

# **GROUP OF 77 MINISTERIAL FORUM ON WATER**

**Muscat, Sultanate of Oman**

**23-25 February 2009**





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MUSCAT, SULTANATE OF OMAN, 23-25 FEBRUARY 2009**

**Introduction**

Both history and current state of affairs confirm that the survival of human-kind and development are closely connected with water. They also confirm that water is the fundamental source of the welfare and prosperity of human beings and the foremost support for the achievement of development goals.

Water draws great international attention and is considered one of the most pressing problems that all countries have to deal with. The current situation manifests the magnitude of the problem. There are about one billion people who do not access to clean water; approximately 2.6 billion people who lack appropriate wastewater systems, about 1.5 million children die yearly from diarrhea and other diseases caused by contaminated water and inappropriate wastewater systems.

It is clear that increasing water consumption in various sectors, insufficiency of water resources, lack of balance between supply and demand, depletion of water resources and absence of prompt, integrated water policies, have led to this critical situation. Several studies and indicators confirm that the world, in the next few years, will face a lot of challenges and water can have a great impact on future development strategies, and indeed could become a decisive factor in political tension and thus world security.

Against this background and in accordance with relevant ministerial mandates, the member countries of the Group of 77 (G-77) have agreed to support the promotion of South-South cooperation and activities related to the exchange of scientific and technological know-how in sourcing, efficient management, preservation and sustainable use of water, in accordance with the existing and relevant provisions of international law. In this context, the Ministerial Forum on Water will provide a valuable opportunity for bringing together Ministers, administrators and practitioners to address the common challenges and strategies for the management of water resources, with special focus on the promotion of the exchange of scientific and technological know-how and the sharing of experiences and best practices among developing countries in the South.

## **About G-77**

### **Establishment:**

The Group of 77 (G-77) was established on 15 June 1964 by seventy-seven developing countries signatories of the “Joint Declaration of the Seventy-Seven Countries” issued at the end of the first session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva. Although the members of the G-77 have increased to 130 countries, the original name was retained because of its historic significance.

### **Aims:**

The Group of 77 is the largest coalition of developing countries at the United Nations, which provides the means for the countries of the South to articulate and promote their collective economic interests and enhance their joint negotiating capacity on all major international economic issues within the United Nations system, and promote South-South cooperation for development.

### **G-77 Member States:**

Afghanistan - Algeria - Angola - Antigua and Barbuda - Argentina - Bahamas - Bahrain - Bangladesh - Barbados - Belize - Benin - Bhutan - Bolivia - Bosnia and Herzegovina - Botswana - Brazil - Brunei Darussalam - Burkina Faso - Burundi - Cambodia - Cameroon - Cape Verde - Central African Republic - Chad - Chile - China - Colombia - Comoros - Congo - Costa Rica - Côte d'Ivoire - Cuba - Democratic People's Republic of Korea - Democratic Republic of the Congo - Djibouti - Dominica - Dominican Republic - Ecuador - Egypt - El Salvador - Equatorial Guinea - Eritrea - Ethiopia - Fiji - Gabon - Gambia - Ghana - Grenada - Guatemala - Guinea - Guinea-Bissau - Guyana - Haiti - Honduras - India - Indonesia - Iran (Islamic Republic of) - Iraq - Jamaica - Jordan - Kenya - Kuwait - Lao People's Democratic Republic - Lebanon - Lesotho - Liberia - Libyan Arab Jamahiriya - Madagascar - Malawi - Malaysia - Maldives - Mali - Marshall Islands - Mauritania - Mauritius - Micronesia (Federated States of) - Mongolia - Morocco - Mozambique - Myanmar - Namibia - Nepal - Nicaragua - Niger - Nigeria - Oman - Pakistan - Palestine - Panama - Papua New Guinea - Paraguay - Peru - Philippines

