://www.wateraid.org/uk/>

WaterAid is an international charity. Its mission is to overcome poverty by enabling the world's poorest people to gain access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene education. WaterAid enables the world's poorest people to gain access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene education. These basic human rights underpin health, education and livelihoods and form the first, essential step in overcoming poverty. The organization works with local partners, who understand local issues, and provide them with the skills and support to help communities set up and manage practical and sustainable projects that meet their real needs. WaterAid also campaigns locally and internationally to change policy and practice and ensures that water and sanitation's vital role in reducing poverty is recognized.

VIII. Water and Research Institutions

African Water Issues Research Unit (AWIRU)

<http://www.awiru.co.za/>

The AWIRU is a not-for-profit applied research organization based at the University of Pretoria, established to develop an African capacity to understand the complexity of African water management and development issues. AWIRU's objective is to generate water management solutions that are politically, socially, economically, environmentally and culturally sustainable in Africa. AWIRU operates in unison with the goals of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), aiming to strengthen transboundary water governance at all levels throughout southern Africa. As a division of the University of Pretoria Water Institute, AWIRU conducts socio-economic research with the aim to understand the complexity of African water management and to generate water management solutions that are politically, socially, economically, environmentally and culturally sustainable in Africa.

International Water Management Institute (IWMI)

<http://www.iwmi.cgiar.org/>

IWMI is one of 15 international research centres supported by the network of 60 governments, private foundations, and international and regional organizations collectively known as the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research. IWMI's mission is to improve the management of land and water resources for food, livelihoods and nature. IWMI targets water and land management challenges faced by poor communities in the developing world/or in developing countries and through this contributes towards the achievement of the UN MDGs. The research agenda is organized around four priority themes including basin water management; land, water and livelihoods; agriculture, water and cities; and water management and environment.

The Institute for Sustainable Futures – Working for Sustainable Water and Sanitation Solutions

<http://www.isf.uts.edu.au/whatwedo/project-water.html>

The Institute for Sustainable Futures (ISF) is a research and consulting organization based at the University of Technology, Sydney. ISF works with industry, government and the community to create sustainable futures through research, consultancy and training. The teams at ISF are recognized international leaders in the area of sustainable water management. They have comprehensive and in-depth knowledge of institutional arrangements and physical infrastructures for sustainable water and sanitation for urban, peri-urban and rural settings; knowledge of sanitation needs and alternative service provision models with potential for long-term sustainability; knowledge and expertise in whole-of-society costs and benefits for water and sanitation; and understanding that it is essential that sustainable water and sanitation programmes prioritize social and political processes (participation, acceptability, decision making, planning, monitoring and evaluation).

Recently, researchers at ISF completed a review of progress towards meeting water and sanitation MDGs in South East Asia and the Pacific. The review was commissioned by World Vision Australia and Water Aid Australia to provide research evidence to contribute to the debate on how best to direct overseas development assistance (ODA) investments in light of the fact that Australia's ODA is set to double over the next four years. The report discusses the extent of the silent humanitarian crisis resulting from lack of access to safe water and sanitation and proposes recommendations on how AusAID, the Australian government aid agency, can improve its investment in water and sanitation to promote development, economic growth and productivity in South East Asia and the Pacific.

ISF's report *Getting the Basics Right: Water and Sanitation in South East Asia and the Pacific* is available at <http://www.isf.uts.edu.au/whatwedo/Getting.the.basics.right.pdf>.

By Naomi Carrard

Stockholm International Water Institute

<http://www.siwj.org/>

The Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) is a policy institute that contributes to international efforts to find solutions to the world's escalating water crisis. SIWI advocates future-oriented, knowledge-integrated water views in decision-making, nationally and internationally, that lead to sustainable use of the world's water resources, sustainable development of societies and reduced poverty. By creating opportunities for dialogue and collaboration between water experts and decision-makers, SIWI stimulates the development of innovative policies and scientifically based solutions to water-related problems. SIWI stresses that water is a key to socio-economic development and quality of life, and that through IWRM, barriers that hinder increased food production, pollution prevention and poverty reduction can be overcome.

South African Water Research Commission (WRC)

<http://www.wrc.org.za/>

The WRC operates in terms of the Water Research Act (Act 34 of 1971) and its mandate is to support water research and development as well as the building of a sustainable water research capacity in South Africa. The WRC serves as the country's water-centred knowledge 'hub' leading to the creation, dissemination and application of water-centred knowledge, focusing on water resource management, water-linked ecosystems, water use, and waste management and water utilization in agriculture.

The International Centre for Water Hazard and Risk Management (ICHARM)

<http://www.icharm.pwri.go.jp/>

Water-related disasters such as floods and droughts are major challenges that need to be overcome in order to ensure sustainable human development and poverty alleviation. The mission of ICHARM is to be the centre of excellence to provide and assist implementation of best practicable

strategies to localities, nations, regions and the globe to manage the risk of water-related disasters.

