

Information on the preparations for the 4th World Water Forum
By
Danielle Morley, Freshwater Action Network Coordinator

<http://www.freshwateraction.net/conferences/wwf4.asp>

Preparatory Beacon Meeting

On February 23 – 25th there was a Preparatory meeting for the 4th World Water Forum in Mexico City. I was invited based on our previous efforts to open up this process to CSOs and involvement in the Kyoto Forum. This report is to provide you with some background information on the state of preparations, with a little bit of analysis on the state of play for local actors based on discussions with both NGOs and the World Water Forum secretariat. If you are interested, please also refer to the Forum website <http://www.worldwaterforum4.org.mx>, you can also subscribe to their monthly e-newsletter for updated information - http://www.worldwaterforum4.org.mx/home/newsletter04_mar.asp

Approximately 100 participants attended, mostly from the Americas and from international organisations. There was no-one from Asia or Africa that I noticed and no other representatives of CSO's, apart from Jorge More (FANCA coordinator) and Ale Salazar (FANCA Mexico) with the Regional Committee for the Americas.

The Beacon Organisations (see below) presented an outline of their baseline documents, the secretariat presented an update on the preparation process, communication strategy. Many questions were raised about the overall state of progress, funding, access by local organisations, role and responsibilities of the regional committees and the beacon organisations, ensuring it is a global forum rather than an Americas Forum. .

As a preliminary conclusion, Cesar Herrera, the Secretary General of the 4th World Water Forum, emphasized that

1) Thematic Beacons (see below) will play an important role as guides of the Preparatory Process, generating and improving the 10 Baseline Documents and as responsible for helping to lead the Thematic Content development process up to march 2006.

2) Participation of the regions will be based as much as possible on the model adopted by the Regional Committee of the Americas (explained in detail later), which promotes the involvement of people closer to local problems by including a CSO network in the Committee and many CSO organisations in the Advisory Group which reviews selection of projects.

Therefore, the Regional Committee will be in charge of selecting the projects for local actions from that region that will be presented during the 4th Forum. In this sense, the Secretariat proposed opening a space in the schedule of the 4th Forum for analyzing up to 400 projects for local action.

World Water Council announced it would organize events during the Forum towards strengthening local action, based on the political priorities for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The next workshop of the Thematic Beacons and Regional Representatives was set for November.

Structure of the sessions during the Forum

As usual it will be held over 5 days and each day will open with a large plenary session focussed on regional priorities, prepared by the Regional Committees. Then the Forum will split into 5 parallel themes and each theme will have 3 sessions per day. Each session will be approx 2 hours long and should aim to include an opening by the convenor, presentation of 4 or 5 Local Projects of the World relevant to the session, an expert panel discussion and an interaction with the audience. The aim is to include 100 Local Projects of the World all together.

There are other aspects to the Forum, Fair etc. Please explore the website.

How to participate

If you want to participate, the process advertised is that you have to prepare a Local Workshop, Virtual Workshop or Regional Meeting. This can be any event that brings together a range of stakeholders to discuss issues of local relevance.

Local projects should show special results in terms of collective actions and Local Workshops (LWs) are supposed to be small deliberative arenas where different types of local stakeholders will discuss their experience confronting the many barriers and opportunities faced. Convenors should submit a one page summary to the Secretariat, locating it within the Themes and submit the results of the local workshops to be sent to the regional committees. Forms are available on the website.

If you want to be a Session Convenor in Mexico, these will be drawn from these preparatory workshops and meetings and a limited number of Local Workshop Facilitators will be included. The selection process and time-table is unclear so it will be wise to keep an eye on the website, prepare a local workshop and liaise with the Beacon organisation and secretariat.

Also you can attend one of the many preparatory meetings, some of which will be dedicated specially to prepare for the 4th World Water Forum and some of which will have special sessions on the 4th World Water Forum tacked on to identity priorities etc. But the process is not crystal clear. FAN recommended that they set up a special Local Action unit in the Secretariat to do this work, but nothing has been established.

Regions

In the same way that the Kyoto Forum focused more on Asia, this Mexico Forum will focus more on the Americas. It is important however that more effort is made for it to be representative of the World as it is a World Forum.

Regional Committees (of the Americas)

The Mexico Secretariat wanted to lead by example, and have followed the recommendation of FAN to include CSO networks in the Regional Committee. FAN recommended that they include civil society water network of Indigenous Peoples, South America and Central America. At this time only a Central American CSO network (FANCA) has been invited to participate at its own expense. The ability of the network to act responsibly as a communication, consultation and outreach node is limited without support from a donor and it is seeking funds.

