

Press Release

Lyon, Monday 30 May 2011

More than 200 local elected representatives and experts commit themselves to the water cause!

Preparatory Conference for the 6th World Water Forum

“Access to drinking water and sanitation is a fundamental right of all human beings”
United Nations General Assembly - July 2010

More than two hundred local elected representatives and those responsible for water and sanitation matters, representing some sixty countries are expected in Lyon to kick off the “**political process of local and regional authorities**” of the 6th World Water Forum. The **Objective**: to reinforce their mobilization for the implementation of the right of access to water and sanitation, the sustainable management of water resources and international cooperation.

This stage is strategic in the preparation of the 6th World Water Forum, for it will enable the commitments made in March 2009 in Istanbul to be amplified.

Moving from debates about the stakes to firm commitments to solutions

While the previous Forums, The Hague in 2000, Kyoto in 2003, Mexico City in 2006 and Istanbul in 2009, have provided a diagnosis of the enormous problems which confront the developed and developing countries, the Marseille Forum is expected to make significant progress in three domains: effective access to water and sanitation, trans-border cooperation and the involvement of local and regional authorities.

Local and regional authorities: key players in the water and sanitation sector

Effective access to water and sanitation for the innumerable populations throughout the world who suffer from a cruel lack of it, in a great many countries requires recognition of the role of local and regional authorities who are closest to the ground. A good number of these authorities are active in this domain on a daily basis and this conference will enable them to show the “solutions” that they have developed and help train their opposite numbers throughout the world.

Mobilization around the Istanbul Water Consensus: obtain 1,000 signatories

One of the major products of the Istanbul Forum in 2009 was the “Istanbul Water Consensus” already signed by some 700 cities and regions from 47 countries which are committing themselves concretely to implement such “solutions”. The objective of the Lyon conference is to mobilize the elected representatives in such a way as to exceed 1,000 city signatories during the Marseille Forum in March 2012 and reaffirm the essential role of local and regional authorities in the world water policy debate.

This conference is co-organized by the International Committee of the Marseille Forum, Greater Lyon and the Rhone Mediterranean and Corsica Water Agency.

6^{ème} forum mondial de l'eau

RÉUNION DE LANCEMENT
DU PROCESSUS DES AUTORITÉS
LOCALES ET RÉGIONALES

30-31 MAI 2011 - LYON / CENTRE DE CONGRÈS



Organized jointly by the French State, the World Water Council and the city of Marseille, the 6th World Water Forum which is to take place from 12th to 17th March 2012 in the Southern French metropolis will be the "Forum of Solutions". The four preparatory processes of this Forum (political, regional, local and thematic) coordinate their activities to prepare and facilitate the implementation of the solutions likely to be beneficial to the priority actions identified.

If you would like to participate and come and meet us, please contact:

Aurore Sun: +33 (6) 19 80 42 67 // a.sun@worldwaterforum6.org

Claudine Chilinski : +33 (0)6 38 13 16 51 // c.chilinski@worldwaterforum6.org

For more information: www.worldwaterforum6.org

Istanbul Water Consensus

One major production of the political process of the local and regional authorities during the 5th World Water Forum, was the Istanbul Water Consensus (IWC), a world agreement between local and regional authorities who wish to adapt their water infrastructure and services to the new challenges which confronted them, such as climate change, uncontrolled urban growth, the depletion and pollution of water resources or even the fatigue of the existing infrastructure. The 720 signatories to this Consensus have committed themselves to prepare an action plan so as to analyze and meet these challenges, to introduce a series of indicators and report on the progress realized on the occasion of the next World Water Forum in Marseille. Elsewhere, 12 large cities, including Vienna, Osaka, Entebbe, Incheon, Paris and Buenos Aires, will be used as catalysts in specific questions in their role as "pilot cities" of the Consensus.

