

## Interview with Dr Mohamed AIT KADI

### Chair of the Technical Committee

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#### 1. Please describe the GWP Technical Committee when you joined, and where it is now.

I consider myself very fortunate to have spent the last 6 years as the Chair of the Technical Committee. The Committee should be seen as the stable backbone of the Global Water Partnership (GWP). It has played over the years a central role in the development of GWP, both by formalizing the concept and practice of IWRM interventions, and by anchoring the regional development of GWP – in most regions, the process of organizing started with the establishment of regional Technical Advisory Committees. The Technical Committee's strength lies in its unique mix of disciplines, professionals with worldwide reputations, from different regions, and international banking organisations, who together address the world's complex and substantive water agenda.

My aim was to build a proactive Technical Committee where members got involved in generating useful knowledge but also one where we played a more active part in shaping the thinking about transition to a water secure world. We have made considerable progress but the job is not finished yet. Our impact measured in terms of knowledge output and international debates footprint has also increased dramatically. All this has been possible thanks to the intellectual generosity of all the very talented and committed fellow TEC members. I am very appreciative of the support and guidance provided to me by the GWP Chairs Letitia Obeng and Ursula Schaefer-Preuss. I was also guided and inspired by the traces left by Toil Jonch Clausen and Roberto Lenton who walked the road before me in this position.

It is vital that knowledge must come from trust-worthy sources; it must be technically credible, practically relevant, and politically legitimate (independent). This is the reputation that TEC has built over many years and is the comparative advantage that has made GWP a trusted and neutral international reference. GWP's future should continue to build on this solid foundation.

#### 2. What has been the most challenging about the work, and what are the biggest rewards.

In this more open and connected world, the knowledge landscape is changing; it has led to an increasing number of players emerging in the international water arena at national, regional, and global levels creating and disseminating knowledge around the world in ever more complex and interconnected networks. Thus, the challenge was to build on TEC's comparative advantage in addressing a more complex substantive water agenda. As you know, TEC's strength lies in:

- Identifying and articulating current and emerging water management issues;
- Transforming ideas and problems into policy/action issues; and

- Generating knowledge that is understandable, reliable, accessible, and useful through a mixture of deep-thinking and professional expertise.

My approach relied on harnessing the latent potential of knowledge and expertise existing in the GWP Regions/Countries as well as partnering with other institutions to cost effectively generate useful knowledge. To achieve this, I have developed the concept of GWP's Knowledge Chain which was further elaborated and consolidated in close collaboration with the Secretariat, the RWPs/CWPs and GWP's Knowledge partners. TEC initiated the organization of a workshop in 2010. All the actors agreed on how they will make the knowledge chain work as bidirectional flows and interactive process. The Knowledge Chain concept has received great deal of interest from many inside and outside GWP and is recognized as the organization's comparative advantage. The concept is interwoven with the publication strategy of TEC. Two new publications series were created:

- Perspectives Papers (seven are published) are intended to galvanise discussion within the GWP network and the larger water and development community.
- Technical Focus Papers are aimed at harnessing and sharing knowledge and experiences generated by Knowledge Partners and Regional/Country Water Partnerships through the GWP Knowledge Chain. An example of the success of the Knowledge Chain approach is the publication in these series of five regional/country IWRM reviews and two TFPs in collaboration with strategic knowledge partners (Blue Plan, DHI and SIWI).

### **3. Where do you see GWP's role in publications going – and specifically the Committee's work.**

Knowledge capital is GWP's greatest asset. Without this GWP is 'just' a Network – a vitally important asset but a Network must have a function and this is centred on generating and managing knowledge. TEC plays a full and active role in developing this capital and provides independent global thought leadership which keeps GWP at the fore of new ideas and challenges. This has been the mainstay of GWP since it was established in 1995.

Policy makers, water management practitioners, business leaders face a constant struggle in keeping pace with the water-related impacts of changes in social, economic, political, trade, climatic and ecological systems. TEC has been at the fore of developing the knowledge needed to address effectively the water challenges and provide improved approaches to integrated water resources management.

TEC produces publications which are cutting edge and address niche areas largely neglected by the growing number of 'water' organisations. They are developed and carefully written specifically for decision-makers, water and non-water professionals, and business leaders, who seek sound practical knowledge based on good science, rather than on current fashion and trends, and which can be interpreted into good and practical water management.

Of course, TEC's key audience is GWP's constituency. Its main publication is called "Background Paper" because it is intended to distill global and regional knowledge and provide to the Network, as a whole, a common understanding of the issues, the options to solve the multidimensional water problems as

well as the analytical, policy and institutional instruments required. These papers capture experiences and lessons learned from different Regions. In doing so they bring together GWP's knowledge networking system. TEC's publications have been translated by the Regions in their languages. They are held in high regard amongst the professional water management community – with several of the background papers being cited widely in academic literature.

Today the world is offering so many opportunities for GWP to pitch in and deliver on the SDGs agenda. This agenda is an unprecedented effort that embodies universal aspirations for achieving a better, more just, equitable, peaceful and sustainable future. It provides a shared normative framework that fosters collaboration across countries, mobilizes all stakeholders and inspires action. To deliver this SDGs new vision we need a fresh thinking. More specifically we need to set in motion new strategies governing the way we live and interact with our environment to ensure that there will be enough water to support, rather than constrain sustainable development and inclusive wellbeing.

In this context we need to give high priority to overcoming the water information and knowledge gaps in many developing countries. GWP has been tirelessly working towards establishing regional platforms designed to help countries to meet their water agenda by facilitating collaboration, awareness, knowledge and capacity building. We should continue to build on this foundation that we have collectively laid.