

International conference on sustainable water management: The Swiss government (IDARio) and Swiss Re discuss solutions for improving use of water resources

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Quality water supplies are an endangered resource in the world today. This causes ecological, economic and social challenges and risks which the Swiss government and Swiss Re will discuss with experts from international governmental and non-governmental organisations, environmental groups and the business and water management communities at Swiss Re's Centre for Global Dialogue in Rüschlikon on 25 and 26 April. The conference's main topics are improving the policy framework and best management practices of sustainable water management.

Today, over one billion people, 20% of the world's population, have no access to clean drinking water. By 2025, 3.5 billion, almost 50% of the world's population will suffer from insufficient water supplies; about half will suffer acute water shortage. Polluted water and water-borne disease cause five million deaths and 30 million cases of illness every year. Yet deteriorating water quality is only part of the story. Wasteful exploitation of the resource means that water - of whatever quality - is becoming increasingly scarce.

Participants at the conference will concentrate discussions on the policy framework for directly influencing water resource protection and on fostering best practices for sustainable water use.

The Swiss government and Swiss Re believe in dialogue amongst all stakeholders and partnership to develop innovative solutions for the sustainable use of water. Public/private partnerships can contribute to the supply of investment and the creation of the effective regulatory conditions to achieve better water management and quality.

Conclusions and recommendations from the conference will be available to the public and will serve as input to the Swiss presentation on water conservation at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, 26 August to 4 September 2002.

International prize for sustainable water management

To demonstrate its commitment to water issues, Swiss Re is launching an "International RE-Source Award for Sustainable Watershed Management", endowed with an annual prize of USD 100,000. Eligible are projects intended to heighten public awareness of the ecological, social and economic significance of clean water and water access. Swiss Re's aim is to reward those working towards implementing the principles of sustainability in watershed management.

Today's first day will begin with discussions amongst conference participants and representatives of the media. On Friday afternoon Joseph Deiss, Swiss Minister of Foreign Affairs will participate in discussions with decision makers from business, science and government.


For further information please contact:

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More information about the conference: www.ruschlikon.net


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