International kick-off meeting for Local and Regional Authorities' Political Process

With more than two hundred representatives of cities and local authorities from all over the planet, the kick-off meeting of the Local and Regional Authorities' Political Process is a very important step to think about the means and actions necessary to achieve the objectives of the Political Process of the 6th World Water Forum. This meeting intends to generate or renew momentum and confirm the commitments of IWC signatories.

Previous achievements and current situation

The Istanbul Water Consensus (IWC) is one of the main output of the Local and Regional Authorities' political process of the 5th World Water Forum in Istanbul (March 2009). It is a global compact signed on a voluntary basis by Local and Regional Authorities willing to adapt their water infrastructure and services to the emerging challenges they are increasingly facing such as climate change, rapid urban growth, depletion and pollution of water resources or ageing infrastructure.

250 Local and Regional Authorities from 43 countries were represented in Istanbul and agreed there on the text of the compact and on its associated process.

Through this signature, local and regional authorities intend to demonstrate their commitment in analysing the challenges their water and sanitation services are facing and in preparing action plans to address them. From these plans, and in line with the spirit of the 6th Forum, cities have developed targets and related indicators to monitor progress toward these targets. Some of them also commit to reporting back on the progress at the 6th World Water Forum in Marseille.

Objectives of the Local and Regional Authorities' process

Through their specific political process, guided and under the responsibility of the Political Process Commission of the IFC, Local (and Regional) Authorities wish to profile themselves as key actors of the implementation of water solutions at the local level. More specifically this process will:

1. Increase the international recognition of the role and significance of Local and Regional Authorities in actions related to access to water and sanitation
2. Increase and strengthen the global mobilisation of Local and Regional Authorities for water and sanitation
3. Provide Local Authorities opportunities to exchange with water experts and to identify and develop concrete solutions to address their challenges
4. Develop new partnerships between local authorities and between regional authorities, most specifically through decentralised cooperation projects
5. Develop constructive dialogue among other political levels involved in the Forum (Ministers, Parliamentarian)
6. Help signatories of the IWC to follow-up on their initial commitments and prepare their reporting at the Forum in Marseille
7. Increase, widen and improve the geographical balance of the signatories of IWC
8. Further build the overall structure of the IWC as a tool for signatories, structuring in particular the role of champion cities further

The 6th World Water Forum

Organized by the French Government, the World Water Council, and the City of Marseille, the 6th World Water Forum, to be hosted in Marseille, 12-17 March 2012, will be the "Forum of Solutions".

Water, an increasingly recognized political issue

Resolution 64/292, which was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on July 28, 2010 recognizes the right to water and sanitation. This right is now fully effective. During the course of the 20th century, the world population went from 1.7 billion individuals in 1900 to more than 6 billion in the year 2000. But whilst the population was tripling, humanity's water consumption was multiplied by six. Today one third of the world population lives in a situation of **water stress**¹. Nine countries (Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia United States, India, Indonesia, Peru, and Russia) possess 60% of world freshwater resources. The increase in population should cause the volume available for the 6 billion inhabitants to drop between now and the 2025. Furthermore, if the current consumption trend continues, between one half and two thirds of the world population will be in a situation of water stress before 2025.

This awareness of what is at stake also concerns water. In the recent years, there has been an increasing awareness of the water crisis, thanks partly to the World Water Fora which have worked to develop shared visions of these major challenges. The first summit of Heads of States organized during the Istanbul World Water Forum bears witness thereof, together with the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of a resolution on Water Rights as well as of a series of articles on the management of trans-boundary aquifers.

Shifting from discussions on the issues to commitments for solutions

Tomorrow we need to amplify this movement, as we must keep mobilizing political decision makers at all levels. Therefore, the organizers of the Forum propose to change radically the tonality of its preparatory works. You are invited to focus – between now and March 2012 – on the solutions to be implemented and to leave aside the discussions on the problems which enabled us to take stock of the situation in the past years; the time for solutions has come. It is nothing less than the creation of a "blue movement" that will start from everyone's initiatives and commitments to solve the problems faced. To do so, we propose to start from the works and recommendations previously elaborated, first to set target objectives, and second to elaborate actions plans and make commitments to achieve them.

