

MEETING SUMMARIES

Below are summaries of a few of the dozens of meetings ECSP sponsored at the Woodrow Wilson Center and elsewhere over the 2002-03 academic year. These meetings featured speakers such as Kofi Annan and Jane Goodall and covered topics that ranged from guarding against environmental terrorism to prospects for the Kyoto 3rd World Water Forum. For summaries of all ECSP meetings, please visit the Project's Web site at www.wilsoncenter.org/ecsp.

NAVIGATING PEACE: GENERATING NEW THINKING ABOUT WATER

October 2003 Update

ECSP's initiative *Navigating Peace: Forging New Water Partnerships* has moved into high gear, with its three Water Working Groups actively exploring new policy alternatives for addressing global water issues. Funded by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, *Navigating Peace* has brought together diverse sets of individuals to generate new thinking in the following three areas:

- The balance between water as **an economic and a social good**, so that it can be provided equitably, efficiently, and universally;
- **Conflict, conflict potential, and cooperative models** over shared water resources; and
- How lessons from water-conflict resolution could **build dialogue and cooperation between the United States and China**—their governments as well as nongovernmental organizations.

The Working Groups

The three Water Working Groups (WWGs) of *Navigating Peace* have each held a first round of multi-day meetings, allowing members to meet each other, begin to identify major areas for focused work, and conduct site visits that also served as team building exercises. WWGs I and II met at the Wilson Center in Washington, DC, and WWG III met at the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution in Tucson, AZ. All three

WWGs, will hold their second and third meetings in fall 2003 and spring 2004, respectively, with WWG I also presenting a panel at the Commission on Sustainable Development annual meeting in New York in April 2004.

Below are the themes each WWG has identified for further focus. Each WWG will be pursuing these themes through commissioning working papers that will become available on a rolling basis throughout the life of *Navigating Peace*. Each WWG will also publish a report on its findings at the end of the initiative.

Themes of WWG I (Water as an Economic and Social Good)

- ***Developing water lifelines that assure meeting everyone's minimum water needs.*** Policymakers and the energy industry agree on these concepts for energy. Why not water?
- ***Redefining the "private sector" in the context of water to include citizens groups, foundations, NGOs, and civil society as well as corporations.*** Who are the stakeholders and what are the forms of organizations around different issues and contexts, and how does that variety affect the intervention of new water technologies?
- ***Identifying the prerequisites for fostering private-sector participation in water services and sanitation.*** How can private-sector action make a difference in an era of government paralysis? What are the best technologies needed for equitable water

access? How can the private sector generate and provide them to low-income people?

- ***Bridging the divides among the drinking water, sanitation, hygiene, and ecosystem communities.***
- ***Reconciling what the public thinks about water with what the policymakers think the public thinks.*** Polls show that policymakers underestimate 13-fold the public's interest in global health issues. But how can we make clear *the connections between health and water*—the health of environments, people, and economies?

The formal meeting abroad of WWG I will be held in Mexico City, Mexico in February 2004. Members of the group include:

Janice Beecher, Institute for Public Utilities (East Lansing, MI);

Gordon Binder, Aqua International Partners and World Wildlife Fund (Washington, DC);

J. Carl Ganter, MediaVia (Traverse City, MI);

Karin M. Krchnak, National Wildlife Federation (Washington, DC);

Melinda Moore, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Rockville, MD);

Scott Whiteford, Michigan State University (East Lansing, MI).

Themes of WWG II (Conflict and Cooperation Over Water)

- ***Is water really a catalyst for cooperation and peace?*** Are river-basin regimes of cooperation really applicable to other regimes?
- ***Social-capital formation from peacemaking around water—does it last?*** Does it form workable institutions? Can you retain creativity when you move to institutionalization?
- ***Are transparency and democracy good things for reaching water agreements, or do they complicate the process to the point where they become obstacles?*** What are the necessary and sufficient conditions for participatory democratic processes to work vis-à-vis water issues and policymaking? In essence, do stakeholders matter, and at what level?

