

4th WORLD WATER FORUM MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

We, the Ministers assembled in Mexico City on the occasion of the Fourth World Water Forum (4th WWF), “Local Actions for a Global Challenge” on March 21st and 22nd, 2006,

1. Reaffirm the critical importance of water, in particular freshwater, for all aspects on sustainable development, including poverty and hunger eradication, water-related disaster reduction, health, agricultural and rural development, hydropower, food security, gender equality as well as the achievement of environmental sustainability and protection. We underline the need to include water and sanitation as priorities in national processes, in particular national sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies.
2. Reaffirm our commitment to achieve the internationally agreed goals on integrated water resources management (IWRM), access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, agreed upon in Agenda 21, the Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI). We reiterate the continued and urgent need to achieve these goals and to keep track of progress towards their implementation, including the goal to reduce by half, by the year 2015, the proportion of people unable to reach or afford safe drinking water.
3. Reaffirm, in particular, our commitment to the decisions adopted by the 13th session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-13), in April 2005, on policy options and practical measures to expedite implementation in water, sanitation and human settlements. We note with interest the importance of enhancing the sustainability of ecosystems and acknowledge the implementation and importance in some regions of innovative practices such as rain water management and the development of hydropower projects. Further reaffirm the importance of the involvement of relevant stakeholders, particularly women and youth, in the planning and management of water services and, as appropriate, decision-making processes.
4. Take note of the Ministerial Declaration of the Third World Water Forum and recognize the work done within the UN System in support of member States, in order to reach the aforementioned goals. In this regard, we support the coordinating role of UN Water and highlight the need to strengthen its work within its mandate among the relevant UN organizations, funds and programs. We appreciate the inputs from the UN Secretary General’s Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation to reinforce ongoing implementation efforts towards reaching water and sanitation targets. We express our continued support to initiatives like the Water for Life Decade and our interest in the United Nations Secretary General’s WEHAB Initiative.

5. Recognize the contributions of the 4th WWF and its preparatory regional process to building capacity at international, regional and national levels and promoting the exchange of best practices and lessons learned on international water and sanitation issues.
6. Acknowledge the input of the Forum for the follow up segment on water and sanitation of the 16th Session of the CSD, to be held in 2008 which will play an important role to monitor and follow-up decisions on water and sanitation and their inter-linkages taken at CSD-13, and as an example of coordinated participation and involvement of governments at all levels, civil society, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, private sector, scientific institutions, partnerships, and international financial institutions regarding water issues and other relevant stakeholders.
7. Reaffirm also the decision of the 13th Session of the Commission of Sustainable Development regarding, inter alia:
 - a) that a substantial increase of resources from all sources, including domestic resources, official development assistance and other resources will be required if developing countries are to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and targets, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration and the JPOI, and
 - b) that Governments have the primary role in promoting improved access to safe drinking water, basic sanitation, sustainable and secure tenure, and adequate shelter, through improved governance at all levels and appropriate enabling environments and regulatory frameworks, adopting a pro-poor approach and with the active involvement of all stakeholders;
8. Recognize the importance of domestic and international policies that foster and assist building capacities and cooperation at all levels to mitigate water-related disasters including prevention, preparedness, risk assessment, community awareness, resilience and response.
9. Recognize the important role that parliamentarians and local authorities are playing in various countries to increase sustainable access to water and sanitation services as well as to support integrated water resource management. An efficient collaboration with and between these actors is a key factor to meet our water related challenges and goals.
10. Note with appreciation the work of stakeholders at the regional preparatory process towards the 4th WWF as well as during the Forum itself, and take note of the documental output of the said regional preparatory stakeholder process, included as annex to this declaration. As appropriate, this output can be used as source of information for our tasks. We also thank participating parliamentarians and local authorities for their valuable views and opinions expressed during our joint working session at the Fourth World Water Forum, and take note of their statements included as annex to this declaration.

11. Welcome the launch at the 4th WWF of the CSD Water Action and Networking Database (CSD WAND), as a means of implementing the decision from CSD-13 to develop “web-based tools to disseminate information on implementation and best practices” on water and sanitation. The CSD-WAND will serve as a platform for exchanging information and best practices, lessons learned and relevant international agreements and policy recommendations. We note that the CSD WAND has been built upon information collected during the 2003-2005 CSD Cycle, in the Portfolio of Water Actions – as an output of the Ministerial Conference of the Third World Water Forum--, and in the database of local actions of the 4th WWF.
12. Encourage all stakeholders, including national and international agencies, and other international and regional fora, such as World Water Week in Stockholm and the water weeks of the regional development banks, to contribute to and exchange information through the WAND.
13. Thank the Government of Mexico and the World Water Council for the organization of the 4th WWF and for their determination to promote better water management through dynamic local actions for a global change.

Mexico City, March 22, 2006.