Forum and World Water Council

The forum: an original concept

Every three years since 1997, the World Water Forum mobilizes creativity, innovation, competence and know-how in favor of water.

The five World Water Forums organized since 1997 have placed water on the international political agenda. *(We should be rather modest, since the objective is more especially Rio 20...this is therefore not obvious)* They have undoubtedly contributed to a global awareness of the water issues.

The Forum must be perceived first of all as a tri-annual process initiated as soon as a host country and a host city have been selected by a series of preparatory processes which combine thematic, regional and political activities. These processes mobilize thousands of water stakeholders over the 5 continents and culminate in the Forum week.

¹ Water stress is said to occur when the demand for water exceeds the quantity available during a certain period or when the poor quality of the water limits its use. Water stress causes a degradation of freshwater resources in terms of quantity (overexploitation of groundwater, dried up rivers, etc.) and quality (eutrophication, pollution by organic matter, saline intrusion, etc.)

However this week is not an end in itself: it represents simply an important milestone in a continuous process combining dialog, action and monitoring of the results.

With a unifying and open-minded image, the World Water Forum strives to open its activities to the entire water stakeholders of the political arena and of the civil society. The World Water Council, the host city and the host country promote interactions and partnerships at all geographic scales and between all actors, with a special focus on developing countries.

The World Water Council

The World Water Council is an international NGO which provides a platform for exchanges and partnership building among all institutions of the water community. It was created in 1996 by water professional associations and by UN Agencies. Its missions are to raise awareness on water issues and to stimulate political commitments in favor of water. It has today more than 400 member organizations from about 100 countries. Since its creation, its founding institutions have requested the Council to create the World Water Forum, the main instrument it uses to accomplish its missions.

The first Forum held in Marrakesh hosted 500 participants. In 2000 in The Hague, 6,000 participants attended the Forum. Three years later in Kyoto, more than 20,000 professionals, decision-makers, elected officials, representative from international organizations and NGOs came to the Forum.

In 2006, Mexico received 20,000 participants. In March 2009, 25,000 participants from 180 countries gathered in Istanbul, which organized as well and for the first time, a Head of States meeting.

6th forum: guiding principles, building blocks

Guiding principles

What is the major ambition of the 6th World Water Forum? Simply put: Solutions for people.

Using the results of previous Forums and other international meetings as a foundation, we will aim to develop and to trigger actual implementation of concrete solutions through the achievement of a series of targets in a number of priority areas. This will include contributions and successful case studies from the world water community, generating commitment to successfully implement innovative or existing solutions in order to meet those targets (very abstract as a term...can we not talk about making the right to water and sanitation effective) .

Four preparatory processes of the forum

Four preparatory processes will coordinate their activities to prepare and facilitate implementation of solutions to the identified priorities for action

POLITICAL PROCESS

Governments, parliamentarians, local authorities develop political targets and solutions, e.g. cities commit to reduce the energy footprints of their water services under the Istanbul Water Consensus process.

THEMATIC PROCESS

All stakeholders develop and facilitate the implementation of action targets mobilizing a variety of organizations to reach the goals associated with each priority for action.

REGIONAL PROCESS

Regional processes In the Americas, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Africa, and in sub-regions develop and facilitate the implementation of targets referring to regional priorities, as identified in previous Forums.

LOCAL AND CITIZEN PROCESS

Develop and facilitate the implementation of targets through citizen's actions and local experiences.

Roots and Citizenship Commission

The Forum preparation will rest on 4 processes conducted in a multi-stakeholder way and interconnected. The Forum Week in March 2012 will provide an opportunity for all participants to share the results of these processes and to build momentum toward the continued implementation of solutions.

