

## Water governance is key to Africa's water struggle

"Science should advance understanding of water interdependencies, global changes and alleviate the stresses in water-related systems," according to Salvatore D'Angelo, keynote speaker at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) workshop held in Pretoria in November. "Water systems are under severe stress and call for appropriate governance to take water sciences to society and policy makers," he said.

D'Angelo was one of 30 presenters at the four-day event that focused on the strategic role of water in alleviating the human tragedy associated with HIV/Aids and poverty in southern Africa. Some 80 scientists, government officials and consultants from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states attended the workshop co-hosted by the CSIR's water research group. The organisation's water research is focused on ensuring an optimal supply of quality water to users, while ensuring the integrity of the resource base.

D'Angelo and co-presenter Francesco Rizzo represented the UNESCO International Hydrological Programme (IHP) and the Italian government's Water Programme for Africa (WPA). The latter is a UNESCO initiative. The IHP is the only global intergovernmental scientific programme on water resources of the UN system.

"The IHP Phase VII first biennium - from 2008 to 2009 - will be focusing on climate change, transboundary issues (international waters, surface and groundwater), extreme events, water for peace, and water education and training for sustainable development," D'Angelo explained. The Phase V11 will last until 2013. "The IHP was conceived as an evolving programme, and is thus ready to adapt to society's needs and transformations. The programme is implemented in phases of six years in order to remain prompt in identifying new, emerging problems, alerting decision makers, raising public awareness and providing the necessary resources to respond with action," he said.

In the closing presentation, Connie September, chairperson of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Water Affairs and Forestry, said the lack of access to clean water is a violation of the human rights of a person living with HIV or Aids. "In the design of water systems, the needs of these patients and their caretakers have to be considered," she said.

Dr Jeanette Rascher, CSIR research group leader for water resource governance systems and coordinator of the event, believes that the workshop achieved its objectives to engage directly with experts in their fields in order to contribute to finding sustainable solutions, and strengthen network ties between different sectors. "It is imperative that we build capacity in SADC on these important issues and to manage these services effectively in the long term."

The CSIR water resource governance systems research group focuses on knowledge generation in the areas of policy, governance, water resource planning and management approaches and socio-ecological systems



The choir of the Pretoria German School nursery delighted workshop delegates with their singing talents. Welcoming the toddlers are, at the back, Dr Pat Manders, acting Executive Director of CSIR Natural Resources and the Environment, Salvatore D'Angelo of UNESCO, Connie September, chairperson of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Water Affairs and Forestry, and Francesco Rizzo from UNESCO

(including human health). The objective is to ensure the equitable, efficient and sustainable deployment of water resources to support socio-economic development.

Other collaborators in the workshop included the African Water Issues Research Unit of the University of Pretoria (UP) and the UNESCO Chair at the University of the Western Cape. The workshop was supported financially by the Italian Ministry for Environment, Land and Sea.

The workshop ended with a candle lighting ceremony in memory of the victims of Aids.

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