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WATER WISE

A PRIVILEGE CALLED WATER

CINTIA TAYLOR

During MY CHILDHOOD AND UPBRINGING I NEVER understood why everyone would tell me to save as much water as I could. In school, the teacher would make us do projects with suggestions on how to save water: to close the tap when you brush your teeth, or to avoid long baths and take showers instead. But I had also learnt the whole water cycle, how it would evaporate into the sky and come down again as rain. So I questioned why was it so important to conserve water when it would always come back?

I could understand the idea behind energy conservation because my mother kept on referring to how much it cost. However, I had noticed that the water bills were not that expensive. And my mum never called my attention to the amount of water I used.

In my teenage years I started learning about climate change. The weather and the seasons were changing, and there was no way we could avoid the discussion in Geography classes. Yet, water was not really a priority. Even though we would mention the fact that it was raining less and some areas were getting drier, no one ever disclosed the big picture. Images of distended bellies in skinny bodies would invade our TV screens from Africa. Media showed children starving and running after the UN planes that dropped bags of cereal. Yes, they were hungry. But to my understanding and to that of my peers, that had to do with war, not water. The direct relation between growing crops and using water for irrigation simply did not get through to us.

I guess when you grow up by the seaside and in a country with 850 kilometres of coast-line like I did in Portugal, you tend to forget how privileged you are. There, living without water is simply inconceivable because it is so far from reality.

That is, until you experience it first hand. When I visited my uncle in Angola in the beginning of my twenties I began to understand

the need to use water wisely. In the capital city of Luanda electricity and water would fail regularly. Those who could afford it had electricity generators and spare water tanks. Once, when the water service failed my aunt restrained herself from turning on the washing machine. By doing that, she would be saving close to forty litres of the tank water, which could be used for showers and cooking. Although not a rich family, they could afford as much water as they wanted. Even though the tank contained enough water for a couple of days, periods of scarcity could last much longer. It was only then that I realised the reasons for saving water.

In Luanda temperatures are high and relative humidity is close to 100% making your skin feel sticky and dusty. Under those circumstances I was taking the shortest showers in my life. It felt wrong to do otherwise, once you understood how people lived over there. The city was built for some hundred thousand inhabitants and today it houses almost five million people. Most of them live in deplorable huts. To them water pipes and running water are luxurious benefits. Still, Luanda's population is lucky: they are able to grow fruit and vegetables in the region, and the city itself does not even experience half of the hunger that assails the rural areas of the country.

In the western world, we seem to be unaware of our privileges, and little action has been taken in order to reverse this ignorance. We were given the information, but has anyone explained why we should use it? Has anyone come forward with the true facts about water and the consequences of not using water wisely and moderately? People need reasons that justify their change of habits. And one of them is as simple as this: water is a human right – how would you feel if it would be taken from you?

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WATER WISE: EDUCATION IS THE SOLUTION

AN INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD MEGANCK

CINTIA TAYLOR



Professor Richard Meganck, director of the UNESCO Institute for Water Education in Delft, the Netherlands, has spent his life dedicated to water. A PhD graduate in Forest Hydrology, he has been working in the United Nations for thirty-three years. During this period he has travelled to 105 countries, and has lived in eight of them with his family, mainly in Asia and Latin America. Mr Meganck has therefore witnessed the different ways society relates to water management. He has published more than eighty articles and has written five books, the latest one Dictionary and Introduction to Global Environmental Governance, is a project made in conjunction with Richard E. Saunier. Mr Meganck is critical of some policies, but very hopeful about the future and defends education as the key to sustainability.

CLIMATE CHANGE, PARTICULARLY IN RELATION to water has made news headlines lately. Do you consider this a fashion of the moment, or are people finally taking the matter seriously?

RM.: I believe that until recently it was one of two things: either a scientific argument or a fashionable trend. Most notably in the last couple of years, it has become apparent it is no longer a fashionable trend and that science is correct. We are indeed impacting the planet in ways that will affect its climate. And climate and all of its ramifications have become an absolute fundamental economic development issue. Climate is linked with the poverty discussion. If you notice, most of the climate change takes place near the Equator. Those places will become drier and places in the north that can more easily afford it, will become a little warmer. However, these have the range and the money to adapt, whereas in the area around the Equator, when you add a couple of degrees the impact will be much more direct. It will affect the economy and therefore the

progress of those countries. So I think science is quite clear in establishing that climate change is having an impact, that it is caused by humans and that we have to take action because of the potential consequences. I think that the fashionable trend has passed and citizens are finally starting to get the message in large enough numbers that climate change will become a political issue, and a drive for investment and such. It takes an awfully long time to realise that.

Why has it taken all this time?

RM.: It is like steering a super tanker. To turn 180 degrees in a super tanker you have to think miles and miles ahead. It is not as easy as turning your bicycle around. It is the same with climate change, we knew it was cyclical, but there are a couple of reasons why we were not able to bring this to coalesce our opinions more rapidly.

First of all, we have an increasing amount of scientific and technological tools now. All these space explorations efforts have brought a whole new range of technical tools, including computers. The Internet has evolved through all kinds of research and development in science, a lot of it related to space programmes. And finally, we had the opportunity to not only collect, but also analyse vast amounts of data. It used to be very difficult to compare this vast amount of data

with other data from another part of the world. But we can now import all this material into computers, we can compute very complex equations, and these computers can analyse and process a lot of data that we simply did not have the means to do before.

Also space exploration has greatly increased our photographic ability to look down on the planet Earth. The telescopes and satellites allow us to look at the Earth and measure things from space that we could not do before.

Once the scientists began to understand climate change, then it was a whole different game to try to convince the politicians of what was going on. Science is obviously fundamental. It is the foundation upon which development occurs, or should occur. However, unless you bring politicians along, the money will not follow, because priorities are not compatible.

Eventually the preponderance of scientific data and information became so important that groups such as the European Union took it very seriously. Finally climate change became politically important. Then there are other catalysts of political

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“ For the benefit of the flowers we water the thorns, too (Egypt). ”

“ No one knows how much the water is worth until it runs out (Spain). ”

and economical development. Poverty became so overwhelming that it was unacceptable to sit in comfort in developing countries watching people starve on TV screens.

So it is a combination of factors – social factors, economical factors, and technological factors – that had to come together. And that takes a long time. It is the super tanker again. When you want to change public opinion (to turn that super tanker around to force different investments), it takes a lot of time and energy. Because political systems prefer the *status quo*, they do not like change. It is much more complex than just the science.

Could that long period of inactivity have held back solutions that could have prevented the current situation?

RM.: Without a doubt! In hindsight we should have invested in this area much earlier. Selling an idea that is proven is much simpler than selling an idea that still has risks associated with it. Politicians were not willing to take the risk, economists were not sure if it was going to pay off. Bankers do not like to hear the word 'default'; they like to hear the word 'payment'. There are all kinds of reasons for these problems.

Certainly, we have missed opportunities. If we could have seen the future, we could have avoided wars and millions of deaths in genocides, in Rwanda, for example, or in Darfur: we could see them murdered before our eyes, yet look how long the political machinery has taken to realise what is happening there.

It is only the rare individual who can look into the future and say he is willing to take the risk. And sometimes they are ridiculed. Leonardo Da Vinci and many great minds were laughed at during their lifetimes. It was only afterwards we realised these people were brilliant! And the same thing happens in science. Science is an incremental process of trial and error. And only by giving it time to evolve can you eventually come to the point where you can say 'let's move'.