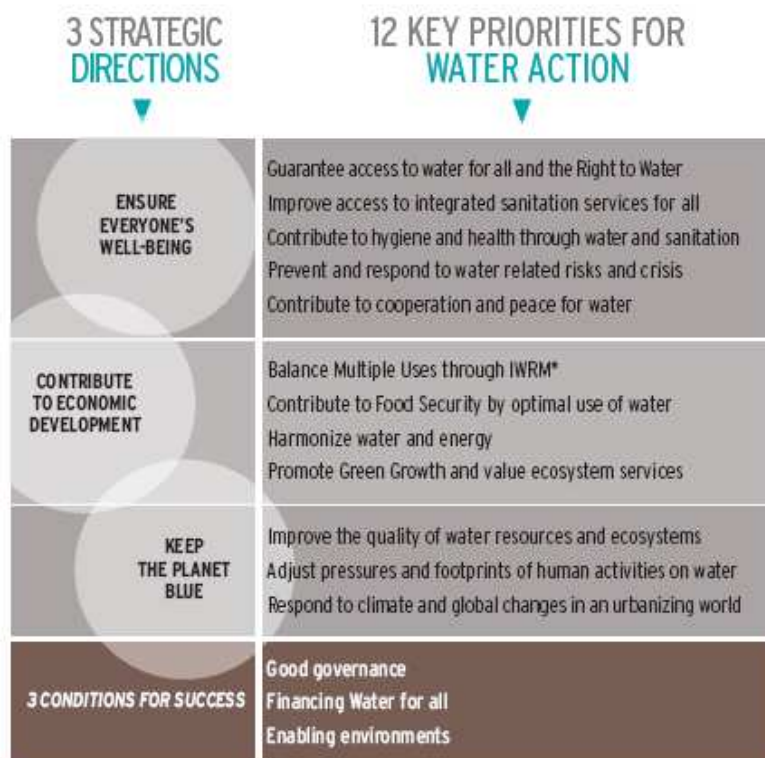
It will comprise:

- Official sessions: present the results of all four preparatory processes Children and Youth Forums: get future generations on board Cultural and awareness raising events
- Forum Prizes granted to personalities, public policies, grass root organisations
- Learning Centre activities
- Fair/Expo: offer opportunities to all types of organisations to present their activities and achievements

The 12 priorities for action

Channel the contributions of the world water community in favor of a healthier blue planet, at peace, prosperous and resilient. These priorities are grouped around the three pillars of sustainable development and are completed by 3 transverse Conditions for Success. For each Priority for Action, a series of target objectives translates the questions identified into concrete and operational objectives at all levels.

The thematic framework of the Forum addresses both water-related actions needed to face today's development challenges, in addition to the means necessary to ensure those actions, which are cross-cutting. (Some emerging issues not dealt with in previous Fora have found their way to the forefront. The scope of this framework aims beyond simply solving water issues. It invites to think bigger and outside the water box. The 12 priorities for action drive the contributions of the world water community towards a more healthy, peaceful, prosperous and resilient blue planet. They are clustered around the three pillars of sustainable development. They are completed by three crosscutting Conditions for Success. Under each Priority for Action, a series of targets translates the identified issues into concrete and achievable objectives at all levels.



The Greater Lyon Area, a centre of expertise in water management

Jean-Paul Colin, Vice-President of the Greater Lyon Area, responsible for water policy: *"Our community has always striven to unite all stakeholders in the field of water to use their combined expertise to benefit the people of the Greater Lyon Area. Looking far beyond our own immediate area, we would like to share our know-how with our partners abroad. We have a genuine role to play in meeting the Millennium Development Goals for Water and honouring our Istanbul Pact pledges".*

The Greater Lyon Area Water Authority is first and foremost firmly committed to **sustainable development**. Specific areas of involvement include the preservation of aquatic environments and natural resources, a guarantee of unrestricted access to perfect quality water, urban rain water management, high-quality water treatment and the Greater Lyon Area international solidarity policy.

