

Date Published: 04 Jul 2011

Dr Maria Neira,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon.

Thank you for inviting me to be here at the Global Launch of the 4th edition of the World Health Organization's Guidelines for Drinking-water Quality at the Singapore International Water Week 2011.

WHO's Role in Safe Management of Drinking Water

2 The provision of safe drinking water is a key pillar of public health, and for over 50 years, the WHO has been playing a leading role in providing guidance on water safety measures to Member States.

3 The Guidelines for Drinking-water Quality is one of the WHO's longest-standing publications. It forms an authoritative basis that countries worldwide, including Singapore, use to set national regulations and standards in support of water safety for public health. The Guidelines are also used by organisations and institutions worldwide as a source of information on water quality and health and on effective management approaches.

Singapore-WHO Cooperation

4 Over the last 40 years, Singapore has developed significant expertise in the development and implementation of approaches to safe water management. This is due in part to the close working relationship that Singapore has had with the WHO since the signing of the Basic Agreement in 1966. In 2007, Singapore and the WHO entered into a Cooperation Arrangement to promote collaboration in water quality management, water reuse and safe water management. This cooperation leverages on Singapore's expertise in safe drinking water management, especially in water-stressed situations, and on the WHO's leading role in guiding Member States on water safety measures.

5 Since then, Singapore and the WHO have jointly organised several activities for the benefit of the global community. These include research collaboration provision of training and sharing of best practices through WHO conferences and workshops, publication of guidance documents, and supporting the WHO in responding to water-related issues. We are also happy to have contributed to the 4th Edition Guidelines through partnering the WHO under our Cooperation Arrangement.

Launch of 4th edition of WHO Guidelines for Drinking-water Quality

6 The new Guidelines emphasise a preventive and holistic approach in the management of drinking water quality, through measures such as preventing pollution of water catchments, acting on sound local risk assessments, being vigilant of trends and changes, and communicating effectively with the public. This is timely in light of the many uncertainties, such as climate change, that the world faces today.

7 The supply of safe drinking water is one of the key challenges in the search for sustainable water solutions. In line with that, the Singapore International Water Week provides a global platform to address these challenges by bringing together policymakers, businesses and water experts to discuss and identify waters solutions for a changing urban environment.

Conclusion

8 The Singapore International Water Week is pleased to host the global launch of this new Edition of the WHO Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality. This marks another milestone in our common journey towards achieving a safe, sustainable water supply delivered reliably to the global community.

9 Thank you.

National Archives of Singapore