Additionally many CSOs are members of the Advisory Group of the Americas which will work alongside the Committee on the selection of Local Projects and regional priorities.

It is unlikely that other regional committees will follow the example of the Americas unless the secretariat lays it down as a pre-requisite. FAN is trying to investigate for Asia (lead by Japanese) and Africa (lead by the African Development Bank) and Europe.

Unresolved Issues

- 1) Selection of Projects: Many questions were asked about the selection criteria for the case-studies and sessions presented in the Forum but this was not properly addressed. Several Beacons emphasised that for them 'local' can be a city, a river basin etc. It is being loosely applied. The secretariat is urged to provide guidelines. Also the relationship between the selection responsibilities of the Regional Committees and the Beacons is not exactly clear.
- 2) Selection of Sessions: Again the process is not clear, the most direct method will be to send a proposal to the Secretariat, the Regional Committee Coordinators and the Theme Beacon where you wish to be located. Also to attend one of the many meetings being held between now and March 2006 that will be listed as official preparatory meetings on the website. <http://www.worldwaterforum4.org.mx/home/where.asp>
- 3) Funding: A funding mechanism to support preparations and participations of local groups, municipalities etc has not been found. There is a problem attracting significant donor funds to the process at the moment, although people are 'working on it'.
- 4) Timing: The process is running late, which of course prejudices local groups from taking part. It is not known when the deadline for selection of projects or sessions will be made
- 5) Inclusiveness: Following the Kyoto Forum policy of a Forum open to all with hundreds of sessions, on hundreds of themes, which was fair but led to criticisms of lack of purpose etc, the Mexico Forum will limit the number of sessions and themes. Approximately 400 projects will be presented in 75 sessions over the five days. However will a relatively un-funded preparatory process succeed in reaching those with an alternative vision working on the ground?
- 6) Africa: The date no process has been announced for the Africa region. Who is invited to join the Committee and the Advisory Group, meetings planned etc.
- 7) Asia: The Japanese Water Forum are leading the Asia preparations, they have a list of existing meetings and special Forum meetings in the region to use to consult on regional priorities for Asia. The first coordinators meeting is planned for 16 May 2005. It is not known who the coordinators will be. There is very little planned activity in South Asia. Funding mechanisms for local actors is not clear.
- 8) Links with the CSD-13 outcomes: It is hoped that it will build on CSD-13.

Beacon Organisations & Background Papers

<http://www.worldwaterforum4.org.mx/home/organizers08.asp>

Various international organisations are preparing Baseline Documents, to focus the content of the preparatory workshops, selection of projects and the sessions. They are called the 'Beacons' and presented first drafts and information on their preparations at the Beacon meeting in February. The documents will not be completed but will be 'living documents'. Also it is unconfirmed to what extent the Beacons will be involved in the short-listing of projects and sessions for the Forum.

A foreseen problem is that Beacon organisations are not suitable for reaching out to really local groups working on 'alternatives', and will use their role and funds to pursue their own agendas, research etc rather than act as facilitators. Below I focus on the Beacon suggestions for ways forward towards the Forum and do not go into the substance of their various papers, the presentations were very short

Water for Development – World Bank

They did not distribute a draft paper, but made a presentation. It illustrated that the Bank thought it could pursue its own agenda focused on 'de-linking economic growth from rainfall' through regulating rivers and increasing water storage and dams. They were heavily criticised during discussions for their narrow and infrastructure focussed approach to 'water for development' and perhaps they will heed these comments to broaden the content.

Implementing IWRM – Global Water Partnership

They presented a general paper; focus on integration, implementation, and reform. Recommendations were that the Forum should advance efforts to move towards more integrated approaches at all levels:

- Fostering work with communities to design and implement measures to reach the communities' own integrated strategies. Documenting the experiences of these initiatives to the Forum.
- Fostering multi-stakeholder efforts to develop national IWRM and Water Efficiency Strategies, and documenting these experiences so that lessons learned from these experiences can be utilized elsewhere.
- At the global level, the 4th World Water Forum and its preparatory process can catalyze change among– from Ministers to community groups.

The Forum should use the preparatory process by:

- Working with local stakeholders to organize local workshops around the key actions needed to catalyze the preparation of integrated community level approaches
- Using the opportunities presented by the Forum process to ensure that Ministers are aware of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation action target, through meetings, workshops and panel discussions.
- Working with Regional Multi-Stakeholder Committees to discuss the preparation of IWRM strategies at the regional level with a view to developing regional strategies and actions.
- Increasing awareness of region-specific challenges and building regional multi-stakeholder coalitions for accelerated action.