Water sanitation is part of the Millennium Development Goals set for 2015. Yet, there are a billion people who do not have access to water, and more than two billion people who do not have access to sewage and sanitation. Taking into account the current numbers and the fact that world population is growing, how can we reach the point at which people can actually drink water without having to walk many kilometres?

RM.: There are several aspects to that question. First of all, money alone will not achieve the Millennium Development Goals. It takes citizen participation and commitment of all sectors of society. That in itself is complex. It also takes investment in education. And I say, underline that. Put it in a bigger font, because education is the key to the sustainability of things. I do not care how much you invest in water treatment plants, sewage treatment plants, water distribution facilities, dams, or irrigation systems. Unless you have people who are knowledgeable at all levels – from the technician to the minister – and unless you educate them to manage those systems for the long term, they are going to fail. Whether it is five months or five decades, those investments will fail if they are not maintained, nor operated within an ever-changing context.

That brings me to another issue. Jan Eliasson, former president of the UN General Assembly, made a comment once that struck me as one of the most important ones in the recent years. He said that if he would be king for a day and could make a single decision to improve productivity and the state of humans in the world, he would choose to remove the need of young girls and women to haul fuel, wood and water. Because we lose forty billion working days per year with this necessity. So he said, if instead you could have a standpipe a hundred metres from each home, or functional latrine system in each household, and whatever it would take to address the Millennium Development Goals and the educated people to manage it, then what would happen? Young girls could go to school and learn to read and write – literacy would go up. If they are literate they are taking responsibility for decisions that many cultures do not allow women because they are uneducated such as family planning. HIV-Aids rates will go down, community development will increase because you have women being more economically and

socially productive, and you will also have a higher education standard in the village to make more informed decisions. And this is important because this is when water becomes a cost-cutting issue. So water has touched all these sectors by that simple decision to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

But has training been provided in those areas, specifically in Asia and Africa, where water scarcity is already a serious issue?

RM.: This is increasingly so. But of course, there is a tremendous gap between the need and the reality. If you look at this institute, we have around 1,500 applications a year from academically qualified people from all over the world to undertake their post graduate education here at Master and PhD level. We can only admit two hundred students. Even though we have educated and awarded over 13,600 degrees, this institute itself is only a drop of water in the

bucket of what is needed.

We did an informal survey a couple of years ago and we found out that if Africa is going to meet the Millennium Development Goals, they need a 300% increase in the number of trained professionals dealing with water. In Asia they need an increase of 200%. In Latin America and the Caribbean, a 50% increase in the number of trained people, from technicians to the most senior professionals or academics. We need thousands of trained people. And it is not only a developing country issue. I was recently sitting with a minister of one of the Scandinavian countries. They are going to lose 50% of their trained water professionals to retirement over the next ten years. They do not even know how they are going to meet this demand in parts of the developed world.

In Europe registrations for engineering and hard sciences are going down, whereas business registrations in universities are increasing greatly. The entrepreneur mentality has taken over in many parts of the world. By studying engineering or natural sciences, you will not necessarily become a multi-millionaire, but

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“ If you wish to drown, do not torture yourself with shallow water (Bulgaria). ”

“ To give counsel to a fool is throwing water on a goose (Denmark). ”

you will have an exciting and challenging career. However, it is still difficult to attract people to those hard disciplines, as opposed to other disciplines that can offer greater monetary rewards.

In Africa, there are also institutions training water scientists, water engineers, water policy specialists, and other experts. But they are not meeting the demand, nor will they, even with the help of institutions like this in the north serving the developing world.

Although it may be a worldwide issue, this demand may face particular difficulties in areas such as the African continent, where the Food and Agriculture Organization has declared twenty-five countries in state of emergency due to climate change and water scarcity. Some of these countries even have governmental debts. So how can they provide training, when they lack even basic needs and the means to sustain the country?

RM.: The simple answer is the development banks: World Bank, Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank. The banks and the donor countries – the OECD countries – have to support this. It is in their interest. I call it enlightened self-interest. In other words, wealthy countries investing in education are going to benefit directly or indirectly.

If the economic state is improved in the poorest countries, then the people from those countries can buy manufactured goods made in Europe, in North America, or in Japan. If their living standards are improved, if they have electricity in their villages, basic healthcare, if they can eliminate polio or if they tackle the Aids problem, or there are no longer parasites in the children's bellies, people begin to think about other things. So if you can meet these basic needs in the poorest of the poor countries, and then in the next level you improve the situation of other countries a little bit, over time you are going to help yourself, by selling your products. That is a direct benefit.

Indirectly, there are numerous ways we benefit from this, and several forms of helping these countries: low interest loans from the banks, debt relief from these big banks, subsidised loans from commercial banks because they have a corporate social responsibility to fulfil, and Official Development Assistance (ODA) from the OECD countries.

Another possibility is the concept of virtual water. That is part of the solution. A tomato in sub-Saharan Africa costs more than it does in Europe. You need water to grow a tomato, but there is so much demand and so little water. If you grow the tomato in Europe and export it to Africa, then you have got transportation cost plus European labour costs. And there is a direct relationship: the most water-poor countries have the poorest health, because they do not have good diets. They lack fruit and vegetables and all that variety we need to be healthy individuals.

Water rich countries in the north can grow vegetables and fruits and I predict that in the future they will get credit from their ODA for either giving those tomatoes away, or selling them at subsidised rates to the poor countries. And that is virtual water, because if you are eating a tomato in sub-Saharan Africa, you are consuming water, because it takes a lot of water to produce a tomato or any other vegetable or fruit. It

is virtual, as it is not water from Sudan, but from some place else. And you are benefiting from that. So it is a win-win situation in that sense.

You have mentioned the need to invest in education.

RM.: Fundamental.

It is fundamental, but already in Europe less and less investment is going to this sector. How can we expect a change of policies, which will regard education as key for sustainable development and for access to water? How can we change the mindset of society?

RM.: In Europe there are some positive signs in terms of percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) that is going to the ODA. Several countries have said that they are going to go even above the 0,7% of their GDP to up 1%. That money has got to go to some place. That is a room full of money.

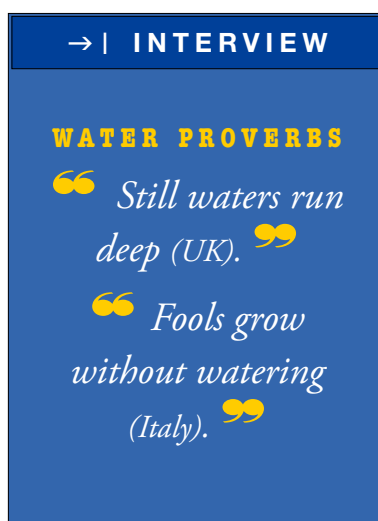
I do not know how you move a society forward without educating people. If you want to keep people ignorant, you do not allow them to learn to read and write; if you want to keep people illiterate then, either through force or just because they are not able to discern, to argue or to debate, they will all accept what is fed to them. And that is precisely the way to keep a society underdeveloped and how to keep a few in power.

On the other hand, if you empower people through education, then people begin to question, they begin to say, 'my situation is not exactly like my neighbour's situation', and they begin to debate. Education is the fundamental mover; it is the catalyst for a chain reaction of things that will affect all sectors of development. If we do not invest in education, then we are really short-circuiting the developing world. We will keep them dependent on our aid, on our policies, on our lending mechanisms, and on our payback and interest rates.

