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The First International Conference of the Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance Zaragoza, Spain - 3 to 4 December 2009

Zaragoza, 1st December 2009. The First International Conference of the Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance with the title "Raising Awareness and Communicating the Urgency to Act" invites up to 60 water operators from all parts of the world to come together in Zaragoza on 3 and 4 December 2009 to exchange experiences and build new partnerships.

The conference is jointly organized by the United Nations Office to Support the International Decade for Action 'Water for Life' 2005-2015 (UNO-IDfA), which implements the UN-Water Decade Programme on Advocacy and Communication (UNW-DPAC), and the Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance, hosted by UN-Habitat, with the support of the regional platforms of Water Operators Partnerships (WOPs) and the water operators from 5 continents (Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, Middle East and Europe), the Municipality of the City of Zaragoza, the Government of Aragon, the Spanish Ministry of the Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs, and the Ebro River Basin Authority.

The objectives of the International Conference are to bring together water and wastewater utilities to discuss and exchange experience on the modalities of different legal and financial mechanisms, to support and collaborate in the south-south and north-south Water Operators' Partnerships as a corporate social responsibility and communications tool. Good practices on communication will be presented and discussed and collaboration and cooperation channels will be analyzed.

The conference will be the platform to introduce and launch "Water Smart", the United Nations communication campaign for Water Operators on the Urgency to Act with special focus on the World Water Day 2010 which concentrates the water world in March next year on water quality.

UN-HABITAT is the United Nations agency for human settlements. It is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. UN-HABITAT's Water and Sanitation Programme is concerned with improving access to safe water and helping provide adequate sanitation to millions of low-income urban dwellers. UN-HABITAT hosts the **Global Water Operators' Partnership Alliance**, an international network of actors working to promote and implement not-for-profit water operators' partnerships to improve the capacity and performance of water utilities, with the ultimate objective of improving service to the poor.

Water Decade 2005-2015. The primary goal of the 'Water for Life' Decade is to promote efforts to fulfill international commitments on water-related issues by 2015. These commitments include the Millennium Development Goals to reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and sanitation by 2015, to stop unsustainable exploitation of water resources. The Water Decade also promotes the development and implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management and water efficiency plans.

The United Nations Office to Support the International Decade for Action 'Water for Life' 2005-2015 (UNO-IDfA) in Zaragoza implements the UN-Water Decade Programme on Advocacy and Communication (UNW-DPAC). The 26 member entities of UN-Water, the United Nations interagency coordination mechanism on water, support Member States worldwide, in their efforts to achieve water and sanitation goals and targets. UNW-DPAC facilitates and implements communication, information and awareness raising activities in the framework of the 'Water for Life' Decade. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) hosts and leads UNO-IDfA/UNW-DPAC.