

# **NATIONAL WATER AND HEALTH CONGRESS**

## **WITH INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION**

**OCTOBER 26 - 30, 2015 / ANTALYA**

### **FINAL DECLARATION**

National Water and Health Congress was held between October 26 - 30, 2015 by Public Health Institution of Turkey affiliated to the Ministry of Health, in cooperation with Karadeniz Technical University, Istanbul University and Çukurova University.

Our congress tackled **EVERYTHING ABOUT WATER** such as drinking-utility water, packaged water (natural spring water, drinking water and mineral water), bathing water, swimming pools, waste water, thermal springs, aquaculture, water contamination, preservation of water resources, water management in disasters, water in public areas, monitoring of water quality and laboratories and national and international regulations on water.

Congress participants were academicians from various fields (such as public health, aquacultural engineering, environmental engineering, food engineering, biology, chemistry, etc.), Ministries and public institutions/agencies, municipalities, special provincial administrations, experts and employees from the Water and Sewerage Administration, central and provincial staff from the Ministry of Health and representatives from non-governmental organizations and related sectors.

Nearly thirty public institutions and agencies such as the Ministry of Forest and Water Affairs, Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Culture and Tourism and non-governmental organizations provided institutional support to our congress and many companies from private sector contributed to the organization.

11 international speakers, coming from different countries and from various institutions including the Regional Office for Europe of the World Health Organization and European Environment Agency participated in our Congress. Other than the invited speakers, there were poster and oral presentations from 6 countries.

1050 national and international participants attended our congress, 26 sessions and 3 conferences were held in three halls simultaneously and a total of 116 speakers made their

presentations in panels. A one-day "*Applied Training on Water Microbiology*" was held prior to the congress as aimed at packaged water suppliers. 36 participants of this training were given certificates of participation.

Also, a half-day "*Training on the Cleaning of Water Tanks and Drinking-Utility Water Disinfection*" was held for employees in municipalities. 142 participants from municipalities and the directorate of public health was given certificates of participation. Both trainings aroused great interest.

During the Congress 160 papers were submitted, 66 oral presentations were made and 94 presentations were hanged in the poster field throughout the congress for participants' view.

Our Congress also broke new grounds in terms of congress activities. In order to arouse the interest of society towards "water" and to house an artistic activity in harmony with our congress theme, we held "*Photography Contest on Everything about Water*" which was approved and supported by the Photographic Arts Federation of Turkey (PAFT). The contest broke a record with 425 participants and 1344 photographs. Owners of the ranked photographs were awarded. All 35 photographs were displayed in our exhibition area throughout the Congress and attracted great attention by congress participants.

Also an art exhibition titled "*Adell Water Culture in Anatolia*" containing some important pieces that demonstrate the role and reflections of water in Anatolian Culture met our participants in foyer areas throughout the congress.

Views presented and underscored during scientific sessions of our Congress were:

1. Water is indispensable for human life. The principle of "supply of safety drinking water and sanitation" within the concept of "primary care" that was considered as the most fundamental service by the state in the "Declaration of Primary Healthcare" that was adopted in Alma-Ata, the capital of Kazakhstan, by the World Health Organization in 1978 reiterates everyone has a right to access to clean and safe water.

Water is a matter and an asset that must be protected from all kinds of pollutants and dangers for the sake of today and future generations.

2. Water is a resource that is swiftly and heavily affected by environmental factors. Thus, it significantly affects the quality and health of aquaculture and agricultural and animal products is contacts. This is the reason why preserving water is vital and essential.

3. In order to preserve underground and surface waters and sustain all values added by water to human life all public and private institutions and agencies, non-governmental organizations, etc. must act within a multi-stakeholder health responsibility. In this sense, "Program for Developing Multi-Stakeholder Health Responsibility" developed by Public Health Institution of Turkey affiliated to the Ministry of Health would be a useful guide.

Revision and improvement of this guide must continue to be conducted with multiple shareholders. It is clear that all parties related to water must work together for the same purpose.

- a. Therefore, the state has many important duties to plan, regulate, perform and ensure water preservation, the supply water to all sections of the society and to habitational and business areas and the disposal and recycling of waste water. The state fulfills these duties by organizing public and private institutions/agencies and strives for the better. All local and central administrations that fulfill these duties on behalf of the state must set health as priority in all policies they develop and implement. And one of the most important factors that have an impact on health is water and is must be approached within this context.
- b. Management mechanism regarding water in central and local administrations must be discussed once again. It was considered very beneficial for all acts and actions regarding the management of drinking-utility water and wastewater in provinces to be carried out by a single administration that is authorized and commissioned for this subject, as it was the case in metropolitan municipalities. Therefore, it would be useful to manage water from the center by establishing a similar management structure in provinces that are not metropolitan municipalities.
- c. Local administrations are responsible and obliged to provide clean, safe and continuous drinking-utility water to the society. Local administrations must ensure, without any doubt, that running water is ready for drinking and utility purposes. It is one of the fundamental duties of local administrations to refresh the trust in tap water in order to ensure people's trust in running water for drinking and utility purposes. Local administrations must put great effort into fulfilling this duty.

