

waterpoints

World Bank Praises Developing Country Innovations

According to a new World Bank report, an increasing number of developing countries are reducing pollution by replacing regulations with local 'people power'.

In Indonesia's PROPER program local government officials publicized the performance of water polluters using colour codes to demonstrate which companies were attempting to control pollution and which ones weren't. An awards ceremony was then held to recognise the top five companies who were cleaner than required.

The World Bank reports that there was a 40% drop in water pollution in 18 months as a result of the program. Similar initiatives are now being implemented in the Philippines, China, India and Mexico.

UNICEF Appeals For Aid

UNICEF launched its annual appeal for children and women in countries in crisis. According to UNICEF, while highly publicized crisis spots have received substantial funding in the last year, it has left the longer-term disadvantaged countries wanting.

UNICEF is currently requesting \$US 229.5 million from donor nations to deliver vital resources to women and children in a number of countries.

Amongst UNICEF's priorities for the appeal are 'campaigns to prevent epidemics of water-borne diseases such as diarrhoea and cholera'.

Managing Water for African Cities

In an effort to reduce the threat of water scarcity, the UNCHS and UNEP have established a regional programme for Managing Water for African Cities. It is predicted that in the next twenty-five years one in two people in Africa will live under 'water stress' and that twelve more African countries will join the thirteen suffering from water scarcity.

Through the programme officials from Abidjan, Accra, Addis, Ababa,

Daka, Johannesburg, Lusaka and Nairobi made a study visit to South Africa and Namibia. The visit allowed water management officials to study innovative approaches to improve the efficiency of water use.

Latest News of Bangladesh Arsenic Crisis

It is estimated that more than 20 million of Bangladesh's 125 million population is drinking contaminated water. Naturally-occurring arsenic has been discovered in high concentrations in tubewells, the main source of potable water. Yet the extent of the problem still remains unknown due to problems with testing the wells.

In an attempt to alleviate the situation, the Bangladesh Department of Public Health and UNICEF have joined forces and launched a National Communication campaign on arsenic mitigation on 20 December 1999. With UNICEF's support the DPHE are increasing their capacity to undertake tests for arsenic in the city's tubewells.

Water Scarcity

In 2025 water scarcity will be one of the world's leading concerns according to a report from the World Commission on Water for the 21st Century in a report from December 1999. Total global water demand will increase by 40% from 1995 levels and many countries will face serious water problems — including Algeria, Belgium, Peru, Egypt and South Africa. It is also suggested that water shortages threaten to reduce the global food supply by 10%.

Drought fears in the 21st Century

Researchers from PEARL (Queen's University Paleocological Environmental Assessment & Research Laboratory) suggest that the world's supply of fresh water could plummet in the future.

Research conducted on Lake Naivasha in Kenya, shows that large changes in climatic conditions have occurred across the globe over the last millennium and could reoccur in the future, independent of human-induced global warming.

The study shows that extreme changes in water availability occurred many times in East Africa producing major droughts and social unrest.

UNESCO: WORLD DAY FOR WATER

UNESCO is currently preparing events and activities for this year's World Day for Water on 22 March. This year's theme is Water for the Twenty-first Century and aims to focus on the challenges to be faced by humanity in water resources development and management in the coming century.

UNESCO are hoping to encourage as many associations and groups as possible to focus on water issues around the world. The aim is to raise public awareness of specific water issues such as: the participation of women and youth in water management, the increasing scarcity of water resources and the future possibilities of a water crisis.

Organizations and agencies worldwide are being encouraged to celebrate World Day for Water with a special event or action such as: an Open Day for water institutions in both public and private sectors, coverage in the media of water resources, school competitions, information distributions and water saving campaigns.

UNESCO, through the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) has prepared a web site at www.unesco.org/science/waterday2000 and invites you to link related web sites in order to inform as many people as possible. Contact UNESCO <JMFuenta@UNESCO.org> for more suggestions or information on how you and your organisation can celebrate this day.