But isn't that what is happening?

RM.: Yes and no. There are some encouraging signs. Although it can be abused, micro lending is an encouraging development by which people are being empowered. But there is also an increase of ODA and loan forgiveness. The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and some donors, like the USA and the EU, have forgiven a lot of debts to the heavily indebted countries. Those signs give me at least some degree of hope.

Also, I say that one of the brightest things that has happened in the development scenario is that NGOs have assumed more power and responsibility. In fact, they can do things that governments can never do: they can touch politically sensitive issues that governments cannot really get involved with, and go where no government wants to go, where it is too dangerous. I think that although they have their detractors, organizations such as Greenpeace and other extreme groups have done some positive things for the world. And they have changed the direction of the super tanker of development in the last twenty-five years. But look at what is happening in certain parts of the world where there are attempts to restrict the work of the NGOs' communities. Why would anyone want to restrict them? Because they are trying to control larger segments of society. Once people are empowered to read and write and debate on the power, they congregate and governments will



obviously have to be more participatory. So that is a threat to a few and a benefit to the others.

My hope is that this opposition, if it is fully true, will be short lived and we will see the benefit and value of investing in education, and that the NGOs may push us in that direction. More money will have to go to education for the other parts of the machine to work. After all, if you have an automobile and it is running and you remove a spark plug, it is going to stop. All the pieces need to be there.

How can we empower the populations themselves? How can we teach illiterate people about water and what in particular can we teach them?

RM.: The NGOs, the Church groups and volunteers, they all have a vital role to help extend peoples' horizons. Think about the change that has occurred, from one generation to the next in simple things like littering. Younger children today take that much more seriously than my generation did when I was growing up. The usage of the seat belt: when I was growing up there was no such a thing as a seat belt. Today, most children will not get in the car until they fasten their seatbelt. So those are important changes in other sectors, and I think there are some educators out there for the water sector.

Most rural communities are heavily dependent on agriculture, and farmers have a very important role to play and can teach us a great deal about water, and about the relationship between the air, the soil and the water. Without those three resources we would not have civilization. And the truth of the matter is that whether you are a shoe-maker, a heart surgeon, or a farmer, your dependency on water is identical. Without it, your profession, your life, your daily situation totally changes or is even destroyed.

Also the Internet is doing a tremendous amount in educating people about the importance of water. Even more so once the hundred-dollar computer becomes available, which Bill Gates claims to be in the near future. Aid agencies will be able to purchase millions of computers for one hundred dollars each and can distribute them all over the world.

And so, there are both technological aids and human factors to some of these problems. The NGOs, the farmers, the local community leaders can move vast numbers of people in the direction of education, leading them to understand the importance of it. Then the investments will be needed. But remember that even when the poorest and least powerful country sits down with the World Bank and says 'Look, our people really need water, and education', it is their decision how and in what form these loans come.

Is there a will on the part of international organizations to promote this education?

RM.: Yes, I think there is a will. I think there is also an awful lot of waste, to be honest. There is unnecessary competition even among international organizations to grab headlines. And sometimes it is difficult to do all the years of work needed to get the platform in place from where you can really start affecting societies.

The World Health Organization and Rotary International have been labouring for thirty-five years trying to fight polio. Nobody even knew it. Nobody got any credit. Now we are finally at the point where polio is only present in a few countries, with a few cases a year. We can even dream about completely eliminating that disease from the world. Look at how many years Aids was not only forgotten but not even recognised. How Aids patients were treated as pariahs. But now we are finally getting to the point where the disease or the syndrome can be understood, it can be managed, and investment is finally starting to come. A couple of world leaders have helped, like Bill Clinton who contributed with a tremendous amount by putting Aids on the top of his foundation's agenda. There are some enlightened leaders in Europe who have taken Aids or climate change issues to the frontlines. Look at what Tony Blair has done in the EU to help bring climate change to the discussion board. There has got to be a combination to help these things move forward. I always use the

term 'the pope'. 'The pope' would be somebody who can address the international community and get leading decision-makers to listen.

And then there has to be a movement concerning education. How many years was water a forgotten issue? Finally, in the last few years it is at the top of the international agenda. For a lot of years we thought of water as a means to carry our waste away and it was something that was just there. Water is a renewable resource, but it is not an inexhaustible one. Because the cost of treating water will become so high, it will become inaccessible to people if we continue to contaminate it.

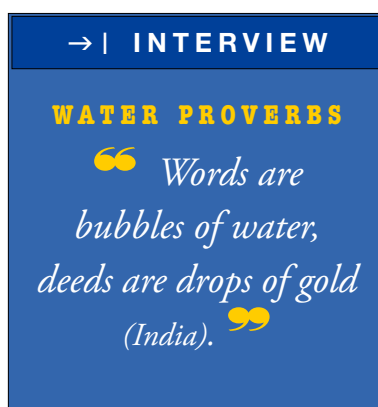
Will it become the new petroleum?

RM.: In my opinion, it already is the new petroleum, particularly if you look a few years into the future. Look at Yemen's capital city of Sanaa. Their water level sinks in metres per year. Sanaa's water system was built for fifty thousand people and now there are a million people in Sanaa. In ten to fifteen years they will run out of water. They have to do something today to have water then. Again, that's far-sighted thinking.

In the West we can spend between two hundred and six hundred litres of water daily. Simply by flushing, we can use fifty litres in one day. In some countries twenty to fifty litres of water daily is something that is difficult to attain. How have we reached this unbalanced world?

RM.: In the case of water, we thought it was always renewable; we did not really talk about the inexhaustible part of the equation. It is a circle. My dad used to tell me, because we come from a farming background, 'they don't make much soil these days'. What he was trying to say is either you treat your soil well or you will have to pay for cleaning it in the future, or you would have to sell your farm and move to another place. It is the same with water. We used to think water would always keep coming, and it would always be clean water, and little by little we became aware that we had to clean it and we invested in it. That's part of it.

Then in the OECD countries we really never made a distinction between potable water and grey waters, which are other



waters that can be used for irrigation and other things. We are finally starting to recognise that we do not have to use potable water to flush our waste away, or to irrigate the garden, or to wash an automobile, or to do certain industrial tasks. But we have always used potable water. Grey water is slightly treated water and you can use that for irrigating. In certain parts of the world they are bringing grey water into the house. The water in your toilet would be treated in a primitive fashion: all solids and some bacteria would be removed. You would use that water to flush your waste away, instead of using drinkable water. Again, our society is complex, and to provide all that infrastructure costs billions of dollars. In the developing world

think they are a little bit out of time in teaching how valuable water is and how we should treat water and re-use our water. Scientists now have the means to clean salt water, sewage water and water out of the river and make it potable water. If you give people those three choices, the first they are going to drink is the water out of the river, second is the desalinated water, and the last they are going to drink is the old sewage water. Somehow people do not mentally accept the fact that rivers are also full of bacteria and sewage. Furthermore, they do not accept the fact that we can chemically clean sewage water, which we do all the time because rivers have all kinds of 'goodies' in it. But somehow the term sewage affects them:



Nepal Water. Photo by Alex Zahnd.

we must first get people water and sanitation. They are not really thinking about its re-use, although there are some interesting experiences going on where less than pure water – because it is very expensive to treat clean water – is being used for irrigation and other things. But that is not by virtue of wanting to save, that is due to the fact that the resource itself is contaminated and they do not have money to clean it.

