

**“Message from Yokohama”**

**by the participants  
in the 7<sup>th</sup> IWA Regional Workshop in Yokohama, Japan  
2012**

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Water supply is essential for human life and socioeconomic activities. Water utilities, however, are facing challenges such as aging facilities, declining revenue, and a lack of human resources. Since most of the pipelines are buried underground, aging of the network proceeds without being recognized by the water utilities. This invisibility of water infrastructure brings about poor maintenance and widens the gap between the investment needs and the actual amounts of investment. Eventually, aging water infrastructures may lead to declining levels of services, which in turn cause loss of customers’ trust in water supply services.

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In order to overcome such challenges, we recognize that asset management of water infrastructure is a useful tool, which must be incorporated into the management of water utilities. Asset management is a continuing effort, which makes it possible to assess the current status and future needs of investment.

During the workshop, the international experts on asset management presented asset management concept, tools, examples and the ways to integrate into the management of water utilities. The advancement of IT-based tools may help small water utilities introducing asset management, but we should further strengthen the human resources of water utilities for sustainable management.

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The management information of water utilities, including asset management, should be shared with the customers of water supply services. For this purpose, public relations play an important role in disseminating information regarding with quality, risks and costs of water supply. Public relations can also be used for collecting customers’ opinions. Hence, we should integrate public relations into the process of asset management.

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After two days of the workshop in Yokohama, we came to the common understanding of the aforementioned problems and challenges surrounding water utility management in the world. We also recognized the importance and usefulness of asset management as a tool for the sustainable management of water utilities. We, the participants of the workshop, declare that we will put further efforts to realize sustainable management of water utilities by integrating asset management and public relations into the process of water utility management. The achievements of the IWA Asset Management specialists, as well as those examples of the experts in the water utilities, are highly acknowledged, and we will join them in giving assistance to the water utilities, especially to the small ones, in the world.