

INTERNATIONAL RAINWATER HARVESTING ALLIANCE

ANNOUNCING A NEW COLLABORATIVE ACTION ARISING FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION CONFERENCE STAKEHOLDER FORUM FOR OUR COMMON FUTURE AT THE WSSD TO IMPLEMENT WATER AGREEMENTS & GOALS

A new International Alliance was formed at the World Summit for Sustainable Development which has the greatest potential to ensure that the Millennium Development Goal to reduce by 50% the number of people without access to safe and affordable drinking water by 2015 is met.

The global water crisis has gotten worse since Rio '92 and currently over 1.2 billion people lack access to safe water. Unless urgent action is taken, by 2015 almost 2 billion people will be facing severe water shortages.

Access to fresh water is a basic human right and is fundamentally essential to human health, women's welfare, food production, poverty alleviation, ecosystem protection, regional peace and stability. Catching rain whenever and where ever it falls and storing it for periods of no rainfall and drought is the most cost effective and sustainable way of providing water to where it is needed the most.

Rainwater harvesting enhances the availability and access to freshwater. It directly addresses the unsustainable exploitation of the planet's fresh water resources resulting from over extraction.

Representatives from every continent met at the WSSD in a 3-day Implementation Conference Stakeholder Forum for Our Common Future and established an International Rainwater Harvesting Alliance (IRHA) to provide a sustainable alternatives to address the global and regional water crisis.

The Mission of the newly formed alliance is to provide safe, reliable water to communities around the world with inadequate access to fresh water.

The IRHA will focus on community based rainwater harvesting, ensuring gender equity and has the following objectives:

- To focus on all aspects of Rainwater Harvesting and to build a knowledge bank on traditional and innovative Rainwater Harvesting systems;
- To promote Rainwater Harvesting as a sustainable way to provide community access to water improving the quality of life;
- To exchange rainwater harvesting knowledge and experiences increasing South-South and North-South collaboration;
- To influence policy at the local, national, regional and international levels;
- To provide a forum for promoting alliances and relationships;
- To promote a representative approach for implementing direct action programs.

A USD \$50,000 donation by Blue Planet Run has provided seed funding to ensure this important alliance is in position to assist in the implementation of the Freshwater outcomes and goals of the WSSD. A Steering Committee with representatives from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America and Oceania has been formed to coordinate the initiation of the Alliance.

The International Rainwater Harvesting Alliance is committed to raising rainwater harvesting to the very top of the political agenda as a sustainable way of implementing the Millennium Development Goal on Freshwater and addressing the global water crisis.

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