The West has been giving tips to people on how to save water countless times, but we seem to have failed. So how can we reach people in the West?

RM.: I don't know. Maybe advertising. I mean, the only reason why people wear Adidas and Nike tennis shoes is because we are bombarded with their ads. I think we have to make water like litter: it is bad to litter. We have to make water like the seat belt: you have to fasten your seat belt. And now we have to realise it is bad to waste water. So eventually, over time, through advertising, through public campaigns, through education in our primary and secondary schools, people will become more aware. I

'it came through my toilet, now you expect me to drink it?' Yet, I have been in a plant in North America where the former sewage water coming out is chemically and beyond any shadow of a doubt cleaner than what potable standards are. People won't drink it. So we have got to break down some mental barriers. It has got to be 'cool' to drink recycled water. And we really are going to get there, because advertisement and knowledge will tell people 'this is ridiculous, of course we can drink this'. Or eventually without any other water to drink, I guess we are going to drink this clean sewage water. We will do it to avoid death.

There is no reason why you cannot use your dishwater or your bath water to irrigate. Why don't we collect that water in a cistern under your house and pump it out into your garden? As long as you are using a degradable soap, plants do not know the difference. It is absolutely clean. It is a very simple system to skim off oils, fats and greases, and as long as you do not have heavy metals or contaminants that are very toxic, we can do that. But it takes education. □

WATER SUPPLY IN ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN

VERONIKA SZLÁVIK



Human societies have always faced the challenge of supplying sufficient quantities of adequate quality drinking water. A society's ability to make clean drinking water available to its citizens – and the means it uses to ensure the constant and reliable supply of this vital resource – provide a unique historical survey of the society's development and its equity.

Provision of clean drinking water is a prerequisite of any enduring society and in ancient times it served not only as a political resource, as it was an important element of citizen care, but it also played a socio-cultural role, showing the wealth of a certain region. In addition to its primary physiological importance, several religious elements were attached to it due to its purifying and healing qualities. Therefore ponds and springs were respected as ritual places. In the well-known Delphi sanctum, for example, the prophetess swam in the spring near the Castalia to purify herself prior to the prophecy *phythia* as part of the oracle's ritual.

Early settlements could only emerge in close vicinity of water sources, in contrast to modern systems where the situation of the habitation is basically not related to direct water sources. In ancient times access to water was a basic right of all citizens. The leader of the community, independent from the complexity of the settlement, needed to arrange the adequate quantity and quality of water accessible to all members of the society.

The Greek and Roman civilizations were primarily urban. As the natural water supplies (rivers, rainwater collected in cisterns and so forth) could not meet the demands of the whole population, development of a constant and stable water-supply became a fundamental requirement. In the 4th century BC, Peisistratos, the tyrant of Athens, constructed a public well

house on the Agora, which was the first building of its kind. Using this sort of social care, he obviously intended to favour his supporters in the public order. From this moment on we can speak of organized urban water supply, which significantly characterized the urban civilizations. We can deduce in what way

water supply belonged to the concept of the *polis* from Pausanias famous work, the *Guide to Greece*, where he wrote about Panopeus, a town situated in the underdeveloped region of Phokis: "if you can call it a city when it has no state buildings no training-ground, no theatre, and no market square, when it has no running water at a water-head and they live on the edge of a torrent in hovels like mountain huts" (X 4,1).

Under the reign of the Mediterranean's dry climate the water supply could only be assured by the inventiveness of the engineers. They even carved underground water channels into the rocks. The most typical example of this is the tunnel in Samos, where water flowed through a 1636-metre long underground channel carved into the mountain. The tunnel, which was built around 530 BC, was considered a remarkable engineering achievement in its era.

In the Roman Empire, organization and technical perfection of the water supply

developed even further, thus representing the highest standard of its age. The state was responsible for the water supply of the cities. As in bigger cities local sources of drinking water were not enough for the residents, so clean water had to be conducted from distant fountains to the wells and public baths of the cities. Differences could be observed in the access and consumption of water between the 'haves' and 'have-nots'. While wealthy families obtained water from their own well and possessed a bathroom, the poor strata were compelled to carry water from the public wells or employ a water carrier for this purpose.

The water system of the city of Rome was considered to be the most advanced system in its time. Most wells were erected during the reign of Augustus (27 BC - 14 AC), when seven hundred wells and 150 fountains were built as 'emperor's gift', in this way almost every corner had a well, which was free for Roman people. The metropolitan water supply was not limited to providing only drinking water. Personal hygiene was also a major issue in the day-to-day life of Romans. Their famous public baths played an important part in this. These baths were used both by

HISTORY

WATER PROVERBS

“Any water in the desert will do
(Saudi Arabia).”

“Water from the well and naked women throw men in their graves
(Argentina).”



Indor Aqueduct. Photo by Samuel Bengé.

Water was conducted to the city by using two- or three-storey high arched stone aqueducts that gradually declined and thereby provided for the constant flow of water to its final destination. By the 3rd century AD, almost a hundred cities had one or more aqueduct systems in the area of the *Imperium Romanum*. Their construction meant great prestige for the city. Thus the aqueducts, thoroughly enmeshed the urban areas of the Empire, became one of the most important material symbols of the Roman civilization. ■

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Roman Aqueduct, Pont du Gard, Nîmes (France), 19 BC - AD 103.

Photo by Veronika Szlávik.

rich and poor. Most Roman settlements contained a public bath of some sort. Because fire was a constant concern, Romans were encouraged to keep water stored in their apartments. Furthermore, great amounts of water were used for floor and wall heating and for watering the few public parks, as well as the privately owned urban vegetable gardens. For the water supply of the ever-growing cities (e.g. in the city of Rome in 1st century AD water consumption of the approximately one million inhabitants reached the daily high of 700.000 - 1 000 000m³), water was often conducted to the city from remote sources, for example, in Roman Cartago (Carthage) that meant it travelled 132 kilometres. Water arrived to the water towers of the city first, where it was distributed from among apartment houses, wells, water pools, and baths. However, water was only free at public well houses or public baths, on the other hand private houses, baths and gardens needed to pay for the water, although not a considerable amount.



Roman Aqueduct, Segovia, (Spain), AD 50. Photo by Damian Gorrison.

IRRIGATING STABILITY

AN OVERVIEW OF WATER AS A SOURCE OF CONFLICT

YURI J.P. SCHUTTE

Part OF THE UN'S MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDG) IS the target to halve the proportion of people without "sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation." Clearly, this target's aim is to improve the general health and life of millions of people. However, part of this equation is, of course, access to fresh water, the main ingredient for safe drinking water and basic sanitation. And that is where a fundamental complication arises. Besides nature's limitations, access to fresh water has come under threat by man-made limitations that have led to increasing tensions in numerous parts of the world. Water, and in particular access to fresh water, has become a potential source of conflict.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall the vast majority of the theory on violent conflicts and their sources has focussed on ethnicity, nationalism and other similar areas of disagreement. The end of the Cold War witnessed an increase of nationalistic fervour and demand for individual suffrage due to the void caused by the departure of the bipolar world. Yet for various reasons, oversimplified explanations of several conflicts have led to a wrongful categorization of conflicts as being inter-ethnic conflicts. In other words, what might appear as an inter-ethnic conflict could have easily started as a competition between groups over resources. This is the case in various African conflicts, such as the one in Congo for example. This does not mean, however, that no progress has been made on this topic. Since the dawn of this millennium, more attention has shifted to understanding conflicts as a competition for resources. One of these resources is water, or at least potable water.