- Qatar - Rwanda - Saint Kitts and Nevis - Saint Lucia - Saint Vincent and the Grenadines - Samoa - Sao Tome and Principe - Saudi Arabia - Senegal - Seychelles - Sierra Leone - Singapore - Solomon Islands - Somalia - South Africa - Sri Lanka- Sudan - Suriname - Swaziland - Syrian Arab Republic - Thailand - Timor Leste - Togo - Tonga - Trinidad and Tobago - Tunisia - Turkmenistan - Uganda - United Arab Emirates - United Republic of Tanzania - Uruguay - Vanuatu - Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) - Viet Nam - Yemen - Zambia - Zimbabwe

### **Forum Topics**

The main objective of the Group of 77 Ministerial Forum on Water is to exchange views and conduct an interactive dialogue on the challenges and strategies for the promotion of South-South cooperation in the field of water. The two major topics to be addressed are:

- **Exchange of Scientific and technological know-how among developing countries;**
- **Sharing of experiences and best practices among developing countries**

## **INFORMATION FOR THE PARTICIPANTS**

### ***I – General Information***

**Geography:** The Sultanate of Oman is one of the most fascinating countries in the Middle East, renowned for its spectacular geographical beauty and cultural diversity. It has a diverse range of history, heritage and climate conditions. Thousands of years ago, Oman was known as Magan (a Sumerian name).

The Sultanate of Oman lies in the South-western part of Asia, on the south-east coast of the Arabian Peninsula. It borders the United Arab Emirates in the northwest, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the west, and the Republic of Yemen in the southwest. With a total land area of 309,500 square kilometers,

the Sultanate of Oman is the third largest country in the Arabian Peninsula.

***Time:*** Sultanate of Oman is four hours ahead of GMT and there are no day-light saving time changes.

***Climate:*** The country's climate is predominantly arid and varies slightly from one region to another. In the coastal areas, the weather is hot and humid during the summer months, while it is dry elsewhere in the interior. Milder weather dominates the mountains and Dhofar region all the year round. March temperatures can be as low as 25 degrees Celsius in Muscat.

***Banking Services:*** Omani Rials as well as US Dollars (US\$) are accepted in Muscat. Money can be exchanged at the Airport on arrival, at the banks and other authorized money exchange agencies on the presentation of a Passport. The current exchange rate is approximately one US\$ to 0.39 Omani Rials. Major Credit cards and travelers checks are also accepted.

***Electricity/Voltage:*** Electricity in Oman is 240 volts at 50 Hertz. Any device which does not accept 240 Volts at 50 Hertz needs a voltage converter. Travelers with computers, shavers, and other appliances should carry a plug adapter kit.

## ***II – Requirements***

***Visa:*** A visa for entry into the Sultanate of Oman is required. All participants must contact the Sultanate of Oman Embassy or Consulate in their respective country. In the event, if a diplomatic representation of the Sultanate of Oman is not present in a given country, participants must inform the National Organizing Committee in advance and provide passport information. All enquiries regarding the Visa issuance should be directed to the National Organizing Committee:

**Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Water Resources  
Public Relations Department  
Attn.: Mr. Hashim Khumis Al-Balush (Director)  
Muscat, Sultanate of Oman  
E-mail: prd@mrmwr.gov.om**

**Tel.: 968-24602271**  
**Mobile: 968-99357274**  
**Fax: 968-2-469-3860**  
**Copy to: ird@mrmwr.gov.om**  
**g77off@unmail.org**

***Health Requirements:*** There is no particular need for participants to take specific health precautions. A first aid facility will be available at Al Bustan Palace Hotel during the Forum.

### ***III – About the Forum***

***Date and Venue:*** The G-77 Ministerial Forum on Water will take place at the Al Bustan Palace Hotel in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, from 23 to 25 February 2009. The opening ceremony will take place on 23 February 2009 morning in the plenary hall of Al Bustan Palace Hotel.

***Programme:*** The detailed programme of the Forum including the opening ceremony will be issued separately.

***Documentation:*** Background documents will be made available to all delegations in New York prior to the Forum. They will also be available online on the G-77 Website ([www.g77.org](http://www.g77.org)). Documents issued during the Forum will be made available to delegations by the Secretariat. Delegations interested in making available statements and other documents related to the Forum should submit copies in advance to the Secretariat in Muscat.

