

“Water for Life”: Expectations for the International Decade for Action 2005 – 2015

A World Water Day roundtable

22 March 2005, 10h00 – 12.30

International Environment House, Room 3

Growing demand for water by the world’s industries, farms and households is depleting freshwater ecosystems at an alarming rate. As a result, by the year 2025 some 1.8 billion people will be living in areas without sufficient water for human needs. The UN General Assembly has recognized this growing crisis by proclaiming an International Decade for Action on water – which starts today. This roundtable will explore how we can better promote the sustainable use and conservation of freshwater resources during this International Decade.

Provisional programme

9.30 Coffee

10.00 Welcome by Gourisankar Ghosh, Director of the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC)

10.10 Presentations by the Panelists:

- **People, water and wetlands**, by the moderator [Peter Bridgewater](#), Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
- **Wetlands and poverty alleviation**, by [Kemi Awoyinka](#), Wetlands International
- **Integrated Water Resources Management: Nature for Water: the new dimension**, by [Sibylle Vermont](#), Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscap
- **Healthy water, healthy ecosystems, healthy people**, by [Pierre Quiblier](#), World Health Organization

11.15 Discussion with panelists and participants

12.15 Wrap-up by the moderator

12.30 Close

Panelists

Peter Bridgewater has served as Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance since 2003. He previously worked with UNESCO as Director of the Division of Ecological Sciences and as Secretary of the Man and the Biosphere Programme. His earlier career included appointments as Chief Scientist of the UK Nature Conservancy Council and Chief Executive of the Australian Nature Conservation Agency. Mr. Bridgewater has written or edited more than 170 publications on nature conservation, vegetation science and biodiversity issues.

Kemi Awoyinka is the Wetlands and Poverty Alleviation Officer of Wetlands International. She also acts as Coordinator of the Wetlands and Livelihoods Working Group of Wetlands International. This Working Group includes representatives from development assistance and environmental organisations around the world. By creating such partnerships between the poverty reduction and conservation communities, the Working Group aims to strengthen the cross fertilization of ideas and perspectives on wetland, water and poverty issues and highlight priorities for strategic interventions.

Sibylle Vermont is a biologist (botany and zoology) with an MSc on savanna ecology and a specialization in environmental policy. Since 1991, with the Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape/Ministry for the Environment. Dealt with European integration and projects in Eastern and Central Europe (biodiversity and water), environment and health, environment under the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations (UNECE). Since 1999, focusing on water, on issues like civil liability for accidental water pollution and now mainly on integrated water resources management. Chair of the IWRM group of the UNECE Convention of the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention).

REGISTRATION FORM

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You are cordially invited to participate in this roundtable. Owing to the limited number of seats available, please indicate your participation in advance by completing this form and returning it by **18 March 2005** to Ms. Fatma Gordon at the address below by fax, post or email (Fatma.gordon@unep.ch).

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____