In the Fifties, tensions rose between Egypt and Sudan. In the next two decades Israel and Syria, and India and Bangladesh saw tensions between them increase. In the second half of the Nineties, rows erupted between China, Myanmar and Thailand, as well as between Angola, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe. The disputes did not concern border agreements or conflicting

territorial claims. Instead, the conflicts, of which those between Egypt and Sudan, and between Israel and Syria truly witnessed the exchange of hostilities, were conflicts about water, in particular unilateral proposals or actions that clearly affected the state of

the river in the other state or states. In the Fifties, Egypt decided to build the Aswan High Dam on the river Nile. As a result some of the other nine states that form the basin of the Nile were affected by it. The lake resulting from the Dam's construction spread across the Egyptian-Sudanese border forcing the relocation of people in Sudan. In addition, as Sandra L. Postel and Aaron T. Wolf, directors of the Global Water Policy Project and Transboundary Freshwater Dispute Database Project respectively, point out "a war of words has raged [...] for decades" between Egypt and Ethiopia as a result of developments related to the Nile as the two states do not have a water-sharing agreement.

Conflicts or tensions over water between states are mostly the result of a natural phenomenon; rivers generally do not tend to restrict themselves to the territory of one state. For this particular reason, Hussein Solomon, former Research Manager of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes and currently Professor at the Department of Political Science at the University of Pretoria, amongst others, has argued to strengthen international laws and legal norms governing the use of water. In 2000 Solomon noted that within existing international law and practices there are various contradictions that make it difficult to solve interstate conflicts that derive from water usage by one state and the consequent effects it has on others. Additionally, the creation of stronger international authorities or at least the strengthening of existing ones has been called for.

The establishment and functioning of the Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM) is a good example of such an authority that needed strengthening. It was set up by Angola, Botswana and Namibia in 1994 to deal with the man-



Dividing Water. Photo by Sean Duggon.

agement of the Okavango River and regional issues related to it. The main function of OKACOM is to oversee “the management and development of the water resources of the Okavango River system.” However, in 1997 disagreement between the three States erupted over Namibian plans to divert the river. As Postel and Wolf note, the Commission was the designated body that could “help manage the dispute.” Yet, the dispute lingered on for several years. OKACOM was not able to project its authority in a meaningful way due to the manner in which it operated. For instance, it did not have a permanent secretariat until May 2005. Since then, several attempts have been made to make it tougher. In 2006, it was represented at the World Water Week in Stockholm with the mission to raise its profile. In addition, further international support, for example by the US Bureau of Reclamation’s Office of International Affairs and the Southern Africa Development Community, also strengthened the Commission’s capacities and capabilities. The further institutionalization of the authority, as well as the received international support, strengthened OKACOM, allowing it to project its authority over the ‘Okavango States’. The case supports the



argument that strengthening international bodies improves possibilities to resolve tensions in an international forum, thus alienating water as a source of conflict between states.

Unfortunately, interstate conflicts or tensions are recently accompanied by intrastate tensions and violent conflicts. Frequently mentioned is the case of Bolivia, where in the year 2000, civilians in the city of Cochabamba clashed with soldiers after its water system was privatized after years of mismanagement by public authorities. Subsequently, water bills demanded a larger portion of the income of Cochabamba’s residents. In the same year, farmers and police clashed in China as the first protested against the local government’s plans to divert parts of the Yellow River. The idea behind these plans was to increase water supply for urban (i.e. mainly to increase the proportion of the population with access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation) and industrial areas, clearly affecting agricultural activities in the rural parts of the River’s basin.

These two cases clearly illustrate that, particularly in parts of the developing world, including in rising economic powerhouses, governments at various levels have to make equitable decisions between improving access to fresh water (including the MDG target for fresh drinking water and basic sanitation) and raw economics. The urbanization of China resulting from its vast economic growth forces planners to face the choice of improving standards in urban (read: economic industrialized centers) or in the rural parts (improving lives of farmers and villagers). In contrast to the interstate conflicts over water mentioned above, in this case strengthening water authorities of

regimes would not be able to do the trick. As the Heads of State and Government set the above-mentioned target, it is somewhat questionable if they expected that attempts to reach such targets could lead to increasing internal stress, as depicted by the two cases discussed earlier. One could especially expect this in states characterized by weak governance and the lack of institutions in which citizens can easily voice their concerns and views during policy-making processes related to the management of the water supply.

To borrow Postel’s and Wolf’s term, ‘dehydrating conflict’ is deemed necessary to improve the possibilities of reaching the target of the MDGs related to the access of drinking water and

basic sanitation. As the strength-ening of the Okavango Commission has illustrated, muscled international organizations or institutions (or at least those with some form of enforcing authority) could make the difference. However, at the intrastate level it is a different ballgame. What seems especially necessary is that developing countries are not, for example, pushed by financial institutions to privatize activities, but that they are professionally advised during the policy-making process, and preferably

by creating possibilities in which the citizens themselves could contribute their views in a constructive manner as well. ■



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EU APPROACH TO WATER MANAGEMENT

THE EUWI INITIATIVE

ANDREJA ZULIM

World WATER DAY, 22 MARCH. EVERY YEAR WE CELEBRATE the day, every year we try to see what has been undertaken. Meetings were held, policies were written and projects were initiated. Where are we and what has been accomplished?

The statistics are worrisome; 71% of the Earth is covered by water and we still do not have enough; 1.1 billion people have no access to clean drinking water; when flushing the toilet we use approximately 47.7 litres a day; when taking a shower we use around 31.7 litres each time.

Various studies show differences between the usage of water in developed and developing countries. They question the way we use water, the reasons behind water scarcity, and its consequences. These three queries are currently the hot issues in the 'world of water'.

On 8 September 2000 the UN formed a declaration in which it calls for action in different fields promoting sustainable development, among which is the goal to establish environmental stability. More specifically, one of the goals is to "reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water".

However, there are doubts regarding how realistic and sustainable it would be to achieve this goal by 2015. Even if we achieve this goal, there will still be more than half a billion people without access to clean and potable water. The European Union (EU), a union of twenty-seven countries, decided to follow one of the UN Millennium goals and put it into practice through many projects.

EU Water policy has been changing since the Seventies and the most recent EU Water Framework Directive was introduced in 2000 as an answer to the UN Millennium goals.

The 'new' approach to water policies encompasses not only basic water policies but also approaches water problems by simultaneously integrating other policies, such as agriculture or navigation, into one framework.

The new model for managing water is based on river basins. Each basin is to be monitored and updated every six years on the criteria of minimum ecological protection and minimum chemical standards for all surface waters.

The Water Framework directive requires these criteria to be met in all EU countries by 2015 and includes a new regime for clean waters and minimum ecological and chemical standards.

Various organisations, such as European Trade Union Confederation or World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) demand access

to water as a fundamental human right. Demands are also directed at different authorities in the EU, asking for strict regulations in the agreed frameworks and the highest standards in the implementation of policies.

In order to achieve the objectives proposed by the UN concerning sustainable development in the world, the EU launched a Water Initiative (EUWI) in 2002 at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. Thus, the EU Water directive was followed by the Initiative to help not only the EU countries, but also the world in general, based on the concept of river basins.

Integrated Water Resource Management is put into practice through diverse projects addressing problems in the 'water world' in order to achieve sustainable water management and meet UN Millennium goals by 2015.

