

Media Advisory

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International experts gather to debate water laws in move to tackle poverty and promote agricultural growth in rural Africa

From January 26 -28 a unique gathering of international experts will meet to debate the critical issues surrounding water laws in Africa. Water lawyers, policy makers, government water resource planners and implementers, NGOs, and academics from eleven African countries and eleven countries in Asia, Latin-America, and the west will discuss over thirty paper presentations which raise pertinent questions and innovative solutions for promoting poverty alleviation and agricultural growth in rural Africa.

The Workshop entitled “*African water laws: Pluralistic legal frameworks for water management in rural Africa*” will be the first debate of its kind in Africa on the interface between formal and customary water laws in Africa. How can governments tap the remarkable social capital of African communities’ own water resources development and approaches to resolving conflicts over water? How can the logistical nightmare of issuing water licenses to millions of rural scattered small-scale water users be avoided? Do African countries with abundant water resources need the strict formal regulation that water-scarce South Africa is pursuing? Does government’s role as regulator clash with its role as investor in new rural water infrastructure for both domestic and productive uses?

Organisers of the workshop include the South African Governments Department of Water Affairs and Forestry and the Water Research Commission, in collaboration with the International Water Management Institute, the Faculty of Law of the University of Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania, and the Natural Resources Institute UK.

Notes for Editors.

1. Workshop and press conference venue: Willow Park Conference Centre, Kempton Park, Johannesburg. Map is attached.
2. The press is invited to attend the full workshop, which starts at Willow Park Conference Centre on 26th at 9.00 hrs.
3. On Friday 28th January 16.30 hrs a synthesis of participants’ answers to these and other questions will be presented in plenary session. A special press conference on the conclusions and policy recommendations will take place at 17.30 hrs. Workshop participants will be available for interviews. All those attending are invited for a farewell-braai in the evening.
4. The workshop program, papers and other information are posted on the workshop website at www.nri.org/waterlaw/workshop