IX. Transnational water management

Nile Basin Initiative

<http://www.nilebasin.org/>

The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) is a partnership initiated and led by the riparian states of the Nile River through the Council of Ministers of Water Affairs of the Nile Basin states (Nile Council of Ministers, or Nile-COM). The NBI seeks to develop the river in a cooperative manner, share substantial socio-economic benefits, and promote regional peace and security. Cooperative water resources management is complex in any international river basin. In the Nile Basin, which is characterized by water scarcity, poverty, a long history of dispute and insecurity, and rapidly growing populations and demand for water, it is particularly difficult. The NBI started with a participatory process of dialogue among the riparians that resulted in their agreeing on a shared vision – to 'achieve sustainable socio-economic development through the equitable utilization of, and benefit from, the common Nile Basin water resources'.

Mekong River Commission

<http://www.mrcmekong.org/>

The Mekong River Commission (MRC) was formed on 5 April 1995 by an agreement between the governments of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam. The four countries signed the agreement on the cooperation for the sustainable development of the Mekong river basin and agreed on joint management of their shared water resources and development of the economic potential of the river. The MRC is an international, country-driven river basin organization that provides the institutional framework to promote regional cooperation in order to implement the 1995 Agreement. The MRC serves its member states by supporting decisions and promoting action on sustainable development. The MRC supports the Mekong Programme, a regional cooperation programme for

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the sustainable development of water and related resources in the Mekong basin owned by its member countries. Its goal is to strengthen the integrated water resources management capacity and knowledge base of the MRC bodies, National Mekong Committees, Line Agencies and other stakeholders.

X. Water and Dams

The World Commission on Dams (WCD)

<http://www.dams.org/>

The WCD is an independent, international, multi-stakeholder process that addresses the controversial issues associated with large dams.

It provides a unique opportunity to bring into focus the many assumptions and paradigms that are at the centre of the search to reconcile economic growth, social equity, environmental conservation and political participation in the changing global context.

XI. Water for Agriculture

Water Conservation and Use in Agriculture (WCA)

<http://www.wca-infonet.org/iptrid/infonet/index.jsp>

The WCA infoNET information system is an Internet-based integrated information platform that merges high-quality information resources and expertise allowing direct access to publications, documents, data, computer programmes and discussion groups that provides a knowledge base, support and the necessary global platform for decisions on water conservation and use in agriculture.

International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID)

<http://www.icid.org/>

The ICID was established on 24 June 1950 as a scientific, technical and voluntary not-for-profit Non-Governmental International Organization (NGO) with headquarters in New Delhi, India.

The Commission is dedicated to enhancing the worldwide supply of food and fibre for all people by improving water and land management and the productivity of irrigated and drained lands through appropriate management of water, environment and application of irrigation, drainage and flood management techniques.

International Network on Participatory Irrigation Management

<http://www.inpim.org/>

The mission of the International Network on Participatory Irrigation Management (INPIM) is to facilitate Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM) through the exchange of people, ideas and training materials. The INPIM is a non-profit organization, whose mission is to facilitate (PIM) through the exchange of people, ideas, and training materials. INPIM was first launched at the First International Seminar on PIM in Mexico. The participants of this seminar felt the need to remain in touch with each other and exchange ideas and expertise in the area of PIM. For this reason, they established a network with its own identity that would assist them in pursuing this goal. Currently there are four national chapters of INPIM: Albania India Pakistan and Indonesia.

XII. Water and Conflict

The Pacific Institute

<http://www.pacinst.org/>

The Pacific Institute is dedicated to protecting the natural world, encouraging sustainable development and improving global security. Founded in 1987 and based in Oakland, California, it provides independent research and policy analysis on issues at the intersection of development, environment and security. Its aim is to find real-world solutions to problems like water shortages, habitat destruction, global warming and environmental injustice. The institute currently has five main areas of research: water and sustainability, environment and security, community strategies for sustainability and justice, economic

globalization and the environment and global change working on a wide variety of topics.

The Pacific Institute offers a wide water and conflict bibliography at <http://biblio.pacinst.org/conflict/>

XIII. Water Footprint

Water Footprint

<http://www.waterfootprint.org>

Traditional water use statistics show water supply per sector (domestic, agriculture, industrial water use). The approach has always been supply and producer oriented. The water footprint concept has been introduced to have a demand- and consumer-oriented indicator as well. The 'water footprint' concept has been introduced by Arjen Hoekstra in 2002 in order to have an indicator of

water use in relation to consumption. The water footprint of an individual, business or nation is defined as the total amount of freshwater that is used to produce the goods and services consumed by the individual, business or nation.

The term 'virtual water' was introduced by Tony Allan in the early 1990s. It is defined as the volume of water required to produce a commodity or service. When there is a transfer of products or services from one place to another, there is little direct physical transfer of water (apart from the water content of the product, which is quite insignificant in terms of volume). There is, however, a significant transfer of virtual water. By importing virtual water, water poor countries can relieve the pressure on their domestic water resources

Compiled by Sonja Capello