The EUWI is based on a participative multi-stakeholder approach. It includes not only those directly involved, but also other members of civil society, govern-

ment, and the private sector. After the project was launched, working groups with different focuses were formed based on regions or specific themes.

Furthermore, working groups established goals that are to be met by the EUWI:

- ☞ Reinforce political commitment towards action and innovation oriented partnerships;
- ☞ Promote improved water governance, capacity building and awareness;
- ☞ Improve efficiency and effectiveness of water management through multi-stakeholder dialogue and coordination;
- ☞ Strengthen co-operation through promoting river basin approaches in national and transboundary waters;
- ☞ Additional financial resources and mechanisms to ensure sustainable financing identified.

● | IN BRIEF

WATER PROVERBS

“ Fire, water and government know nothing of mercy (Albania). ”

“ Gone water does not mill anymore (Mexico). ”

“ Blood is thicker than water (Italy). ”

To be able to implement EUWI goals, a great amount of funding is put into different projects, many of which are research projects. The EU funds them through Framework Programmes for Research and Development. Projects usually involve partners from different regions of the world, researchers, members of government, civil society and enterprises.

In both Bolivia and India, the EU project NEGOWAT tried to support and develop discussion which would lead to a fruitful solution for the all parties. NEGOWAT is just one of the examples of the many projects within the EUWI framework, many of which are very successful. Through these projects the EU does not give instant solutions to the problem, but instead tries to



Pouring clean water in Eritrea.

Other projects are funded within the EuropeAid framework and the ACP-EU water facility, as well as through different country partners.

One of the many projects funded through EUWI was a project aimed at facilitating negotiations over land and water conflicts in Latin American and Indian peri-urban upstream catchments and combining agent-based modelling with role-playing. France, UK, the Netherlands, Brasil, Bolivia and India were the involved partners. The project was undertaken in Chennai, India and Cochabamba, Bolivia. In India, they had a serious problem with domestic water supply to the area, and in Cochabamba, water was seen as a part of a conflict. This project tried to reconcile the parties involved, sitting them together around the same table and helping them negotiate the solution.

Cochabamba lacked a sewage system until 2001, when the US decided to invest in a water and sanitation project between two parts of the city. Communities in the city were not happy with the project, having water distributors on the one hand and irrigation users on the other hand. The conflict began in 2004, involving the army on both sides.

In the case of Chennai, the area needs a lot of work on water infrastructure and services on the one hand and on the other shows imbalance between water users and water providers. Large amounts of water are brought by tanker to the city by both public and private providers and due to water market differences problems arose.

involve all stakeholders in order to find the best solution for all those concerned. The constructive engagement of stakeholders is vital for the functioning of different regions and providing better solutions to water management problems.

EUWI projects, many of which are research projects, not only present research results to academia, but by involving the whole society, also provide an image of the social, economic, environmental and political situation as well.

We may say that the EUWI and other EU initiatives are too ambitious. They expect full commitment of all parties involved, regardless of whether they are in the EU or any other part of the world. However, without serious commitment, it is not possible to find solutions to the problems that are continuously arising. By investing both human and financial resources the EU demonstrates its important role and serious commitment to improving communication and enhancing cooperation leading finally to fruitful and successful solutions. ■

S O U R C E S

United Nations Environment Programme.
 United Nations Development Goals.
 European Parliament, News on Health and Environment.
 EUWI - European Union Water Initiative.
 Directing the flow, a new approach to integrated water resource management.

LIVING WITH WATER SCARCITY

A TALE FROM AFRICA

SOPHIE SALFFNER

Sophie Salffner has spent six months in Nigeria doing linguistic fieldwork. She never lived a day without water, but learnt how to manage it in a different way. In this short article, Sophie describes her experience in the world of water scarcity, far away from home and far away from the luxurious daily showers and running tap water of her home country Germany.

I will start by explaining a little about the village I was in. It is called Ikakumo, and it is situated in Southwest Nigeria, in the Northeastern corner of Ondo State. In terms of infrastructure, there is electricity but like everywhere else in Nigeria this resource is never stable and there are power cuts every day. There is also an asphalt road leading to the village, although this road ends shortly after one passes the village. Yet mini cabs come to the village a few times every day, allowing the inhabitants a means of transportation whenever they need it.

Open drainage for waste and rainwater can be found on both sides of the road, though the village lacks an elaborated canalisation system.

It has a market, two primary schools, a secondary school, a number of churches, two mosques, and a very basic health centre and dispensary (like a little chemist) but they do not have trained medical staff. I would guess that there are around 1,000 to 1,500 people living in the village, with more people living in settlements in the bush.

There are a number of water sources. The farthest is the Osse River, which you will probably find on an average sized Nigerian map. It is about six kilometres down the road and that is where people go, for example, to wash and clean the melon seeds from their farms. Then there are various little streams and ponds where people fetch water for drinking. These are between one and three kilometres away from the village. Fetching water is a job for the women and girls, but if there are not enough girls in the house the boys also have to come along. They go with bowls, buckets and jerry cans. The size of these depends on the person carrying them. Usually it varies between half-filled five-litre buckets for the smallest five-year old to big thirty-litre bowls for the women. When they

reach the pond, everyone takes off their shoes as a matter of hygiene. The water is scooped out with little plastic bowls (metal is not allowed) and poured into the cans and buckets.

During the rainy season there is enough water to go around for everyone, but at the height of the dry season, which is around February and March, you might see queues of people waiting for the pond to refill. The water itself is slightly greenish brown, and people put something they call *alaun* in it, so that the particles settle. The water becomes clear then, but there may still be bacteria in it.

The Fulani, a nomadic people who keep cattle, also use the streams and the rivers to provide water for their cows. The animals are not allowed to use the drinking water ponds, and some local villagers do not even like it when they use the smaller streams. This is therefore a point of conflict between the nomadic Fulani and the settled villagers.

In Ikakumo villagers have various wells for fetching washing and cooking water, and there are around five functioning UNDP sponsored boreholes too. The wells are between five to seven metres deep, and everybody draws water from them with little five-litre buckets held on ropes, which are then emptied into bigger buckets and bowls and taken into the house. The boreholes are about thirty-five metres deep and have pumps. It is the children's job to stand there, pump away and fill all the buckets, and from what I could see they have a lot of fun doing that. The wells and boreholes are covered and locked. There are usually one or two respectable families in the neigh-

bourhood who are the guardians of the key. The boreholes, for example, are usually opened in the morning and then again between three and seven in the afternoon. People actually queue up around that time, and if you drive through some of the villages you will see a long and very straight line of buckets in front of the borehole, up to thirty metres long. That image was always funny to see! The borehole water is of drinkable quality and it does not need to be treated before use.

Regarding toilets, some people urinate wherever they are in the village, especially the children and the men, but also some of the women. For faeces people will either use the bushes by the side of the road or use the latrines at the back of some houses.

FEATURE-STORIES

WATER PROVERBS

“ Dirty water
cannot be washed
(Togo). ”

“ Only a fool tests
the depth of the water
with both feet
(Mali). ”

“ Every course of
water has its source
(Zulu). ”

These are basically pits with a hole where people can squat and do their business. The latrines do not use water for flushing, which is an advantage.

To take showers, people grab a fifteen-litre bucket with water and a small bowl that they use to pour the water over themselves. Then they simply scrub themselves with soap and sponges and use the rest of the water to rinse it off.

