



OPENING BY GUY FRADIN

There is no global treaty or protocol that requires the treatment of urban waste waters. These include discharges from households, industry and storm-water overflows. This is despite the fact that, at a global scale, such discharges are estimated to contain about 15 times more pollution than 2 centuries ago. And this trend keeps on growing!

Urban Waste Water Treatment is frequently a “silent” sector, perhaps due to social or cultural taboos: in nearly all languages, waste water treatment is easily confused with purification of water for drinking! For the politician it does not deliver votes, and for bankers it has no profitability!

The objective of our session : «Fighting poverty by managing waste waters »

Five major players have accepted a challenge: Attempt to establish that urban waste water treatment delivers benefits for sustainable development that is to say for people, the environment and the economy, as a means of reducing poverty equitably. They are: The Municipal Utility of Greater Istanbul (ISKY), the Moroccan Sebou River Basin Agency (ABH, Sebou), the Mexican Valley River Basin Agency (GRAVAMEX), the Greater Paris Union of Sewerage Utilities (SIAAP), and the Seine-Normandy Water Agency (AESN) in France.

Their local perspectives will be preceded by a brief review of the global situation, presented by a keynote speaker from the United Nations Environment Programme. A panel of five experts will then respond to these presentations: our panel members come from Columbia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Romania and France, and represent nearly all sections of civil society. Benedito Braga, Chief Executive Officer of the Brazilian Federal Water Agency, and Vice Chairman of the World Water Council, has graciously accepted to chair this session: our sincere thanks for this.

I'm sure we will have a lively debate !

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