

*Press Release*

## **UN-Water new office bearers take on duties as water moves to centre of sustainable development challenge**

**Zaragoza/Geneva/Nairobi 8 February 2012 (UN-Water – WMO – UN-Habitat) - World Meteorological Organization Secretary-General Mr Michel Jarraud and Mr Albert Diphoorn, UN-Habitat Urban Basic Services Branch Coordinator, take up positions as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively of UN-Water for a customary two-year term. Both were elected by consensus during UN-Water’s 15th meeting in Stockholm in August 2011.**

Challenges including population growth, urbanization, food security and environmental degradation mean that the United Nations (UN) system – now more than ever before – needs to elevate the role of water on the international agenda and step up efforts to preserve and manage this precious natural resource which is so fundamental to life on our planet.

The impacts of climate change on the distribution and availability of water adds a new dimension to the challenges. The humanitarian disaster in the Horn of Africa and last year’s flooding in Thailand are just the latest example of the human and economic impact of weather extremes such as drought and floods.

“Adaptation to climate change will require better water management and more sharing of information and data about water resources”, says Mr Jarraud. “We need to deal with these challenges especially in a context of rapid and unsustainable urbanization and plan water for today’s but also future generations”, Mr Diphoorn adds.

UN-Water indeed coordinates and strengthens the work of 29 United Nations agencies and bodies on all issues relating to freshwater. It was established in 2003 in order to tackle global water-related challenges and maximize opportunities in a coordinated and integrated manner across the UN family and has done much to promote the UN Delivering as One vision.

Mr Jarraud and Mr Diphoorn take office in a year in which the Rio+20 Summit will focus the spotlight on sustainable development and poverty reduction – including improving water resources management and the urgent need to accelerate progress towards the drinking-water and sanitation targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The decision to upgrade the rotating Chair to Executive Head level is designed to further elevate the water agenda within the UN and to strengthen the position of the UN family in the global policy arena.

Outgoing UN-Water Chair, Dr Zafar Adeel, United Nations University, and Mr Thomas Chiramba, Interim Vice-Chair replacing Mr Tim Kasten, UNEP, handed over their duties at UN-Water’s 16th meeting in Zaragoza, Spain on 8 February 2012.

For more information, please contact:

Stefanie Neno, Communications Manager, UN-Water  
Tel: (+39) 06 57054079  
e-mail: stefanie.neno@fao.org  
UN-Water website : [www.unwater.org](http://www.unwater.org)

Clare Nullis, Press Officer, WMO

[www.unwater.org](http://www.unwater.org)



Tel: (+41 22) 730 8478;  
e-mail: [cpa@wmo.int](mailto:cpa@wmo.int)  
WMO website: [www.wmo.int](http://www.wmo.int)

Ana Moreno, UN-Habitat Spokesperson and Chief of Advocacy, Outreach and Communications  
Tel : (+254) 702 116 120  
Email : [ana.moreno@unhabitat.org](mailto:ana.moreno@unhabitat.org)  
UN-Habitat website: [www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org)