Our water policy also includes raising awareness and education among adults and children, as well as measuring the compliance of our projects against sustainable development benchmarks.

The Greater Lyon Area has today been identified as an **area of expertise** in the field of water for several reasons: its high-tech facilities, including the new La Feyssine water treatment plant, a particularly enlightened Research, Development and Innovation ethos, and its expertise in water resource protection, water treatment, rain water management and international solidarity.

The Greater Lyon Area is putting this expertise into practice whilst scrupulously observing the pledges made as part of the Istanbul Pact:

- **by developing a sustainable, integrated and participative approach to water management and treatment:** the Greater Lyon Area has implemented assessment criteria for its water policy based on indicators and defined targets.
- **by evaluating internal and external constraints on local water resources and aquatic biodiversity:** through controlled management of urban development which protects water resources. Systematic upstream work involving water professionals and town planners is taking place. The Greater Lyon Area places constraints on land use if required to preserve aquatic resources, using national legal and regulatory **instruments**.
- **by establishing a dialogue with all local and regional stakeholders for professionals:** the creation of a Rhône-Alpes Region Infrastructures and Water Research Group (GRAIE, Groupement de Recherche Rhône-Alpes sur les Infrastructures et l'Eau), which has facilitated progress on an operational level including:
 - The reclamation of sludge from water treatment plants by encouraging all stakeholders (scientists, industrialists, local authorities, etc.) to work together
 - The production of a guide on the subject of integrating rain water into town planning
 - The development of mutual assistance between water treatment plants for water treatment waste products (sand, grease, sludge): pooling of resources between GRAIE members
 - The organisation in Lyon of the triennial international NOVATECH conferences (Sustainable Techniques and Strategies for Urban Rain Water Management in Wet Weather)
- **to raise public awareness of water issues:**
 - Activities to raise environmental awareness; educational trails, water-themed lessons, etc.
 - Consultations, user satisfaction surveys, etc.

- **by implementing action plans to improve water services and treatment:**
 - o The European programme PREPARED - ENABLING CHANGE: a network of towns, industrialists and scientists in Europe, Australia, the USA and the Ukraine working together on a project to develop new technologies to evaluate the impact of climate change on hydrology
 - o The European AQUA ADD programme: to exchange professional practice between European cities in the field of urban rain water management (with the aim of reusing rain water: "rain is not a nuisance but a resource")
 - o GESLY: a dynamic management model for groundwater at catchment area level. All types of use are covered, including agriculture, industry and drinking water supply.
- **by working for international solidarity:** demonstrating a strong commitment to International Solidarity as part of the Millennium Development Goal to "halve by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation", the Greater Lyon Area created the Sustainable Development Water Solidarity Fund in 2003, in partnership with Veolia Eau, to which the Rhone-Mediterranean Water Agency (Agence de l'Eau Rhône Méditerranée) and Corsica also contribute. Over 745,000 people in 17 countries have benefitted from support from the fund since its creation. The Greater Lyon Area is also implementing decentralised cooperation programmes, notably with local authorities in Madagascar and the Lebanon.

The Greater Lyon Area is a "Health and Water" pilot city: this is a real public health indicator as water is a priority target for action. This notably involves: placing water management in the city at the service of the well-being of the population, implementing eco-developments in the water field, developing scientific excellence for rain water management, and research and experimentation in emerging areas.

Greater Lyon Area projects in the lead-up to the World Water Forum 2012:

- Completing the water treatment system to ensure excellent sanitation for the development of the greater urban area over the next 20 years
- Finalising the water resource protection policy for the greater urban area: declaration of public utility for Crépieux-Charmy
 - o Implementing resource protection zones to ensure that soil use and activity near the catchment area are compatible with maintaining water quality
 - o Abstracting natural drinking water from this site in close proximity to the greater urban area (370 hectares), and transforming it into an exemplary biodiversity site (Natura 2000).
- Continuing to honour our International Solidarity pledges

The Greater Lyon Area is committed to sharing this know-how and expertise. This is demonstrated by its ongoing involvement with the World Water Forum since 2003.

