

## GOVERNANCE, INNOVATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TOP ISSUES AT TWO GLOBAL WATER EVENTS

*Singapore convenes global water industry leaders to discuss sustainable water management and develop next generation of leaders via inaugural water utilities forum and leadership programme*

**26 September 2013** – Over 200 global water leaders from 48 countries gathered in Singapore for two inaugural events – the Singapore International Water Week (SIWW) Water Utilities Leaders Forum and the Aquarius Programme. Held concurrently in the week of 16 – 19 September, both events convened some of the leading minds of the water industry – from countries such as China, India, Malaysia, Russia, Germany, Finland, Saudi Arabia and USA, across the entire water value chain – bringing together experts from the government, utility sector, business practitioners, and thought leaders. Both events were graced by Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for the Environment and Water Resources.

Themed “Mapping Challenges & Solutions”, the two-day SIWW Water Utilities Leaders Forum provided an unprecedented platform for global utility leaders to discuss challenges faced, share unique perspectives and formulate solutions on water utility issues such as planning, operations and financing. The Forum is a key initiative of the Singapore International Water Week, the global platform for sharing and co-creating innovative water solutions.

Running parallel, the Aquarius Programme was initiated to develop the next generation of regional and global water business leaders through an exclusive four-day leadership programme which tapped on the business acumen and insights of an esteemed faculty of industry champions on the water business in the globalised Asian market – aimed at generating new thinking and knowledge in response to the changing economic, technological and social landscape. The Programme was jointly organised by PUB, Singapore’s national water agency, Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB) and the Human Capital Leadership Institute (HCLI), and aims to position Singapore as a world-class, high impact, water talent development hub.

The key issues and learning points distilled from both events were complementary, and focused on the areas of governance and leadership, technological innovation, and community engagement. The importance of good governance and leadership was stressed in the context of providing the enabling framework to drive change, aid water organisations in overcoming challenges, and help the water industry to grow.

In addition, embracing technological innovation was recognised as the way forward for the water industry – utilities and private companies should capitalise on mutually-beneficial private-public partnerships (PPP) which can result in quality improvements and cost effective solutions. However, instead of being technology recipients, utilities must take the lead in actively guiding water innovation to optimise operations.

Community engagement was also a pressing issue across the global water industry, with water leaders concurring that there is a strong need for public education and more transparent engagement with the communities on various water issues including service delivery, water conservation and taking ownership of water security.

Dr Alexander Zehnder, Chief Executive Officer of Triple Z, who chaired the SIWW Water Utilities Leaders Forum session on planning, remarked, "I learnt a lot about the issues other utilities face, as well as the needs of different countries. Singapore is clearly the leader in the water sector and naturally a water hub where stakeholders meet to discuss about issues on water," This view was also echoed during a mass sharing session where almost all the leaders agreed that the Forum created a better understanding of the common challenges facing the water utility sector, and facilitated connections amongst peers to co-create solutions.

"The Aquarius Programme leverages Singapore's expertise in water governance and focuses on innovative water solutions, and shares this knowledge with the rest of the region. The programme is a milestone achievement in talent and leadership development for the water industry as it helps to groom the next generation of water business leaders. The strategic partnerships developed over the course of the programme also led to conversation amongst the industry leaders and the exchange of good ideas and technical expertise will benefit the water industry," added Ms Cindy Wallis-Lage, President, Global Water Business of Black & Veatch and Aquarius Programme Speaker.

"The salient points of the rich discussions at both events will be further developed and will pave the way for more insightful conversations with fellow water practitioners from all over the world. We will deep dive into these issues at the second run of both events next year together with a larger audience of water policymakers, industry leaders and utility managers," said Mr Chew Men Leong, Chief Executive of PUB, SIWW Water Utilities Leaders Forum Chairperson and Aquarius Programme Speaker.

The discussions at the SIWW Water Utilities Leaders Forum and the Aquarius Programme will be continued next year at the upcoming SIWW 2014, held from 1-5 June 2014, alongside the World Cities Summit and CleanEnviro Summit Singapore. As a co-located event, the next run of the Aquarius Programme will be held from 30 May – 2 June 2014.

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### **About Environment and Water Industry Programme Office**

The Environment & Water Industry Programme Office (EWI) was set up in May 2006 to spearhead the development of the environment and water industry. Led by PUB and working with partner agencies such as EDB Singapore, IE Singapore and SPRING Singapore, EWI adopts a three-pronged strategy with technology as a key pillar. Our vision is to grow value-added (VA) contribution from the water sector from \$0.5 billion (0.3% of GDP) in 2003 to \$1.7 billion (0.6% of GDP) by 2015. For more information, please visit [www.ewi.sg](http://www.ewi.sg).

### **About Singapore International Water Week 2014**

The Singapore International Water Week (SIWW) is the global platform to share and co-create innovative water solutions. Stakeholders from the global water industry gather at SIWW to share business opportunities and showcase the latest water technologies. SIWW is part of the strategic programme of the Singapore Government to grow the water industry and develop water technologies.

Explore collaborations and innovative water solutions within a vibrant ecosystem of companies, research institutions and water leaders. Experience Singapore's "living laboratory" and learn how sustainable water management is essential to liveable cities. Shape the future of water and cities at SIWW, the world's only integrated event on water and urban sustainability.

In line with global water industry trends and opportunities, SIWW 2014 will feature discussions on four themes, namely: Municipal Water, Industrial Water, Integrated City-Environment-Water, and Future of Water, where we explore forward-looking solutions to meet future challenges and scenarios.

### **About PUB, the national water agency**

PUB is a statutory board under the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources. It is the national water agency that manages Singapore's water supply, water catchment and used water in an integrated way.

### **About PUB's tagline: Water for All: Conserve, Value, Enjoy**

PUB has ensured a diversified and sustainable supply of water for Singapore with the Four National Taps (local catchment water, imported water, NEWater, desalinated water).

To provide water for all, PUB calls on all to play our part to conserve water, keep our water catchments and waterways clean and build a relationship with water so we can enjoy our water resources. If we all play our part, we can have enough water for all our needs – for industry, for living, for life.

### **Find out more about us**

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### **About Economic Development Board**

The Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB) is the lead government agency for planning and executing strategies to enhance Singapore's position as a global business centre. EDB dreams, designs and delivers solutions that create value for investors and companies in Singapore. Our mission is to create for Singapore, sustainable economic growth with vibrant business and good job opportunities.

Visit [www.sedb.com](http://www.sedb.com) for more information.

### **About Human Capital Leadership Institute**

The Human Capital Leadership Institute is a national centre of excellence, with the mission to help organisations accelerate human capital and leadership development in Asia, for a globalised Asia.

The Institute achieves this by driving Pan-Asian research, creating cutting edge executive development programmes and fostering rich networks between leaders in business, government, academia and consulting. [www.hcli.org](http://www.hcli.org).

*HCLI is a strategic alliance between MOM, EDB and SMU*

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16 - 19 SEPT 2013 | SINGAPORE  
**AQUARIUS PROGRAMME**  
RAISING THE NEXT WAVE OF WATER BUSINESS LEADERS

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