

**Report of the International Conference on Integrated Water Resources
Management
(February 28, 2005, New York)**

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It is a great honor for me to deliver a speech here as Minister of State for Water, Ministry of Water, Land and Environment of Uganda.

For three days from December 6 to 8, the International Conference on Integrated Water Resources Management was held, organized by the Japan Water Forum, where I served as a Vice Chair. At the conference, 217 experts in various water-related fields from 48 countries across the world came together to discuss the water issues, and the meeting yielded significant achievements.

A major objective of the meeting was to reaffirm that it was crucial to develop, manage, and preserve invaluable water resources properly to ensure both socio-economic prosperity and rich natural environment. In addition, we were required to encourage every government to ascertain that all countries prepare an Integrated Water Resources Management Plan by 2005, adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002. In the plenary session, pioneering approaches to the IWRM and concrete actions around the world were presented and discussed. The outcome of the meeting was compiled as "Recommendation on Integrated Water Resources Management and Water Efficiency Plans."

As for this recommendation, it is proposed that all countries should develop integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans (IWRM Plans) as committed in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The plans to be completed by each country by 2005 should be focused on the ways in which the country will change water development and management, and as well as the first-step actions that the country will take towards their version of IWRM.

It also recommends that emphasis should be put on strategic planning, financial mobilization and capacity building, and ensuring the participation of various stakeholders in the preparation of the plans. The implementation status should be monitored for the presentation at the 4th World Water Forum in March 2006.

Another achievement of the International Conference on IWRM was an Urgent Appeal

submitted from the session on risk management and supported by the UN Secretary General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation. The gist of this appeal is to halve the number of human loss of life as a result of water related disasters by 2015, and to add this to the MDGs. This appeal was intensively discussed during the World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Kobe from January 18 to 22, 2005.

In the Millennium Development Goals on water and sanitation, two major goals concerning water shortage and a sanitary water environment were defined. One was to halve the number of people who have no access to safe water, and the other was to halve the number of people who have no access to improved sanitation. But to our regret, no goals were set concerning the issue of too much water, such as floods or tsunami.

It is very clear that water-related disasters hamper the development of developing countries. The massive tsunami that devastated the coastal areas of many Asian countries is a case in point. If the sea level rises due to global warming, the risk of floods will further increase. Though we did not predict the latest tsunami, it shows typical features of water-related disasters. Most water-related disasters can be predicted. Floods follow heavy rains, and earthquakes trigger tsunamis. Water related disasters are relatively easier to predict compared with earthquakes or volcanic eruptions. If effective forecasting and warning systems exist, substantial number of lives can be saved, to say the least. This is the essence of the urgent appeal.

To conclude my speech as Minister of State for Water, Ministry of Water, Land and Environment of Uganda, I would like to propose that the contents and the next steps in IWRM planning as adopted in "Recommendation on Integrated Water Resources Management and Water Efficiency Plans," as well as the proposed target in the Urgent Appeal "to halve, by 2015, the number of water-related human loss of life" should be concluded as policy decisions on practical measures and options to expedite implementation at CSD-13 in April 2005.

Thank you.