

## Global water experts to meet in Sri Lanka to tackle the SDG6

*The Hague, Netherlands, 13 March 2019.* International water experts will meet at the [IWA Water and Development Congress & Exhibition](#) in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019, to progress solutions and the uptake of innovation needed to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the dedicated water goal SDG6 by 2030.

Developing and emerging economies face the greatest threats to their water security. In these countries, increasing water scarcity and deteriorating water quality are critical issues. Global changes such as rapid urbanisation and climate change amplify these concerns. The need for safe treatment of wastewater is fundamental to the well-being of societies, economies, and the environment. In a globalised and connected world, such issues cannot be dealt with separately but must be tackled together.

“With 2.1 billion people globally still lacking access to safely managed water supplies and 4.5 billion without safe sanitation, there is an urgent need to accelerate the diffusion of knowledge, innovation and sustainable water solutions,” says **Diane d’Arras, President of the International Water Association (IWA)**. “Transformational change is required to deliver water and sanitation for all within the upcoming 11 years under the Sustainable Development Goals agenda.”

It is in response to these needs and opportunities that more than 3000 water experts from around the world will meet in Colombo, Sri Lanka in December this year. The [IWA Water and Development Congress & Exhibition](#) series focuses on the transition to new ways of managing water resources and delivering water services in emerging economies. This 2019 edition, organised by IWA together with the host country Sri Lanka and the National Water Supply & Drainage Board, deals in particular with drinking water treatment supply, faecal sludge and wastewater treatment for resource recovery, urban and city water services, integrated water management solutions at city and basin scale, and cross-cutting areas that contribute to the achievement of dedicated water goal SDG 6.

“We need to transition to a circular economy approach, where we try to reuse water as many times as possible and where we endeavour to generate value from the waste streams, particularly energy and nutrients,” says **Kala Vairavamoorthy, Executive Director of the IWA**.

### The IWA Water and Development Congress & Exhibition in Asia

In the Asia Pacific region, home to two-third of the world’s poor, water quality is at a critical stage, as growing volumes of untreated wastewater from households, cities, agriculture and industry continue to be released into the natural environment. This links to the region’s role in

the globalised world. For example, 20% of our global wastewater comes from the textile industry, and the dyeing industry is the second largest water polluter worldwide, according to [UN Environment](#). The fashion industry in Asia continues to grow to meet global demand. According to the World Bank, the most polluted river in the world is Indonesia's [Citarum river](#), which has more than 200 textile factories along its bank. Over the years, the Indonesian government has established several ongoing clean-up efforts as [a clean river](#) would bring countless benefits to the ecosystem, economies and societies.

“Unprecedented challenges offer opportunities to implement a new paradigm for sustainable water and wastewater management,” comments **Kala Vairavamoorthy, Executive Director of the IWA**. “This is particularly the case in emerging economies, where more than 85% of wastewater is discharged untreated into rivers, lakes and oceans. The next 10 to 20 years will be the golden age for solutions for wastewater and sanitation provision in emerging economies. The potential to innovate and implement a step change in approach is great. This will result in improved health of our societies and the environment.”

In Asian countries, as with emerging economies in general, there is an urgent need to accelerate diffusion of innovation and uptake of sustainable water solutions, products and services. This can catalyse the transformation required to deliver water and sanitation for all by 2030 under the Sustainable Development Goals agenda.

### **The 2019 IWA Water and Development Congress & Exhibition in Colombo, Sri Lanka**

The IWA Water and Development Congress & Exhibition is the international biennial water event with a special focus on developing and emerging economies – countries with some of the most significant water challenges now and in the future. The 2019 congress is the second of the congress series organised by the International Water Association taking place in the Asia region. Congress participants and exhibitors will explore how policies, regulation, new financial models, innovative research, and best practices from around the world can help meet the growing threats to both water availability and water quality, and make progress towards achieving the human rights to water and sanitation.

### **The International Water Association will hold the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the IWA Water and Development Congress & Exhibition in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 1-5 December 2019.**

Previous editions: 2017 - Buenos Aires, Argentina; 2015 - Dead Sea, Jordan; 2013 - Nairobi, Kenya; 2011 - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; 2009 - Mexico City, Mexico.

To know more about the IWA Water and Development Congress & Exhibition 2019, please visit [www.waterdevelopmentcongress.org](http://www.waterdevelopmentcongress.org).

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## **About the IWA**

The [International Water Association](https://www.iwa-network.org) is the largest international network of water professionals working towards a water-wise world. With members in more than 130 countries and over 70 years heritage, the association focuses on developing solutions for water and wastewater management.

As a knowledge hub for the latest science, technology and best practice in the water sector at large, the IWA works to place water on the global political agenda and to influence best practice in regulation and policy making.

The IWA is a global water association that brings together water professionals to close the gap between sciences and practice to provide solutions to the water challenges the world is facing.

[www.iwa-network.org](https://www.iwa-network.org)