- ***Is access to drinking water really an issue, considering that everybody has it or else they're dead?*** Why are we focusing on that instead of focusing on clean water, on disinfection systems that people can use? How can we consistently identify what's the real problem and where we should put the resources to address it?
- ***Do normative international treaties have any meaning on the local level?*** Are norms useful or effective?
- ***What is a "water institution"?*** What's a *good* water institution? Can we identify common properties among those we call "good" or "effective"?
- ***Are water wars imminent, or is their prospect a myth?***
- ***Where is the most violence potential concerning water?*** Is it at the household level? Why is it that some forms of violence get publicized and others are subsumed?
- ***Does one size fit all?*** Is what we learn in the Colorado effective elsewhere? Is the size of the Danube commission appropriate for the Zambezi?
- ***Where is God and religion in discussions about water?*** How people think about other people and their relationship with the environment has a profound effect on how they use water, and many don't understand those nuances. When Dublin announced that water was an economic good, the formulation upset the entire Muslim world.
- ***How does water illuminate (and how can it rectify) the crisis of governmental legitimacy in the South, which is very different than the placid assumption of legitimacy in the North?*** How can values be translated through governments into policy, and then how is that policy enforced? The question of legitimacy brings in all those issues.
- ***Monterey turned the international discussion to underlying governance structures.*** Is it that those governments that don't have those structures have conflicts over resources and these types of issues? They don't have rule of law, robust institutions, etc: can water be useful in those situations? Other countries with better governance don't use water for peacemaking because they have other institutions to do the job.

- ***Institutions are important, but they lag behind complexity and change.*** What makes Uganda and South Africa similar and what makes Uganda and California different regarding water? In the context of the South, increasing levels of complexity and declining levels of capacity are the problem. How can this be addressed?

The next formal meeting of WWG II will be held in the Okavango River Delta, Botswana, in October 2003. Members of the group include:

Inger Andersen, World Bank (Washington, DC);

Kent Butts, Center for Strategic Leadership, U.S. Army War College (Carlisle, PA);

Ken Conca, University of Maryland (College Park, MD);

Kirk Emerson, U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (Tucson, AZ);

Aaron Salzberg, U.S. Department of State (Washington, DC);

Anthony Turton, University of Pretoria (Pretoria, South Africa);

Aaron T. Wolf, Oregon State University (Corvallis, OR);

Howard Wolpe, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (Washington, DC).

Themes of WWG III (Water Dialogue and Cooperation between the United States and China)

- ***What are effective mediation and alternate dispute mechanisms for resolving water conflicts?*** When are such techniques successful in mitigating water conflicts? Can such techniques used in the United States be transferable to China? And visa-versa?
- ***What kinds of conflict resolution mechanisms help reduce the transaction costs of solving conflicts?*** Are certain mechanisms more appropriate and effective for certain types of water conflict?
- ***How might greater stakeholder participation impact the prevention or resolution of water conflicts?*** For example, could greater stakeholder support for water management and protection programs mitigate water

conflicts? How might greater stakeholder participation in water management be encouraged in China?

- ***What are the potential roles that non-governmental organizations could play in preventing and resolving water conflicts?***
- ***How have water rights doctrines helped or hindered the resolution of water conflicts in the United States and China?***
- ***What are the strengths and weaknesses of U.S. and Chinese river basin commissions in preventing and resolving water conflicts?***
- ***How might market mechanisms help mitigate or prevent water conflicts?*** Could better pricing and strong water markets promote more trust among urban and rural traders (who are today competitors) and encourage conservation?

The next formal meeting of WWG III will be held in Beijing, China in November 2003. Members of the group include:

S. Elizabeth Birnbaum, American Rivers (Washington, DC);

Irene B. Brooks, International Joint Commission (Seattle, WA);

Michael Eng, (Tucson, AZ);

Liu Hongxia, Yellow River Conservancy Commission (Zhengzhou, China);

Ma Jun, Sinosphere (Beijing, China);

Jay F. Stein, Stein & Brockmann, P.A. (Albuquerque, NM);

Wang Xuejun, Department of Urban and Environmental Science, Peking University (Beijing, China);

Yu Xiubo, WWF-China Programme Office and Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resource Research (Beijing, China)

Additional Activities

In addition to the WWG meetings, ECSP continues to host and sponsor meetings on global water issues as an essential part of *Navigating Peace*. Past speakers at these meetings have included: **Peter Gleick**, Pacific Institute; **Mikhail Gorbachev**, Green Cross International; **Gidon Bromberg** and **Abdel-Rahman Sultan**, Friends of the Earth Middle East; **Mutsuyoshi Nishimura**, Japan's Ambassador for Global Environment;

Anthony F. “Bud” Rock, U.S. Department of State; **Stan Bernstein**, UNFPA; **Robert Jerome Glennon**, University of Arizona; and **Deirdre Chetham**, Harvard University.

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