

WaterTech for Resilient Cities

WASHINGTON, March 6, 2015 /3BL Media/ – More than 200 leading water experts gathered here today at the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to address the impacts of floods and droughts on urban water infrastructure and develop the partnerships to fund and implement solutions – building resilient cities. With 60 major Latin American cities situated along coasts, the region’s urban centers are highly vulnerable to rising sea levels and millions of people who depend on rivers fed by Andean glaciers face the possibility that their primary water source may disappear within the next 15 to 25 years.[1] The event called for collaboration between the public and private sectors across the Western Hemisphere to catalyze innovations and investments to make water infrastructure more resilient.

Leaders participating in the landmark event included Luis Alberto Moreno, President of the Inter-American Bank, Catherine Novelli, Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment and Ambassador Harriet Babbitt, Chair, the U.S. Water Partnership Steering Committee.

“Climate change is a major threat to tens of millions of people living in Latin America’s urban centers such as São Paulo, Buenos Aires and Mexico City,” said Ambassador Babbitt. “I encourage parties from the policy, finance, and science and technology communities throughout the region to address these risks by exchanging ideas and co-developing partnerships and solutions with our U.S. public and private sectors.”

The WaterTech for Resilient Cities Conference, scheduled for March 5-6, 2015 at the Inter-American Development Bank, was co-hosted by IDB, the Organization of American States, the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Water Partnership and supported by Bank of America, FEMSA Foundation, McWane Inc., Xylem Inc. and the Regional Policy Dialog. Small roundtables focused on identifying new partners, innovative approaches/practices and key solutions on topics such as built infrastructure, natural disasters and early warning systems, information sharing tools, innovative financing models, twinning arrangements for water operators and much more. The complete agenda is here. A live-stream of the event is available here.

Other principal speakers included Ruffner Page, President, McWane, Inc.; Albert Cho, Vice President of Strategy and Business Development, Xylem Inc.; Dr. Partho Sanyal, Managing Director, Bank of America Merrill Lynch; Dr. Vidal Garza, Director, FEMSA Foundation and Julie T. Katzman, Executive Vice-President, IDB. Dr. Fernando Miralles-Wilhelm, Hydrologist and Water Resources Engineer, IDB served as the Master of Ceremonies.

The event also offered opportunities for networking and one-on-one meetings with key U.S. federal agencies, multilaterals, utilities, associations, universities and private companies. Attendees were also invited to tour the DC Water Blue Plains Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant – the largest in the world – which serves more than two million Washington, D.C. metro area customers.

About the U.S. Water Partnership

Announced in March 2012, the U.S. Water Partnership unites and mobilizes U.S. expertise, resources and ingenuity to address water challenges around the globe, particularly in the developing world. A joint effort of both public and private sectors in the U.S., the partnership is supported more than one hundred partners, including government agencies, academic organizations, water coalitions, NGOs and private sector entities. The U.S. Water Partnerships is being incubated by the Global Environment & Technology Foundation. For more information, please visit: <http://uswaterpartnership.org/>.

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[1] The Nature Conservancy, 2015. <http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/latinamerica/latin-america-adapting-to-climate-change.xml>

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