



Press Release

Four billion people impacted by Water Scarcity:

IWA and AWP invite leaders to summit on water scarcity and drought

12 May 2016, Melbourne – The International Water Association (IWA) and the Australian Water Partnership will convene government and business leaders, NGOs, scientists and international organisations to a global summit on water scarcity and drought. The summit will take place on October 10 in Brisbane, (Queensland, Australia) in connection with the World Water Congress and Exhibition.

A recent report pegs the number of people affected by water scarcity at four billion as opposed to two billion in earlier reports. The World Economic Forum ranks the ‘water crises’ as the top risk facing societies and business over the next decade. Today tens-of-millions of people are impacted daily by severe water scarcity and drought in Africa, Asia and Latin America, a situation that will only intensify in coming years.

“Cities, industries, agriculture and the environment are seriously impaired by water scarcity. Cities around the world have literally run out of water this year, resulting in major havoc and costs for citizens, business and government”, says Dr. Ger Bergkamp, Executive Director of the International Water Association. “The world needs decisive action, a modern day Marshall Plan for global water scarcity. We need all stakeholders to agree a clear agenda and begin to manage water more wisely,” Dr. Bergkamp added.

“Drought management is not just about new infrastructure and technologies, but also about demand management and effective water allocation policy. It is about building systems that are broadly resilient to drought and scarcity, managing demand as well as improving supply,” says Gary Jones, Chief Executive, Australian Water Partnership.

The Summit will focus on:

- Creating climate preparedness and resilience
- Establishing portfolios of water supply and demand management
- Strengthening mechanisms to measure and exchange on water scarcity and drought
- Mobilising public and private investments in water management

The IWA will seek governmental level participation from the most impacted countries: Australia, Botswana, Brazil, China, India, Iran, Japan, Jordan, Korea, Mexico, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Africa and the USA. The private sector will be represented by water technology leaders and companies affected by water scarcity and droughts. The IWA expects broad participation from NGO, research institutes, development partners and urban areas heavily affected by water scarcity.

“While water scarcity and drought will increasingly pose major challenges to society, managing these situations can be turned into a major opportunity for development, business and communities. This requires leadership and a pro-active approach that engages a wide range of stakeholders throughout society,” says Dr. Bergkamp. “The Brisbane Summit will be the first step in a planned multi-year and multi-stakeholder agenda-setting programme.”

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About the International Water Association

The International Water Association is a unique, global knowledge hub for water professionals and anyone concerned about the future of water. It has sixty-year heritage connecting water professionals worldwide to find solutions to the world’s water challenges as part of a broader sustainability agenda. As a non-profit organisation with members in more than 130 countries, the IWA connects scientists to practitioners and communities so that pioneering research delivers sustainable solutions. It further fosters technological innovation and drives best practice through international frameworks and standards.

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