

During the first week of October 2012, the Caribbean Water and Waste Water Association (CWWA) held its 21st Annual Conference at the Atlantis Resort on Paradise Islands, Nassau, Bahamas. The event gathered international public and private representatives to discuss matters associated with Water and Sanitation.



The PAHO/WHO Representative, Dr Gerry Eijkemans, delivered the Keynote Address during the opening Ceremony of the CWWA (*photo above*).

On Wednesday October 3rd, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) held a Symposium on Water as a Basic Human Health issue, emphasizing the importance of access to water and sanitation for Public Health.

During the first part of the symposium, special interest topics pertaining to water and sanitation were addressed. Highlighted issues included: Water and sanitation as an Essential Human Right; the MDGs progress in the Caribbean, and analysis with and without the inclusion of Haiti; the importance of water and sanitation in the considerations for adaptation to climate change; migration in the sub-region and water and sanitation in the context of human security; and finally on the coalition for the elimination of Cholera in Hispaniola and Water for All.

Following these presentations, Puerto Rico, The Bahamas, Jamaica and St. Vincent and the Grenadines presented the water and sanitation situations, lessons learned and challenges faced in their country contexts.

The second part of the symposium consisted of working groups, which discussed and put forth three main statements on the issues of:

- The achievement of safe drinking water
- Support for the coalition on the elimination of cholera in Hispaniola and sanitation and water for all
- Addressing underserved populations in the Caribbean; with a special focus on migrants

In conclusion, the PAHO symposium on water and sanitation as an essential human right on October 3rd called for actionable commitment in the three aforementioned areas, as a means to strengthen the political will, the collaboration and the efforts in addressing water and sanitation issues as a human right in the sub-region.



*At the conference. Dr Gerry Eijkemans (left) with Ing. Ana Treasure, Regional Advisor on Water and Sanitation, based in PAHO-PERU.*

A highlight of the Conference was the signing by the outgoing President of CWWA, of the Declaration to support the ‘Regional Coalition for Water and Sanitation to Eliminate Cholera in the Island of Hispaniola’, in this way joining many partners in the Region, including PAHO, UNICEF and the IDB.

During the High Level Meeting of Ministers responsible for Water, held 4-5 October, the Ministers signed a Resolution to applaud the CWWA's action in joining the Coalition for the Elimination of Cholera. For The Bahamas, the Honorable Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Philip Brave Davis signed the Resolution for The Bahamas.