Local administrations must tackle, plan, implement and improve this issue with priority in a way that is also covers wastewater.

- d.** Preservation of water resources, improvement, maintenance and hygiene of water tanks and sustainable disinfection are important problems in providing safe water. Municipalities and special provincial administrations must take necessary strides for the improvement of the mentioned issues and set water as their priority agenda item.
  - e.** Drinking water and wastewater treatment facilities must be reviewed in terms of new technological approaches, expediency, management methods and financing. These facilities must also be established by local administrations by developing sustainable models and their management must be extended throughout the country.
  - f.** In terms of water management it is compulsory to assign professional, educated, qualified, competent and an adequate number of staff in all fields where water and health are related, especially in local administrations. In this sense, professionals must be authorized by providing them with formal education and certificate trainings and effective and constant in-service trainings must be organized for official personnel on water in public spaces. And in terms of recruitment policies, it is required to recruit professionals and certified staff.
  - g.** Private sector that operates in all fields is responsible for the preservation of water and water resources. These responsibilities must not be overlooked for economic values. Sustainable water resources are a must for everyone.
- 4.** We need multicenter, multi-sectoral scientific epidemiologic studies concerning the effects of water on health and water related diseases. This should be a priority in the supports provided by relevant institutions in planning and conducting these studies.
  - 5.** Public and private institutions and organizations that conduct studies regarding “water” should make the best use of modern and scientifically reliable techniques and technologies in monitoring the quality of water and preventing and eradicating contamination. Scientific perspective and support of the institutions/ organizations such as TÜBİTAK, universities and institutes should be guide in the utilization of these techniques.
  - 6.** It is a saddening fact that Turkey is not rich in water resources; to the contrary, it is among the water poor countries. In this context, local administrations should develop

resolutions for seepage loss problems, regulate/ limit the utilization of water for industrial and agricultural purposes and raise public awareness for the effective use of water.

7. Chlorination is the most effective method for water disinfection. Many international institutions proved that the byproducts that appear after chlorination is not carcinogenic and can be prevented with the decrease in organic pollution.
8. In the speeches that were delivered during the Congress it was reiterated that we are aware of the importance of the packaged water in public health. Packaged waters are of great importance in supplying healthy drinking water for public in the areas without water supply network and emergency/ disasters.
9. Auto control mechanism should be operational and strengthened in the stages of packaged water production.
10. It is important for future generations and water protection to develop environment friendly and recyclable goods for the packages of packaged water
11. Local administrations should determine their water management policies for disasters in advance.
12. It is obvious that the management of thermal waters from one center with integrated systems is a beneficial method. The negative results of the use of thermal water by different enterprises should be presented and a related legislation should be drawn up. In addition, wastewater treatment systems that work with the reinjection of thermal waters should be compulsory.
13. We should review and monitor the rules regarding general hygiene and water safety in thermal facilities that are of great importance both for public health and medical tourism.
14. We should disseminate the efforts across the country for providing clean and safe water in areas such as hospitals, schools, recreational areas, dormitories, malls, sports facilities etc., appropriate disposal, treatment and reuse methods for waste water in these areas.
15. In-building water networks are of same importance as network systems in providing safe water. The Legislation on in-building water structures should be reviewed.
16. According to WHO, climate change will be the biggest health risk in the next century. Within this context, we should take measures to mitigate the negative effects of climate change on water resources.

17. Inspection mechanism for bathing water should be strengthened.
18. Cyanotoxins should be assessed both in bathing waters and also drinking and utility waters.
19. We need new approaches for water and wastewater management in hospitals and hospital managers should be informed about these issues.
20. Water has impact on cultures and cultures determine the perception toward water. Therefore, we can dwell on the concept of “water friendship” in the efforts of raising public awareness.
21. We cannot manage water only with national efforts and works. International cooperation is inevitable and compulsory.
22. This national congress with international participation should be organized in the international platform and should become a tradition with the support of many institutions and organizations. Workers/ staff who have active role in the field of water should have a say in courses and interactive and applied trainings. In this sense, Congress should be improved and enhanced.

We feel proud to see that the first congress where everything about water was discussed in Turkey was a success for everyone.

As the Organization Committee of the Congress, we would like to thank to Public Health Institution of Turkey, Karadeniz Technical University, İstanbul University and Çukurova University in particular and also the members of the Scientific Committee, each public and private institutions and organizations, each participant and everyone who contributed to Water and Health Congress with International Participation.

**ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE  
OF NATIONAL WATER AND HEALTH CONGRESS  
WITH INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION**