

Summary of Discussions
2nd Informal Advisory Meeting for the Ministerial Conference
30 and 31 January 2003
Tokyo, Japan

On 30 and 31 January 2003, representatives from 95 countries, and 21 intergovernmental and other organizations participated in the 2nd Informal Advisory Meeting for the Ministerial Conference to be held on the occasion of the 3rd World Water Forum in Japan. There were about 300 total participants including members of the Japanese government. Mr. Mutsuyoshi Nishimura, Ambassador in Charge of Global Environment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Mr. Masanori Kobayashi, Director General of the Water Resources Department, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport from the Government of Japan jointly chaired the meeting.

Japan presented an overview of the Ministerial Conference. The issues discussed were: (1) Outline of the Ministerial Conference, including the drafting process of the Ministerial Declaration and the preparatory process of the Portfolio of Water Actions (PWA), (2) Interaction with the 3rd World Water Forum, including the World Water Actions Report, the Thematic and Regional Statements of the Forum and the Dialogue between Forum Participants and Ministers, and (3) Possible Elements of the Ministerial Declaration.

Participants emphasized that the Ministerial Conference should build on achievements made so far such as the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg and the previous World Water Forums. Participants recognized the need to ensure adequate interaction between outputs from the Forum and the Ministerial Conference.

As for the PWA, it was pointed out that criteria for action plans to be included in the PWA should be made clear. Japan replied that those priority actions which were to follow-up the WSSD and were to encourage ownership and partnership should be chosen by countries and organizations by themselves.

As for Possible Elements of the Ministerial Declaration, participants supported Japan's proposal to take an action-oriented approach and emphasized the importance of sending out a brief but strong political message. Participants' recognition that water is an engine for economic growth and poverty reduction was shared by a number of participants. The importance of the three crosscutting issues of governance, capacity building, and financing was also stressed by many, as well as that of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) to effectively deal with various water issues. A number of participants emphasized the importance of monitoring, and advised the reference to the Forum statements and recommendations. Particular issues discussed by several participants included the role of hydropower for economic development, transboundary water issues, and the importance of irrigation and rural development for food security and poverty alleviation. Other points raised included climate change, severe drought, water storage, water transport, household approach as against community approach, slum problems, hygiene practices, multi-purpose infrastructure, and relationship with NGOs. Many suggested that the drafting process of the Ministerial Declaration could be moved up. Japan took note of these suggestions.

The Senior Officials' Meeting will be held from 19-20 March 2003, preceding the Ministerial Conference to be held from 22-23 March 2003 in Kyoto. The Government of Japan will distribute further information on this meeting as well as processes leading up to the Ministerial conference through the diplomatic channel and other means.