



INDIA WATER WEEK - 2013

EFFICIENT WATER MANAGEMENT : CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

India Water Week (IWW) 2013 was successfully held from 8 - 12 April 2013 in New Delhi, India for the second consecutive time. Organized by the Ministry of Water Resources, Government of India, it was inaugurated by the President of India on 8 April 2013 at Vigyan Bhavan, under the main theme of “Efficient Water Management: Challenges and Opportunities”.

Global Water Partnership – South Asia (GWP-SAS), India Water Partnership/GWP-India¹ and its Secretariat, WAPCOS Ltd, along with South Asia Water Initiative



Dr. S K Sarkar, Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources, delivering the inaugural address on the Regional Day

(SAWI) organized two side events during the IWW 2013 with support from Mr G Mohan Kumar, Special Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources, India and Chairman of the Organizing Committee and Mr A B Pandya, Organizing Secretary, IWW 2013.

The National Water Policy 2012 was also launched during IWW 2013 and an exhibition titled *Water Expo 2013* was held concurrently during the conference. GWP-SAS and GWP-India jointly displayed a stall during IWW 2013.

South Asia’s water problems are very much rooted in the wasteful and inefficient management of the region’s available water supplies. Therefore its water woes could be significantly mitigated through improved water governance

of its major transboundary rivers that straddle international frontiers and support the lives of millions. Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Pakistan share 20 major rivers. Conflicting claims over shared water resources is a major security challenge in the region. This requires mediation and dispute resolution for water sharing between countries and communities. Though increased water scarcity has been a source of many tensions and conflicts in the region, the need for regional cooperation is also clearly recognized.

¹ Global Water Partnership – India (GWP-India) is also called India Water Partnership (IWP)

Regional Day of the Global Water Partnership (GWP)

Given that many water challenges in South Asia have regional dimensions, the Regional Day of GWP was held on 12 April 2013 under the theme of “Improved Efficiency for Increased Resilience to Climate Change: An Integrated Water Resources Management Perspective”. The Regional Day drew upon regional experience, knowledge and case studies to discuss how increasing water efficiency in an Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) context could create more resilience to climate change.

The Chief Guest of the Regional Day, Dr S K Sarkar, Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources in his inaugural address stated that it is important that government, public and private stakeholders recognize the complexity of the management of water. He further noted that innovative institutional solutions and local coping strategies need to be adopted to address climate change.

Regional Day - Session 1

Theme: Linking water use efficiency to climate change adaptation through integrated water resources management.

Key Messages: The underlying principles in increasing water use efficiency are recognizing land, water, and energy and climate change inter-linkages, reducing consumptive use, reusing where feasible, recycling wastewater and adopting a risk based approach. Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), an approach the GWP defines as “coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources,” can best maximize sustainable use of water resources in the region. The consideration of civil society perspectives is a vital part of this process.

Poverty in South Asia will be eradicated and living conditions of all the people will be uplifted to sustainable levels of comfort, health and well-being through coordinated and integrated development and management of water resources of the region.

5 days
1,300 delegates
3,000 sqm exhibition
17 seminars
9 panel discussions
6 brainstormings

Dr R K Gupta, President, India Water Partnership (GWP-India) and Chairman-cum-Managing Director, WAPCOS Ltd. in his welcome address stressed the need for regional cooperation to combat the effects of climate change.

Regional Day - Session 2

Theme: Water cooperation: Across sectors and borders for the efficient and sustainable use of water (in keeping with the theme of 2013 as the International Year of Water Cooperation)

Key Messages: South Asia's water woes could be significantly mitigated through improved water governance of its major transboundary rivers: the Indus, Ganges, and Brahmaputra. Effective regional cooperation is vital to manage these rivers that link the different states, and GWP's role as a neutral platform is important to help negotiate partisan interests and improve cooperation.

The programme was attended by GWP-SAS; Country Water Partnerships of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka; Central Water Commission (CWC) and National Water Development Agency (NWDA) of India; World Bank; government officials; representatives of Civil Society Organisations and Zonal Water Partnerships; and delegates from India and abroad.

It is clear that in the emerging global and regional scenario, climate change adaptation and disaster coping is interwoven and crucial to the success of initiatives in the water sector, impacting all countries in the South Asian

region as an identified global hot spot. Accordingly, the Regional Day emphasized the need to act now and re-focus and re-evaluate our water management systems to adapt to a changing climate. The Water and Climate Resilience Programme (WACREP) which was initially termed as South Asia Climate Resiliency and Water Security Programme was also launched as part of the Regional Day.

Seminar on Empowering South Asian Women

A seminar on "Different Capacities, Different Roles – Empowering South Asian Women for Climate Change Adaptation" was also jointly organized on 11 April 2013, by GWP-SAS, IWP and WAPCOS Ltd.

The keynote address was delivered by Dr R K Gupta. In the inaugural address Mr Harish Rawat, Minister of Water Resources pointed out that the focus on women in this context clearly indicates the global recognition of women, who, as highlighted in the Dublin Rio Principles play a central role in provision, management and safeguarding of water resources.

The seminar discussed how South Asian women can organize themselves to build resilience and adapt to climate change, and the critical role women could play in climate change adaptation. It was further agreed that a gender session should be made an integral part of all successive Water Weeks in India and should be used as a platform for empowerment of women in the water sector.



Inaugural address by the Chief Guest, Mr Harish Rawat, Minister of Water Resources, Government of India

Conclusion

IWW 2013 brought together a diverse set of water experts, academics, researchers and civil society members to share their experiences and formulate solutions to link water use efficiency to climate change adaptation through IWRM and regional water cooperation.

For further information on IWW 2013:

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Promoting Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in South Asia

Striving for good governance, equity, access, adequacy, quality, productivity and sustainability in the water sector

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