***Working Languages:*** Simultaneous interpretation services will be provided in Arabic, English, French and Spanish.

***Local Transportation:*** Transportation connecting the Hotels to the Forum venue (Al Bustan Palace Hotel) will be made available to the participants by the National Organizing Committee. A schedule of local transportation will be issued separately.

***Arrival in Oman:*** All participants are requested to reconfirm their arrival date at least two weeks in advance. They must indicate the date and time of their arrival, the name of the Airline, the flight number, and other relevant information. This information will facilitate reception at the Airport and Transportation to the Hotels. A welcome/Information Desk will be set up at Seeb International Airport in Muscat.

***Accreditation:*** Participants must fill in the Accreditation Form and submit it to the G-77 Secretariat at the following address:

**Group of 77 Secretariat  
United Nations Headquarters  
39th Floor, Room S-3953  
New York, NY 10017, U.S.A.  
Fax: (1-212) 963-3515  
E-mail: [g77off@unmail.org](mailto:g77off@unmail.org)**

***Media and Press:*** All Media accreditations will be issued through the National Organizing Committee. Reporters/Correspondents will be required to submit official request from the sponsoring media organization to the National Organizing Committee in Muscat.

***Departure:*** Participants are advised to contact the travel desk located at their hotel in order to reconfirm the date and the time of their departure flights.

***Correspondence:*** All inquiries related to substantive aspects of the Forum should be directed to the Group of 77 Secretariat in New York:

**Group of 77 Secretariat  
United Nations Headquarters  
39th Floor, Room S-3953  
New York, NY 10017, U.S.A.  
Tel. (1-212) 963-0192 / 963-3816  
Fax: (1-212) 963-3515  
E-mail: [g77off@unmail.org](mailto:g77off@unmail.org)  
Website: [www.g77.org](http://www.g77.org)**



All inquiries related to logistical aspects of the Forum including hotels, visas, local transportation and protocol matters should be directed to the National Organizing Committee in Muscat:

**Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Water Resources**  
**Public Relations Department**  
**Attn.: Mr. Hashim Khumis Al-Balushi (Director)**  
**Muscat, Sultanate of Oman**  
**E-mail: prd@mrmwr.gov.om**  
**Tel.: 968-24602271**  
**Mobile: 968-99357274**  
**Fax: 968-2-469-3860**  
**Copy to: ird@mrmwr.gov.om**  
**g77off@unmail.org**

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### **Programme of Work**

#### **Sunday, 22 February 2009:**

3:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. : Accreditation/Registration.

#### **Monday, 23 February 2009:**

9:30 a.m. : Opening ceremony.\*  
10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. : Coffee break.  
11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. : ***First round table: Exchange of scientific and technological know-how among developing countries.***  
1:00 p.m. : Luncheon.  
2:30 p.m. : Resumption of discussions (first round table).  
4:15 p.m. : Coffee break.

- 4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. : Resumption of discussions  
(first round table).  
7:30 p.m. : Official Dinner.

**Tuesday, 24 February 2009:**

- 9:30 a.m. : *Second round table: Sharing of  
experiences and best practices  
among developing countries.*  
11:00 a.m. : Coffee break.  
11:15 a.m. : Resumption of discussions.  
1:00 p.m. : Luncheon.  
2:30 p.m. : Resumption of discussions  
(second round table).  
4:15 p.m. : Coffee break.  
4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. : Resumption of discussions  
(second round table).

**Wednesday, 25 February 2009:**

- 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. : Conclusions and recommendations.  
12:00 p.m. – 12:30 p.m. : Coffee break.  
12:30 p.m. : Closing ceremony.\*  
1:00 p.m. : Luncheon.

Sightseeing/Departure of the participants.\*\*

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\* *Detailed programme of the opening and closing ceremonies  
will be issued separately.*

\*\* *Detailed programme of sightseeing will be issued separately.*





**Group of 77**  
United Nations Headquarters  
New York, NY 10017, U.S.A.