What are the issues involved in hosting this event in Lyon? For the Greater Lyon Area and the organisers of the 6th Forum they include sharing our experience, developing partnerships with other or new stakeholders and territories, as well as taking part in the development of a vision of the major water challenges for the future through our involvement in managing the water cycle.

Press contact:

Ariane LAFFON - 04 26 99 39 51 - alaffon@grandlyon.org

The Rhone Mediterranean and Corsica Water Agency: a public player at the service of water resource quality and the aquatic environment

The Rhone Mediterranean and Corsica Water Agency is a public State establishment which encourages water users (local authorities, manufacturers farmers, householders...) **in the fight against the pollution of the aquatic environment and its protection** as well as the **rational use of water resources**.

To act it receives **fees for pollution and water sampling** in the aquatic environment from water users.

The money collected in this way is redistributed to local authorities, manufacturing industry, the farming community or associations... so as to **finance actions to preserve the aquatic environment**: construction of water treatment stations, protection of watersheds, restoration of degraded watercourses, protection of wetlands, reduction in the discharge of toxic products... The Agency also facilitates in this way the sustainable development of economic activities.

The Agency encourages the players from the same catchment area to commit themselves to **common approaches to water management** (SAGE, river, bay or water table covenant to reconcile the uses (drinking water, irrigation, leisure) and the preservation of the aquatic environment.

It provides its **expertise** to the water management players through advice and the coordination of actions to raise awareness. It makes available to all and everyone **information on the state and the uses** of water and the aquatic environment.

In partnership with the local authorities of its basins and consistent with the orientations of French foreign policy, the Water Agency undertakes actions of **international cooperation** in the fields of expertise, treating pollution and the preservation of water resources.

The Agency intervenes in the context of **six year operating programs** prepared and validated by its Board of Directors and the Rhone Mediterranean and Corsica Basin committees where the decision-makers of all the categories of water users are represented, including the consumers. The 9th program (2007-2012) represents **3.2 billion euro at the service of the good state of all waters**.

Each inhabitant contributes individually to these actions through the **price of water**: for a household, the fees of the Rhone Mediterranean and Corsica Water Agency represent 12.5 % of the price of one m3 of drinking water paid through the water bill (average price of water: 2.96 €/m3, 2008 figures).

Water management in France: territories of the large hydrographic basins



The management of water in France is organized around 12 hydrographic basins, delimited naturally by the watersheds.

There are 6 Water Agencies in mainland France which intervene on the seven hydrographic basins: Artois-Picardy, Rhine-Meuse, Seine Normandy, Loire Brittany, Adour Garonne, Rhone-Mediterranean and Corsica.

The French overseas departments have 5 hydrographic basins (Mayotte, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Guyana and Reunion Island).

Press Contact (Rhône Méditerranée and Corsica Water Agency):
Valérie Santini : valerie.santini@eamrc.fr

International cooperation involving the Rhône Mediterranean and Corsica Water Agency: providing access to drinking water and sanitation to the greatest number of people

By becoming involved in solidarity projects alongside local authorities, the Agency has concretely enabled thousands of families in Africa, Madagascar, the Near East, Haiti... to gain access to water and sanitation. So as to develop this cooperation, the Agency today needs to find new stakeholders, for it cannot act directly and alone in these countries.

The World Water Forum organization has provided it with the occasion to incite new local authorities and French non-governmental organizations to take up the challenge at its side.

