



# Fighting Corruption in the Water Sector - Bellagio Forum at the 4th World Water Forum and Expo

## Presentation

[Chairing](#)

## Date

19 March 2006

## Location

Mexico City, Mexico

## Chairing

[R. Andreas Kraemer](#)

Ecologic Institute, as a Member of the Bellagio Forum for Sustainable Development (BFSD), partnered with the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and Transparency International (TI) to convene an awareness-raising event showcasing the new Water Integrity Network (WIN) at the 4th World Water Forum in Mexico. It highlighted the importance of improving integrity and governance structures in the sector, as a precondition for meeting the ambitious Millennium Development Goals.

Every day around the world, many die of water-borne diseases or even lack of water, because of poor access to water or water services. Water is power, and often those in control use it to exploit the weakest. Where access to water is bad, women and girls suffer most, as they usually have to carry the water from wells, sometimes over long distances.

Water infrastructure needs strong institutions, strategic management, and capital for its construction. All too often, corrupt practices, from nepotism in recruitment to incompetent management, from overcharging by re-sellers of water to outright embezzlement of funds meant to finance investment, frustrate attempts to improve the lives and health of slum-dwellers or the rural population in dry lands.

The relationships among water and power, finance and corruption are complex; many instances are known, but the underlying dynamics have not yet understood sufficiently for effective action for improving transparency and reducing corruption in the sector to tolerable levels all over the world. A good introduction to the issues is the report of the seminar "Can We Meet International Water Targets Without Fighting Corruption?" [pdf, English] held at the Stockholm Water Week in 2005.

Against this background, the Bellagio Forum for Sustainable Development joined forces with some of its members and other organizations to convene two combined sessions at the Pavilion of [IUCN - The World Conservation Union](#) in the 4th World Water Forum and Expo in Mexico City, on Sunday, 19 March 2006. The conveners were [Ecologic](#) and [Transparency International](#), and the presentations and discussions first looked at the issues of "Good Governance and Fighting Corruption in Water Services and Resource Management" and then at the "Initiative to Form a Network to Combat Corruption in the Water Sector". The

coordinator was Grit Martinez of Net Impact.

Ger Bergkamp, Head of the Water Programme at IUCN, and host of the IUCN Pavilion opened the event, underlining the importance of good governance, integrity and transparency in the protection of biological diversity and management of natural resources. Hakan Tropp, Project Director of the [Water Governance Facility](#) at the [Stockholm International Water Institute](#) (SIWI) recounted network activities leading to the event at the 4th World Water Forum. Donal O'Leary, coordinator of Transparency International's activities in the water sector, delivered the key presentation about the Initiative to form the [Water Integrity Network](#) (WIN) to combat corruption in the water sector.

The purpose of the network WIN is to initiate and support pro-poor actions to combat corruption in the water sector. The network will operate worldwide, establish an appropriate balance between advocacy work and concrete action, and will cover all aspects of water resources management as well as water supply and sanitation. Members shall be from governments, utilities, regulators, the private sector, the donor community, the Water and Sanitation Program (WSP), policy consultancy and advocacy organizations, universities and research organizations, as well as civil society organizations.

- This presentation of the WIN was followed by three testimonies on action to fight corruption:

Antonio A. Tujan, Chairperson of the International Initiative on Corruption and Governance (IICG), discussed investment in and the management of municipal water services in the Philippines and in particular the Magdalena Water Project. It highlighted the importance of public information and dissemination through community-based organizations and social movements in supporting transparency and combat corruption.

- Michael Ale, President of the Safe Water for Africa Community Initiative (SWACI) and newly elected Governor of the [World Water Council](#), presented ways to overcome corruption in water services and management in Africa and particularly in Nigeria.
- Raul Gauto, Regional Representative of the [AVINA Foundation](#), a member of the Bellagio Forum, related the Colombian experience with the establishment of an Anti-Corruption Agreement among pipe manufacturers (in cooperation with Transparency International).

Kathleen Shordt, Senior Programme Officer in the [International Water and Sanitation Centre](#) (IRC), provided an outlook on future activities in IRC on transparency and sketched the agenda for the further development of the Initiative to Form a Network to Combat Corruption in the Water Sector. An open discussion among the presenters and members of the audience ensued, which provided an opportunity to address some points in more depth. Overall, there was great enthusiasm and moral support expressed for the new Initiative with its potential to improve integrity and structure of governance in the water sector by increasing transparency and fighting corruption. [R. Andreas Kraemer](#), Member of the Board of the Bellagio Forum for Sustainable Development and a co-convenor of its Water Working Group, and Director of Ecologic – Institute for International and European Environmental Policy, introduced and moderated the event. It was brought to a conclusion by the rhythm of African drums in a demonstration of the vitality of the continent's peoples and their culture.

## Organizer

[Bellagio Forum for Sustainable Development](#) (BFSD), Germany

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