Water Supply & Sanitation for All - UNDP

http://unmp.forumone.com/eng_html_02.html

The UNDP report draws directly from “*Health, Dignity, and Development: What Will It Take,*” the final report of the UN Millennium Project Task Force on Water and Sanitation¹. The UNDP hope the Mexico Forum will be a target for making things happen more quickly, particularly for those countries off target.

During the preparatory process:

- Communities could assess needs and design and implement measures to reach the communities' own MDGs as part of such ongoing programmes as the “UNDP Community Water Initiative”, as well as documenting the experience.
- UN country teams and other partners in selected countries could determine the investments, policies, resources and strategies needed to meet the water and sanitation targets.
- Local stakeholders could organize local workshops around the key actions needed to meet the MDGs.
- Regional Multi-Stakeholder Committees could discuss these issues at the regional level with a view to developing regional strategies and actions.
- Opportunities presented by the Forum process could be used to ensure that Ministers debate the MP TF recommendations, through meetings, workshops and panel discussions.
- Increasing awareness of region-specific sanitation challenges and building regional multi-stakeholder coalitions for accelerated action in sanitation.
- Designing longer-term programmes aimed at supporting country-level implementation of the recommendations articulated in this paper, building on the experiences and lessons at community and national levels.

At the meeting itself:

- Presentation or workshop at the ministerial conference on the sanitation angle of the sub-theme that has emerged in the preparatory process as most salient.
- Adoption of a “Manifesto for action” for achieving Target 10, with clear deliverables and commitments by major stakeholders.
- Sharing of lessons from such local initiatives as the “UNDP Community Water Initiative”.
- Showcasing of local projects, particularly sanitation projects, amenable to rapid scaling-up (possibilities include Community-Led Total Sanitation, the Sulabh model, and Ecosan).
- Launch of new longer-term initiatives to achieve Target 10.

Water Management for Food and the Environment – IWMI (international water management institute for the Dialogue on Water Food Environment)

The aim is to “*address the linkages between concepts and actions, and between actions and outcomes; that discussion and debate based on real evidence from basins around the world will build consensus on the way forward*”. The table below was presented to outline their planned thematic structure with an indicative list of supporting partners. They are seeking more partners, but so far these are the ones with funds and a commitment (I assume)

¹ The full Task Force report is available at http://unmp.forumone.com/eng_html_02.html

Sub-Theme	Overview Description	Supporting Partners
<p>Water, Food, and Environment Nexus – Tradeoffs and Societal Preferences</p>	<p>Global and basin-level interactions among water use for food production and in ecosystems</p> <p>Dialogue: presentation/discussion of “lessons learned” from community level dialogues, through representatives from those communities - possibly coupled with experience in a learning framework</p> <p>Basin level interactions – illustrative cases from: Mexico; Challenge Program on Water & Food; IWMI benchmark basins (Krishna Basin, India; Oliphants Basin, South Africa; Ruhuna Basin, Sri Lanka; Rechna Doab, Pakistan)</p> <p>Other contributions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Water Council • Global Water Partnership • Stockholm International Water Institute • Wageningen University
<p>Water Scarcity and Productivity</p>	<p>Characterizing water productivity, exploring factors contributing to food-environment tradeoffs and complementarities</p> <p>Comprehensive Assessment of Water Management in Agriculture</p> <p>Blue-green water use Rainfed agriculture potential, constraints Ecoagriculture</p> <p>Competition for water Urbanization Wastewater use / marginal water use. Urban-rural interface event: possibly focused on city level experiences with waste water re-use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stockholm Environment Institute • International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage
<p>Actions to Optimize Water, Food, Environment Tradeoffs</p>	<p>Local actions to increase water productivity and their implications for the environment Ecological sanitation Wastewater use for agriculture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comisión Nacional del Agua • International Federation of Agricultural Producers

	Multiple uses of water	
Sustainable Agriculture and Wetlands	Sustainability and synergies, e.g., food production in small inland wetlands in Africa Tradeoffs, e.g., loss/ impairment of wetlands biodiversity and habitat through human encroachment Management approaches, documentation of “what works, what doesn’t”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Conservation Union IUCN • Centre for Science and Environment
Water Poverty	Access to water and human poverty, and poverty mapping at the basin level Case examples Ruhuna Basin, including pre- and post-tsunami impacts on land and water, agriculture, and response particularly by the poor Krishna Basin Adaptation, the “socio-ecology” story Pro-poor intervention Conventional irrigation Watershed options (ties in with rainfed blue/green above)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council • IWMI-Tata Program • International Water Association
The Global Food System	Future scenarios for trade, virtual water and food security policies Future scenarios based on IWMI-IFPRI projections Trade and virtual water roundtable Food security at national level and implications for water resource sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and Agriculture Organisation

