THE UN WORLD WATER ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME (WWAP)
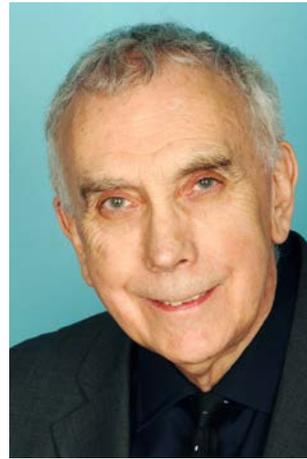## PRESENTS:

STOCKHOLM WATER PRIZE LAUREATE
Professor J. A. (Tony) Allan
King's College London and SOAS London

'Food-water security: beyond hydrology and the water sector'

Monday 16 April 2012 at 4 pm

Venue: WWAP Secretariat
Villa La Colombella - Località di Colombella Alta
06134 Colombella, Perugia, Italy

Free Entrance. Please email confirmation of attendance by noon Friday 13th April: f.greco@unesco.org For more info tel: +39 075 59 11 028

Presentation Abstract

The presentation will highlight the dynamic, and strategic, nature of water and food security.

Food security and water security are inextricably linked. Society uses 90% of the water it abstracts and consumes in its food supply chains. These food supply chains keep economies' food and water secure. They 'convey' the water embedded in food commodities from farms to nearby cities as well as to a billion international consumers many of them on the other side of the world. The way societies organise and access food supply chains mainly determine the extent to which

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communities are currently food-water secure. The vital role of the private sector in such food-water securitisation is not yet widely recognised. Private sector food supply chains operate beneath a complex pact between the state and the market. The agents in these food supply chains – mainly farmers - determine whether food-water is managed sustainably and securely. The term food-water is used throughout the chapter. It is the water used to produce food and comprises 90% of the water needed by an individual or an economy. Food-water can be either green or blue water. Non-food-water is the remaining 10%. It is always blue water.

Virtual Water

People do not only consume water when they drink it or take a shower. In 1993, professor Allan, strikingly demonstrated this by introducing the "virtual water" concept, which measures how water is embedded in the production and trade of food and consumer products. Behind that morning cup of coffee are 140 litres of water used to grow, produce, package and ship the beans. That is roughly the same amount of water used by an average person daily in England for drinking and household needs. The ubiquitous hamburger needs an estimated 2,400 litres of water. Per capita, Americans consume around 6,800 litres of virtual water every day, over triple that of a Chinese person.

Virtual water has major impacts on global trade policy and research, especially in water-scarce regions, and has redefined discourse in water policy and management. By explaining how and why nations such as the US, Argentina and Brazil 'export' billions of litres of water each year, while others like Japan, Egypt and Italy 'import' billions, the virtual water concept has opened the door to more productive water use.

Short bio-note of Professor J A [Tony] Allan

Tony Allan [BA Durham 1958, PhD London 1971] heads the London Water Research Group at King's College London and SOAS. He specialises in the analysis of water resources in semi-arid regions and on the role of global systems in ameliorating local and regional water deficits. In his early career he was concerned with hydrological and environmental issues but gradually turned his attention to the social and political when it became evident that environmental science could not explain why people manage water as they do. He pointed out that

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the water short economies achieve water and food security mainly by importing water intensive food commodities: the concept of virtual water. Mr Allan provides advice to governments and agencies especially in the Middle East on water policy and water policy reform. His ideas on water security are set out in The Middle East water question: hydropolitics and the global economy and in a new book entitled Virtual water. He is currently working on why the accounting systems in the food supply chain are dangerously blind to the costs of water and of mis-allocating it. He also works on the water/energy nexus. In 2008 Mr Allan was awarded the Stockholm Water Prize in recognition of his contribution to water science and water policy.

How to reach us

View WWAP Headquarters - Perugia, Italy in a larger map
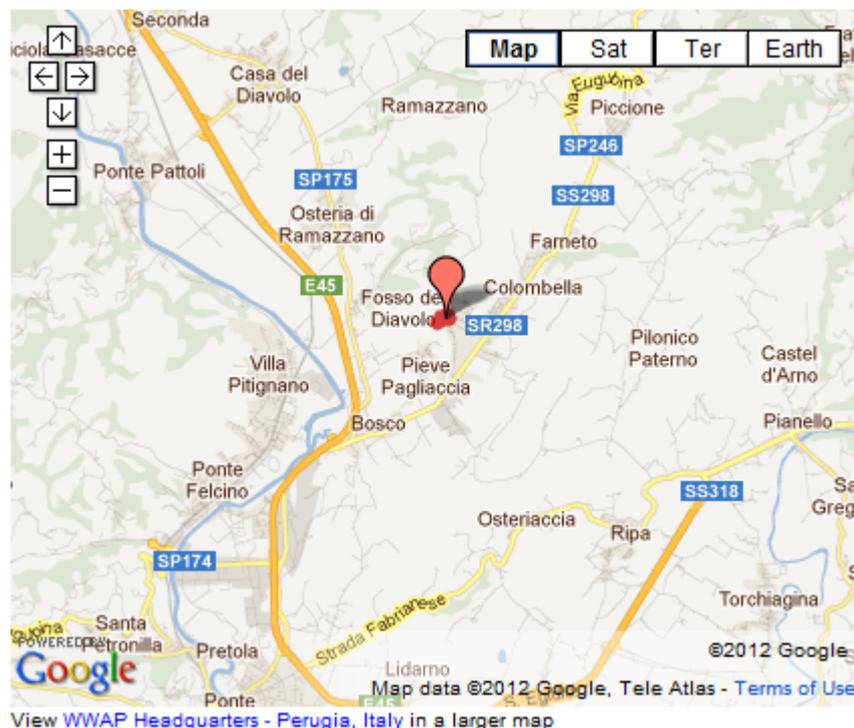
Directions to Villa Colombella by car:

- Follow Route E 45 towards Cesena.
- Take the Exit for Bosco / Gubbio (SS 298 to Gubbio) and make a left turn following the sign for Gubbio.
- Continue straight towards Gubbio.
- After approx. 1.6 km you will see, on the right, the sign "Agriturismo La locanda dei Golosi Ristorante". Continue straight.
- After 50 meters, turn left (follow the sign 'UNESCO Programme Office for Water Assessment').
- Continue on the uphill main road for 1.5 km until you reach Villa Colombella

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