I myself would get a five-litre pot of drinking water every day or every other day to use for drinking, brushing my teeth, washing some fruit and sometimes also for cooking.

I lived in a house with a proper toilet, but since there is no running water in the pipes, it needed to be flushed with a bucket. For that I would try to use the water that was left after washing my clothes so that I could save some water. However, I flushed the toilet more often than I washed my clothes, so sometimes I needed to use well water to flush it.

I also used between one and one and a half buckets of water every day for my showers (usually two a day, one in the morning and one at night).

I needed up to three buckets of water every week for washing my clothes, and I got by with about five litres a day or even less than that for washing dishes.

In my house I had three buckets: one of ten litres, one of eighteen litres, and another of twenty-five litres. When I was on my own in the house I could manage with this quantity for about two days, but when my host father was there we obviously needed more.

When it came to fetching water and re-filling my buckets I always wanted to do that myself. Partly because I wanted the exercise, but also because I didn't want to play the princess, and because I wanted to live my life there the way the people in the village lived it. However, most of the time that was not possible. Yoruba culture requires that a guest is well cared for and that children or anybody younger than oneself will help adults or anybody senior to them. Since I was obviously older than the children and also a guest, the children would literally fight over who could get my water or go to the borehole to fetch my drinking water. That took getting used to, but I would have insulted them if I had insisted on doing it myself.

In the last months there was some construction work going on. A company drilled a one hundred metre deep borehole to supply water to the village. Then they mounted big water tanks on a stand over the borehole and were to install a solar panel to power the pump that would bring up the water into the tanks

from where it would go through pipes throughout the village. People could then draw it from taps rather than manually. The work had started well before I came to the village, the pipes and taps were done while I was there, and then the project came to a sudden standstill. By the time I left the village the project had not been finished, there still was no solar panel in sight and it was not clear what had happened. What happened to the money for the solar panel was particularly unclear. As far as I know there were no explanations from the government institutions who were responsible for the project. I expect to see what has happened when I return there in September. Neighbouring villages have solar powered pumps though and they work fine.

A few weeks before I left Nigeria I received an email from a friend who had also been doing field-work in the country and was about to go home to England. He finished off his email commenting that after having been in the field for six months he was now looking forward to a cup of real coffee, a cold beer and a hot shower. Did I agree? Most definitely when it came to the coffee. I drank coffee in Nigeria, but I never managed to get a decent cup of espresso. Regarding the beer I had to say that Nigeria has quite a few nice beers that I can really recommend. But about the hot shower? Well, having been brought up in Germany I never real-

ly minded the lukewarm temperatures of the water in Nigeria. But it sure is a treat not to have to pour the water over myself, but to just stand under my shower with the water raining down on me. And it sure doesn't hurt to be able to just open the tap for my water either...



The picture above was taken near Ikakumo, Ondo State, Nigeria, at the end of January 2007. It shows one of the language consultants (Matthis, the man wearing green and yellow trousers and shirt) with students of linguistics from the University of Ibadan, who came for a short field trip to my village. After their work the language consultants took them for a walk around the village and the farms, where they collected more vocabulary on names of plants, crops and farming equipment. We ended up by the water pond that I mentioned in the story and you can see a little boy fetching water and all the university students standing around the pond looking at what is going on. Since most of them are city kids, their clothes (as you can see) and their life style is very different from that of the village. In fact, to many of them fetching water from the pond is just as alien to them as it is to me!

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

ANDREA ZULIM



BORN 31 YEARS AGO IN THE CROATIAN town of Varaždin, Andreja Zulim is passionate about life and people. She refers to her hometown in a tender way, describing how flowers and music can be found on every street of the most baroque place in Croatia. “They call it small Vienna”, she says with a nostalgic smile on her face.

Andreja landed in the Netherlands in February. Although she was happy with her professional life, she left her ‘paradise’ to join her Dutch partner and start a life together in Holland.

It was soon after her arrival that she started volunteering with Spanda. Her tasks include fund-raising, research and organisation of events, and collaborating in the production of the newsletter. She decided to join Spanda as she shares some of the organization’s ideals in linguistic and cultural diversity.

This belief is evident in the fact that Andreja, apart from her native Croatian, speaks English and Russian fluently, and has a basic command of German. Added to this soon will be Dutch, which she is currently studying intensively.

Languages were at the core of her academic programme. In 2001, Andreja graduated from the University of Zadar in English and Russian Language and Literature. Almost immediately, her will to experience different cultures and meet new people took her to the United States, where under the Work Experience USA Program she took jobs in New Jersey and New York. She was in the Big Apple during the 9/11 attacks. She was working in a Department store across from the Twin Towers. When the towers collapsed, the store was turned to rubble as well. It was her day off and when Andreja turned on the TV that morning she first thought it was a film. She could not

believe it. Together with her roommate, she drove to the city to offer some help and to donate blood. What she witnessed remains beyond description: “That was my life. I loved having coffee there, watching the concerts”. Two weeks later Andreja returned to Croatia.

Within ten days of her return she found a job as a teacher in her old high school. Accustomed to the New York City rhythm, she was reluctant in the beginning, but teaching turned out to be one of the best experiences in her life.

Two years later, Andreja packed her bags once more and left on a scholarship to Brighton, where she completed a Masters in Contemporary European Studies at the University of Sussex. In the UK she felt at home and fully integrated. However, the governmental scholarship demanded that after finishing her degree she return to Croatia and work as a civil servant.

Thus, in 2004 she started working for the Ministry of Science and Education. She became the national contact person for Human Resources and Mobility and for Food Quality and Safety, within the EU Framework Programme for Research and Development. Andreja was also advising on education and training issues, one of them being the preparation to enter the EU Integrated Life-long Learning Programme.

In 2006, she left her life as a civil servant behind, and entered the ranks of the Ministry of Finance to work on an EU funded project, where she was setting up a framework to manage grant contracts for future structural funds. Andreja worked there until she moved to the Netherlands.

Nevertheless, she has not forgotten where she comes from. It is her dream to help to promote Croatia by opening a shop with products from the country, with particular attention given to wine – another passion of hers. Maybe she will combine it with one of her favourite hobbies: baking cakes.

Currently, Andreja’s professional future is a vast bowl of options. She hopes to start a PhD soon. Regardless of the uncertainties that her life holds, she knows that she will certainly work with people, as they are the subject of Andreja’s affection and her love for life.

VOLUNTEERS

WATER PROVERBS

“ Don’t throw away the old bucket until you know whether the new one holds water (Sweden). ”

“ Water flows where you direct it (Abyssinia). ”

NEWSROOM

SPANDA

SPANDA'S NEW BOARD MEMBER



We ARE MOST HONOURED AND DELIGHTED TO WELCOME Dr Hendrikus Johannes Witteveen on the Board of Trustees in his function as Treasurer of the Spanda Foundation.

Mr H.J. Witteveen was born on 12 June 1921 in Zeist, the Netherlands and was educated at the Netherlands School of Economics in Rotterdam receiving his doctoral degree in 1947.

From 1948 to 1963 Mr Witteveen was professor of Business Cycles and Economics at the Netherlands School of Economics in Rotterdam, and from 1951 Rector Magnificus of the same institution. From 1963 to 1965 he served as Minister of Finance to the Dutch Government, a function he returned to again from 1967 to 1971 after spending two years as Member of the Dutch Parliament.