More than 3.6 M€ of aid spent for access to water and sanitation

From 2007 to 2010, the Water Agency supported **80 sanitation and drinking water projects in the amount of 3.633 M€ of aid which corresponded to 13 M€ in works**

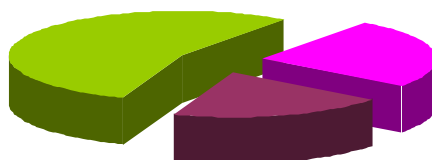
2.5 M€ of aid was granted in the year 2010 alone, to the credit of its policy of international cooperation, in the context of the law Oudin/Santini (relaxing of project selection criteria, widening of the geographical area to the whole of the French-speaking Africa and Haiti, with a financing rate which can stretch to 50% of the cost of the work).

The Water Agency becomes involved in actions of international cooperation through the financial support for **solidarity projects of** and by **sharing know-how**, within its domains of expertise, the treatment of pollution and the preservation of water resources.

The Agency intervenes in the following countries: countries around the Mediterranean Basin, (Tunisia, Morocco, Lebanon, Palestine), French-speaking Africa (Mauretania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Senegal, Niger, Chad, Central African Republic, Benin, Togo), Madagascar and the European Union (Bulgaria, Romania, Albania). The Agency operating area also includes Haiti since 2010, so as to provide a solution to projects of reconstruction.

Répartition des aides de l'Agence par type de projet - 2007 à 2010

Alimentation en eau potable : 55%
(forage de puits, mise en place d'adduction, de châteaux d'eau, de réseau de distribution, etc.)



Assainissement : 25%
(réalisation de systèmes de collecte des eaux usées, latrines sèches, élaboration de schémas directeurs des eaux usées, etc.)

Autre : 20%
(formation, mise en réseau, aide à la gouvernance, étude de restauration, appui à la coopération, etc.)

Solidarity projects

The Agency provides financial backing for such projects destined in priority to provide access to drinking water and sanitation to populations in a state of poverty. The aid may amount to 50 % of the total cost of the work (80 % for preliminary studies prior to the work).

The Agency may help the public or private owners of the Rhone Mediterranean and Corsica basins subjected to a fee paid to the Agency. It may also help French non-governmental organizations insofar as an owner of one or two basins becomes involved in the project, or if the project responds to a humanitarian emergency.

EXAMPLE OF COOPERATION: WITH GREATER LYON TO SOUTH EAST MADAGASCAR

The project: facilities for the provision of drinking water and sanitation for the rural municipalities of Isorana, Sahambavy and Alakamisy Itenina, and the urban municipalities of Fianarantsao, Ambalavao and Ambahimahaso.

The operation: drilling of 77 wells, gravity fed water conduits, wash-houses, sanitary blocks and latrines, channels for the evacuation of sewage and rainwater... for 28 villages and 27 districts.

Contracting authority: Lyon Urban Community (69)

Total cost of project: 271,500 €

Amount of the subsidy (granted in 2010): 135,750 €, that is 50% of the total cost

Sharing experience in the management of water resources

This form of cooperation includes relations with the basin organizations of neighboring countries to the Rhone Mediterranean basin (Switzerland, Spain, Italy), for the management of water tables or cross-border water courses and for the implementation of the European Water Framework Directive.

In the form of missions, seminars, training courses, technical visits, formalized by partnership or twinning agreements, the Water Agency intervenes in those domains where it is most skilled:

- **Integrated water resource management:** based upon consultation with all the water players;
- environmental fiscality: fees and bonuses;
- financial aid policies: fight against pollution and protection of water resource;
- water information system: production and making available of water data;
- planning of environmental objectives of a catchment area;
- action of communication, capacity building or assurance quality organization.

TWINNING AGREEMENT WITH THE BLACK SEA BASIN AGENCY (BULGARIA)

This program, established on the basis of meetings of experts, exchanges of technical and scientific information, aims at improving the practices for the integrated management of water resources of each of the partners.

It takes its place within the context of the overall twinning program "Twinbasin" and benefits from European financing.

