



PRESS RELEASE
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8th High Level Session Ministerial Forum on Water

Caribbean Ministers to Discuss Water and Energy

More than ten Government Ministers and senior officials with responsibility for water resources management in the Caribbean will meet at the 8th Annual High Level Session (HLS) Ministerial Forum on Water, to be held in The Bahamas on October 4th and 5th, 2012. At the 8th HLS, Ministers will have the unique opportunity to share experiences and ideas for addressing regional water security issues in direct relation to increasing energy costs. The Ministerial Forum is a joint initiative of the Global Water Partnership-Caribbean (GWP-C) and its partner, the Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association (CWWA). It is an unmatched regional event, being the only meeting of Water Ministers in the Caribbean to date.

The 8th HLS aims to build on the outcomes of past sessions and will focus on the theme “*The Water and Energy Nexus in Caribbean Development.*” The inherent water-energy connection cannot be overlooked; as producing energy uses water and providing freshwater uses energy with both processes needed for sustainable development. Also critical to this nexus is that water and energy provision lie at the heart of climate compatible development. This year’s Forum therefore intends to carefully examine the interlinked risks of water security and energy security, and determine holistic ways of addressing them to ensure regional growth and sustainable development.

At last year’s Forum in Guadeloupe, the Caribbean Ministers in attendance signed a Decision Paper endorsing recommendations for better water resources management in the region. Key among these recommendations were ensuring that Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) is utilised as the mechanism for effective water management; and to create an enabling policy environment to mobilise multilateral, regional and bilateral resources for the implementation of IWRM plans.

Ministers at the 8th HLS will have the opportunity to share their perspectives on national and regional issues and solutions for a water secure Caribbean. Ministers will also benefit from technical inputs and expertise from regional and international organisations at the Forum, such as the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC), the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), The University of the West Indies (UWI), the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO), the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), among other agencies.

Among the dignitaries at the 8th Forum will be Mr. Bai-Mass Taal, Executive Secretary of the Africa Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW). He is also a Former Cabinet Minister in The Gambia, first serving as Secretary of State for Fisheries, Natural Resources and the Environment and later as Secretary of State for Fisheries and Water Resources. He is the first Executive Secretary of the AMCOW which was formed in 2002 in Nigeria. The Council works to provide political leadership, policy direction and advocacy in the provision, use and management of water resources for sustainable social and economic development and maintenance of African states. The Council has also been accorded the status of a Specialised Committee for Water and Sanitation in the African Union. Mr. Bai-Mass Taal has a wealth of experience and skill in diplomacy, policy formation, partnership building, programme development and management, resource mobilisation, capacity building and institution management. At the HLS he will give a feature presentation on "*Water Resources Management at the Ministerial Level.*"

The 8th HLS will take place under the auspices of the Honourable Philip E. Brave Davis, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Works and Urban Development of The Bahamas with support from the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management (CRew) Project. The 2012 HLS will see the participation of Water Ministers and senior government officials from The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada, Jamaica and Anguilla. Representatives from various national, regional and international agencies will also participate in the Forum.

More on the *Annual High Level Session Ministerial Forum on Water* can be found at: www.gwp-caribbean.org.

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