Mr Witteveen has been Managing Director (1973-1979) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Washington, DC, USA, and Chairman (1978-1983) of the Group of Thirty (Consultative Group of International Economic and Monetary Affairs - G30), Washington, DC, USA.

He has served as director or advisor on international economic and monetary affairs to various international and Dutch companies. He was Advisor to the Managing Board of ABN-AMRO Bank, Member of the European Advisory Council of General Motors, Member of the International Council of Morgan Guaranty, Director of the Royal Dutch Petroleum Company, Chairman of the Robeco Group and Chairman of the ING Group among others.

He is a life-long member of the International Sufi Movement and is now its Vice-President.

Among his publications: *Developing a new monetary system: a long term view*, (Washington DC: The 1983 Per Jacobsson Lecture); *Economic Globalisation from a broader, long-term perspective: some questions and concerns*, *The Economist*, 146, 4 (1998);

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JUBILO

A COMPARATIVE APPROACH

TO JEWISH, CHRISTIAN AND ISLAMIC REALITIES

TEA FOR PEACE

The *Tea for Peace* initiative under the *Jubilo* project is moving swiftly forward, and getting ready for its launch in September 2007 at the Het Nutshuis, in The Hague. Date and guest speakers are to be announced on our website soon. We are happy to welcome everybody to this event.



UN

UN OFFICIAL HOPEFUL ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

The Executive Secretary of the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Yvo de Boer, expressed his confidence in the motivation of politicians and the private sector to tackle climate change to reporters at UN Headquarters. Mr de Boer declared that he is getting "very encouraging signals of the desire of countries to move things forward".

The perception of the Executive Secretary came after the recent publication of three reports on climate change by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and followed the meeting of parties to the Convention held in Germany, with the purpose of preparing Bali's world conference. The reports produced by IPCC gave proof to the human cause of climate change and its impact, but also mentioned the already existing technology which can help solve the matter.

The Bali conference will serve as the beginning of negotiations for the post-Kyoto period, this is, to set a new plan of action to be lead by the countries after 2012.

Mr de Boer pointed out examples such as Brazil which is committed to take the matter beyond discussion and negotiate on a long-term treaty for 2012 and beyond. China and India were

also mentioned as practitioners of good national policies with the goal of reducing greenhouse emissions.

The Kyoto Protocol was signed by 173 states and contains legally binding targets for the reduction of gas emissions until 2012.



NEW HIV/AIDS ASIA-PACIFIC MEDIA COVERAGE INITIATIVE

More than 130 representatives of Asia-Pacific media organizations agreed on a new initiative which aims to cover Aids in the region more often and with an improved coverage of the disease. At the end of May the action was launched at a United Nations meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Advocate Dali Mpfu, CEO of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and Chair of the Global Media AIDS Initiative, argued that: "There is no question that the media is one of the most powerful tools for changing the epidemic and it is severely under-utilised". At the end of the meeting, participants committed to give more attention, resources and to come together in a collaboration aimed at providing media response to the epidemic in the region.



SPORTS BRING PEACE

Djibril Diallo, Director of the UN New York Office of Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP), said that sports can be a means of guaranteeing peace and development. "From international events to grassroots, sport brings people together in a way that can cross boundaries and break down barriers, making the playing field a simple and apolitical site," he explained. Mr Diallo has announced initiatives in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, which will serve as pilot-projects for the utilisation of sports for peace and development. Simultaneously, UNOSDP is working together with the African Union and the South African Organizing Committee for the 2010 FIFA World Cup championship in order



to understand how can they boost education, health, gender equality and promote peace through football.

In addition, African ministers of Sports are gathering in Ethiopia to discuss ways of using sports to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.



NEW VERSIONS FOR FOOD FORCE VIDEO GAME

The UN's humanitarian video game for children *Food Force* launched new linguistic versions in May. In Sweden, representatives of the project designed by the UN's World Food Program presented the Finnish, Norwegian and German versions of the game. These were added to the Japanese, Chinese, French, Italian, Polish, Hungarian and English versions. The game was developed in 2005 and targeted children aged between eight and thirteen. Since its launch, it has been downloaded over five million times. It consists of a realistic scenario in humanitarian aid missions. Players have to pilot helicopters, provide villagers with air-dropping food, or purchase food supplies with a tight budget.

John Powell, WFP Deputy Executive Director for Fundraising and Communications, said that: "Children have very few opportunities to understand the realities of a hungry world. By engaging children in a fun and creative way, *Food Force* will help children become better global citizens – now and in the future".

New versions of the *Food Force* are being prepared in Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic and Swedish. The video game can be downloaded for free at www.food-force.com.



ETHICAL NGOS: FORCES FOR PEACE

NGO leaders representing a broad spectrum of the global nonprofit community and prominent international and national leaders from the governmental, academic, and

for-profit sectors will converge in Canada's largest and most culturally diverse city of Toronto to participate in the 2007 World Congress of NGOs.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have surfaced as major players worldwide in addressing the serious challenges confronting humanity. The numbers and influence of NGOs worldwide has been increasing so dramatically in recent decades, as well as broadening their focus, that we are in the midst of what is called the "NGO revolution." NGOs are now impacting policies and guiding agendas that once were nearly exclusively the arena of governments and corporations, and they are bringing unprecedented vitality and abilities to critical areas related to service and world peace.

From November 8 to November 11, 2007, representatives of NGOs from North America, South America, Europe, Africa, Middle East, Asia, and numerous island nations will gather in Toronto, Canada for the World Congress of NGOs. They will gather to examine issues of fundamental import for the non-governmental community, including how to be more effective in their missions and how to bring about a world of peace and co-prosperity. Joining them will be prominent international and national leaders from the intergovernmental, governmental, and for-profit sectors who share an interest in helping NGOs accomplish their vital tasks.



NGO NETWORK MAGAZINE
FOR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Thursday, March 22 was the 5th Year Anniversary Celebration and Fundraising Gala of the NGO Network, a general interest magazine for the nonprofit sector in sub-Saharan Africa. The theme of the event was the Role of Human Capital in National Development.

The first of its kind in the region, the magazine is published and distributed free-of-charge among NGOs, development partners, inter-governmental agencies and other stakeholders in the civil society. In the last five years, funding for the production and distribution of this magazine was generated locally without external support.

Published quarterly since February 2002 by NGO Guide 2000, a Kaduna-based NGO-Service Consortium and organizers of the Annual All Nigeria NGO Summit, the NGO Network's primary goal is to bring into the limelight the under-reported activities of nonprofit organizations as a means to further enhance their effectiveness towards national development. Registered as a public medium, the magazine has volunteer staff and correspondents in ten African nations as well as contributors from Europe and America.

The event in Abuja featured for the first time an Independent Sector Promoters' Award (ISPA) to honour and recognize renowned activists in the third sector across Africa, for their contributions to the growth and development of the region.



2007 EAST ASIA NGO FORUM

The 4th East Asia NGO Forum will be held in Taipei, Taiwan, Province of China, in June 2007. The main theme of the forum will be «From Assistance to Development: Critical Reflections on International Aid in Asia», which will be broken down into five topics:

- Landmine survivors' immediate rescue and long-term assistance;
- Emergent medical relief: Resource management and reflections on critical decision-making;
- NGO vs. GO: Relationship building, challenges and coping strategies;
- Program monitoring and evaluation;
- Ethics in international assistance: Reflections, challenges and strategies.

For further details on the event, please visit:
www.wretch.cc/blog/toaid.



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