Press Contact:

Valérie Santini : valerie.santini@eaurmc.fr

**“A city, a well”,
an operation launched by the City of Grenoble
with the support of the Association of Mayors of the Cities of France and the
Rhone Mediterranean and Corsica Water Agency**

Initiated by the non-governmental association “les Puits du Désert”¹ (the Wells in the Desert) the operation “A city, a well...” won over Michel Destot, French Deputy and Mayor of Grenoble, Chair of the AMG VF². This operation takes its place in an extension to a project for the rehabilitation of 20 wells in NIGER with the aid of the Water Agency.

In the middle of the Ténéré desert, 400 traditional wells dug out by men with their own hands were inventoried. Over time they become blocked or are prone to collapse during the rainy season or sandstorms. The interventions hence consist in rehabilitating these wells according to constructive sustainable procedures adapted to the local context. The Water Agency, in liaison with the Grenoble Water Department, which is promoting this project, is participating in the financing of a first stage of the work on 10 wells situated in the municipality of Aderbissinat, 2,300 inhabitants, at a cost of 103,000 €. A second stage of 10 wells is to be undertaken in 2012.

When there is no water, there is nothing...

“I created the association in 2000”, says Christel Pernet, its Chair, “following my meeting with Mohamed Ixa, Touareg Chair of the Niger association Tidène, to be able to come and help the populations from the North of Agadez by providing access to water, education and health. The survival of the nomadic and sedentary populations of the Air Mountains is intimately linked to the crucial question of access to water. The first emergency therefore concerns the drilling of wells with the perspective of the irrigation of fallow areas so as to create citrus groves and vegetable gardens in their place”.

Showing our solidarity for a people in danger...

“Michel Destot and myself took an immediate interest in the project presented by the association “les Puits du Désert””, explained Eric Grasset, Chair of the Grenoble Water department. “Since the law Oudin of 27 January 2010, French local authorities have been able to devote up to 1 % of their water services and sanitation budget to decentralized cooperation, emergency assistance or solidarity in actions involving water and sanitation.

With aid from the Water Agency, we have been able to provide a significant and sustainable dimension to this project. Similarly, the association “les Puits du Désert” which works hand in hand with the local Niger association “Tidène”, has enabled the nomadic populations to take in hand these wells by preserving the traditional ways of using them. Each water point is located at a strategic place for the populations and is built in close collaboration with local authorities. The extension of this exemplary achievement is today proposed to all French Cities. The operation “a City, a Well...” provides a solution to water stress, responds to the Millenium Goals and illustrates significant and consistent international solidarity in the direction of people in danger and suffering in a region of the world which records the highest level needs and which cannot be left on the side of the road”.

¹ For more information: <http://www.lespuitsdudesert-tidene.org>

² AMG VF: Association of the Mayors of the Cities of France.

Press Contact (Rhone Mediterranean Corsica Water Agency):
Valérie Santini - valerie.santini@eaurmc.fr

New cities joining the Istanbul Pact mobilized by the AIMF

Countries	Cities
Benin	1. Cotonou 2. Lokossa 3. Parakou
Burkina Faso	4. Ouagadougou 5. Tenkodogo
Burundi	6. Bujumbura
Cambodia	7. Kampot
Cameroon	8. Bangangté 9. Douala 10. Edéa 11. Foumban 12. Yaoundé
Cape Verde	13. Praia
Comoros	14. Moroni*
Congo	15. Brazzaville
Congo (Democratic Republic of the)	16. Lubumbashi*
Ivory Coast	17. Abidjan 18. Bouaké
Guinea	19. Téliélé*
Haiti	20. Carrefour
Lebanon	21. Zahlé
Mali	22. Bamako 23. Ségou 24. Sikasso* 25. Tombouctou
Mauritania	26. Atar 27. Rosso
Niger	28. Diffa 29. Tahoua 30. Tillabéri
Senegal	31. Dakar* 32. Kaolack 33. Ziguinchor
Chad	34. Abéché
Togo	35. Aného 36. Dapaong
Vietnam	37. Hanoi 38. Hué

* Cities expected to sign the Istanbul Water Consensus soon.