



Press release - 11 December 2008 9:00 AM Central European Time -

Major global organisations launch the Water Footprint Network to address critical global water issues.

On 16 December 2008, the Water Footprint Network will be launched by its global partners from business, civil society, multilateral organisations and academia. This initial group of globally leading organisations have fully endorsed the mission of the Water Footprint Network. The Water Footprint Network and its partners strive to develop and apply the Water Footprint to support the transition to sustainable and equitable water use and management globally.

Derk Kuiper, Executive Director of the Water Footprint Network: "It is really exciting to see that during the last months, the Water Footprint Network has gained substantial traction from a wide range of strong global partners. With this solid partner base of businesses, civil society, UN, government and academic organisations, we have embarked on key pieces of the work on Water Footprint. And, looking at the partnership requests, we are confident that many more organisations will be joining us soon to develop and apply the Water Footprint. This is exactly the type of acceleration that is needed to deal with the imminent water risks to society, environment and economy."

Professor Arjen Hoekstra, creator of the water footprint concept and Scientific Director of the Network: "The concept of Water Footprint has really helped to create the understanding that human impacts on freshwater systems can ultimately be linked to human consumption. Issues like local water shortages and pollution are now better understood and addressed by considering production and supply chains as a whole. Local water depletion and pollution are often closely tied the global trade of water-intensive goods. We know that importing countries are exerting significant pressure on the water resources of exporting countries. And often, exporting countries have weak water management resulting in local water problems. We see



now that not only governments acknowledge their role in achieving better management of water resources, also businesses and civil society organizations are recognizing their roles as actors in water use and management. The Water Footprint Network is a platform for these actors striving for sustainable and equitable water use through the application of the Water Footprint.”

The Water Footprint Network actively draws on and engages its growing partner base to arrive at standards and guidelines on water footprint accounting and measurement and to develop practical water footprint tools for its constituencies. The Network further aims to support and promote networking, exchange of knowledge and information on water footprints, water policies and linking the water footprint to the carbon and ecological footprint. All with the final aim to enable the global community to communicate about water footprints and mitigate the negative impacts of water footprints on people and the environment.

The partners

The Water Footprint Network is launched by its founding and first partners:

Founding partners:

- International Finance Corporation (part of the World Bank Group)
- Netherlands Water Partnership
- UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education
- University of Twente
- Water Neutral Foundation
- World Business Council for Sustainable Development
- WWF - the global conservation organization

First partners:

- Alliance for Water Stewardship
- Global Footprint Network
- The Coca-Cola Company



- The Nature Conservancy
- Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment, and Security
- Nestlé Ltd.
- SABMiller
- Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology – EAWAG
- Unilever PLC
- U.S. Agency for International Development

The Water Footprint Network invites partners from all stakeholder groups to endorse its mission and join its activities to develop the Water Footprint to further sustainable and equitable water use. The partner application guidelines and applications form can be found at: <http://www.waterfootprint.org/?page=files/HowToBecomePartner>

Contact persons for additional information and comments:

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Background information:

Mission of the Water Footprint Network

The mission of the Water Footprint Network is to promote the transition towards sustainable, fair and efficient use of fresh water resources worldwide by:

- advancing the concept of the 'water footprint', a spatially and temporally explicit indicator of direct and indirect water use of consumers and producers;
- increasing the water footprint awareness of communities, government bodies and businesses and their understanding of



how consumption of goods and services and production chains relate to water use and impacts on fresh-water systems; and

- encouraging forms of water governance that reduce the negative ecological and social impacts of the water footprints of communities, countries and businesses.

More information about the Water Footprint Network:

Website: www.waterfootprint.org

Contact: info@waterfootprint.org