Risk Management – Cooperative Programme on Water & Climate

Focusing on natural and man-made disasters, such as floods, pollution

They expect concrete and policy-oriented outputs with respect to:

- Mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction policies in development planning, particularly in integrated water resources management,
- Formulation of strategies for local adaptation to climate change and variability as well as to other extreme natural phenomena,
- Formulation of strategies to deal with social conflict and the threat of armed conflict; and
- Crafting local water ethics and hydro solidarity.

For the preparatory process, they ask questions around:

- What has to be done on a higher strategic level to improve the local capacity for actions?
- Which lessons have been learnt at the local, regional and global levels related to these themes?

Cross Cutting Beacon are preparing papers on cross-cutting themes to be integrated into the Forum

Innovative Models for Financing Local Initiatives – Camedessus Follow Up Group (World Water Council, GWP, 4th World Water Forum and others)

The aim of the beacon is to present to politicians, local and national governments, users, civil society, service managers, financing institutions and donors:

- a spectrum of viable and affordable financing options and mechanisms for strengthening local action
- a set of proposals to enable effective application of such models

and to obtain their commitment to enable their appropriate and effective introduction and use

Expectations

Through the regional and local activities organised under the themes and cross cutting perspectives the beacon expects to learn on

- Innovative financing mechanisms used for financing and strengthening local initiatives
- Local Action Cases on innovative financing - key success factors, main constraints and ways these have been solved
- The development of volume of local finance, ODA, lending and investments in the water sector.
- Addressing the questions:
 - o Why is demand for financing low while the needs are so high? To what extent and for whom is investment in water is a (political) priority?
 - o How is the demand process linked to the supply? What are the local processes and what can be recommended to remove obstacles?

Capacity Building & Social Learning – UNESCO – IHE/Delft

They are focused on capacity building to support the paradigm shift of taking place in the water sector including:

- Decentralisation of responsibilities
- Integrated approach of water management
- More attention for management and O&M of water systems
- Demand driven decision processes

- Stakeholder involvement at all steps in the planning and monitoring processes
- Orientation on Water Service delivery and willingness to pay

Their presentation focused on a very consultative preparation that links to all the main themes.

Institutional Development & Political Processes – Oxford Centre for Water Research, University College London, FLACSO

Preliminary Activities are to be expanded dialogue and consultation through: workshops in Chennai, Nairobi and Quito as part of the DPU Research Project on Service Provision Governance in the Peri-urban Interface of Metropolitan Areas and identification and documentation of relevant local initiatives and experiences in collaboration with Regional Multi-stakeholder Committees.

Preliminary list of sub-themes proposed:

- 1: Water rights, cultural beliefs and values about water quality, use and conservation.
- 2: The role of local authorities in the provision of WSS.
- 3: The role of the private sector (both formal and informal) in the provision of WSS.
- 4: The role of local communities and civic society organisations in the provision of WSS.
- 5: Making the public, private and community sectors work together: Lessons learnt from the design and operationalization of multi-sector partnerships
- 6: National policies hindering and promoting cooperation across the public, private and community sectors.
- 7: The Peri-Urban Challenge. Bridging the rural-urban divide in the provision of WSS.
- 8: Monitoring and evaluating the provision of WSS at the local level
- 9: Water and sanitation services in development cooperation. Quantitative and qualitative challenges to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

Monitoring & Implementation – World Water Assessment Programme

This was the least developed of the themes presented, and draws heavily on the work of the UN Millennium Project Task Force 7

Science & Technology – International Water Association

This aims to examine the role and importance of science in water policy and management and the constraints, information systems, brain-drain, financing for research and development

Henrich Boell Foundation – Alternative Water Forum

Myself, Jorge Mora and Ale Salazar also met with 2 people from the Henrich Boell Foundation. We shared information on our organisational profile and activities and thoughts on the 4th World Water Forum. We agreed to try and keep bridging between activities inside the Forum and any parallel, 'alternative' CSO Forum outside. HBF confirmed they will be supporting this type of event and were already planning something of a public hearing.

---ENDS---

