



Side event

2009 Africa Water Week

November 12, 2009

11:30 to 13:00



Getting action on Africa's water crisis

The hard questions...and how climate change impacts the answers

An interactive session between the media, the experts...and the audience

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Location: TBD

Conveners

- United Nations Office to Support the Water Decade (UNO-IDfA)/United Nations -Water Decade Programme on Advocacy and Communication (UNW-DPAC)
- Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)

The process

- Presentation of the event and opening thoughts: Michael McWilliams, Communications Director, SIWI
- Reflections on how best to communicate the urgency to act in the context of climate change: Josefina Maestu, Coordinator-Director UNO-IDfA / UNW-DPAC
- Talk Show: Interactive one-to-one, moderated by Josefina Maestu, UNO-IDfA / UNW-DPAC
 - Expert from the water sector
 - Environmental Journalist
- Open floor: Moderated by Michael McWilliams, SIWI
 - Questions, challenges, and ideas from audience
 - NGO insights: Michael McWilliams, SIWI

Background

When the African Union heads of state adopted the *Sharm el Sheikh Declaration on Water* in June 2008, they strongly endorsed the need to make water and sanitation a priority at both the national and pan-African levels. However, climate change will most likely drive much of Africa far off track from the Millennium Development Goals for drinking water and sanitation.

Public health, economies, and many human lives are now falling into much graver risk.

What is needed – *right now* – is the political will to act and the knowledge to move effectively and efficiently. The nations and peoples of Africa need to ask some hard questions...and get answers that don't dodge the problem.

In this session, a veteran environmental journalist will pose such questions to a knowledgeable expert in the water and development fields. Communicating the urgency to act is a key role of media, but expert information is often quite complex. The answers may not come easy... but this discussion will help make them clear. An official from the UN will moderate the process. Then, the audience will get its chance to give the answers the real-world grounding they need, with some additional insights from NGO research and policy work.

This session grows out of the recommendations of the recent UN media consultation on Climate and Water held last month in Zaragoza, Spain.

Please join us...and help find answers that will get action for Africa