

Secretariat of the 3rd World Water Forum, 6th FL, 1-1-8 Kojimachi Chiyoda-ku Tokyo 102-0083, Japan

• **Media Analysis** •  
**The 3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum**  
Held in Japan March 16-23, 2003

**Media Results Show Forum Was Most Effective Global Water Meeting Ever**

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum**, held in Japan from March 16-23 of 2003, attracted 24,000 participants and initiated a series of proposals and actions that could resolve the global water crisis. It was the largest and most successful international water conference in history.

A major requirement in the campaign to bring safe water and sanitation to everyone is that information on the Forum's meetings, accomplishments and calls to action needed to reach as wide a global audience as possible.

The World Water Forum process is relatively new phenomenon, and a detailed analysis of how and to what extent news of its undertakings has reached the public has never been carried out. Officials of the **Secretariat of the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum**, Japan, decided to perform the task and publish its findings in this report.

Under the auspices of the **World Water Council (WWC)** in collaboration with a host country, a global water forum is held every three years to bring together water experts, governments, international organizations, NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and concerned individuals to discuss the global water crisis and to work out and test the best solutions.

The 1<sup>st</sup> World Water Forum, held in Marrakech, Morocco in 1997, attracted several hundred people. The 2<sup>nd</sup> World Water Forum, which took place in The Hague, Netherlands, drew more than 5,000 participants. The 3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum, held in the Japanese cities of Kyoto, Otsu (Shiga) and Osaka, was expected to attract 8,000 people. Instead, some 24,000 people attended at least one day of the eight-day conference. In addition, more than 1,200 journalists covered the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum, 700 more than the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Water Forum.

Three years of preparation went into the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum, including far-reaching internet conferencing in the Virtual Water Forum and the “Water Voice” Project, both of which involved tens of thousands of people around the globe.

Delegates to the Forum agreed in their meetings this past March to a series of important decisions on solutions to the global water crisis, in which more than 1 billion people lack access to safe water and 2.4 billion lack access to good sanitation, among other water problems.

Kenzo Hiroki, Vice Secretary General of the **3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum**, and other Forum officials selected a two-pronged approach to gauge how the media covered the Forum’s activities – global monitoring and collection of television, radio, online and print stories on the Forum, and then a detailed content analysis of a large selection of what was gathered.

The Forum assembled more than 5,500 newspaper and magazine clippings from around the world, although most were concentrated in ten countries in which the Forum contracted with clipping services. These 10 countries were Australia, Canada, China, Germany, France, Japan, the Netherlands, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Forum interviews with television and radio producers and editors confirmed that international television and radio networks sent out their broadcasts to practically every nation on earth. In addition, the international wire news services such as Associated Press, Kyodo News and EFE, the Spanish news agency, send their stories to newspapers, radio and television stations, in their entirety (taking all international news services into account), to nearly every nation as well. From this global screening, Forum officials determined that a very conservative estimate would be that a minimum of 10,000 articles were published worldwide on Forum activities, in addition to several thousand television and radio broadcasts (including both local and national stations).

By adding up the national and global reach of the hundreds of media outlets that broadcast and published stories on the water meeting, Forum officials estimate that some 1.5 billion people heard, saw and read about the global water crisis and its solutions. This would make the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum not only the largest water meeting ever assembled, but also the most widely known to the global public – probably more than most United Nations conferences.

Forum officials randomly selected some 2,400 of the published news articles in six languages for a detailed content and statistical analysis in order to determine how widely news of the Forum was disseminated, and which themes attracted the most attention.

“The analysis demonstrated that the Forum achieved its goals of making major strides in presenting and solving the global water crisis, and in getting the message of practical water solutions out to people across the planet,” says Kenzo Hiroki, Vice Secretary General of the **3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum**.

“The hard work of the thousands of individuals, governments, NGOs and global organizations involved with the Forum led directly to the issue of the world water crisis being placed on the top agenda of the G8 summit, held this past June in Evian, France,” says Mr. Hiroki. “In fact, the G8 Chair’s Summary and the G8 Action Plans make several direct references to the need for joint actions on their part to follow up on the work of the **3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum**.”

International TV coverage reached more than 200 countries in some 20 stories broadcast by BBC Worldwide TV, CNN International, Associated Press Television Network and EuroNews.

National and regional television networks that broadcast stories on the Forum include: Euronews (18 countries); ABC News and CBS News in the United States; CTV National News and Canadian Broadcasting Corp. in Canada; South African Broadcasting Co.; Kenya Television Network and Botswana Television in Africa; Channel News Asia TV and Doordarshan India TV among others in Asia; and ARD German Television, Swiss TV, News24 and Croatian TV in Europe, and TV Azteca in Mexico among others in Latin America.

Global radio coverage included BBC World Service, which broadcast 30 stories; Radio France International (10 stories); Voice of America (6 stories); Radio Free Europe (8 stories) and Radio Free Asia (3 stories). Many national radio networks also broadcast stories on the Forum.

International news wire services bring stories to hundreds of millions of people in subscriber newspapers and local TV and radio stations around the world, providing a key way to reach a global audience. The global press services Associated Press, Reuters and Agence France Presse (the main international French news service) all published daily stories on the Forum. The Xinhua News Agency, utilized by practically every news outlet in China, as well as in many other countries, published numerous stories on the Forum. EFE, the Spanish News Agency, published stories that ran in Spain and throughout Latin America. The

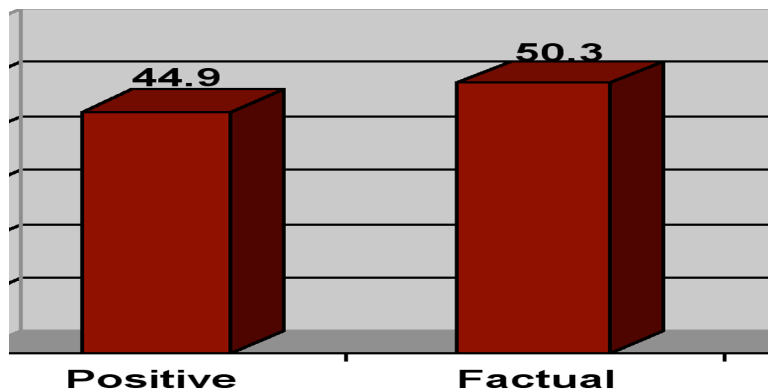
Pan African News Association published articles for its continent; and Kyodo News, Asian Intelligence; and the Pacific Islands News Agency reached all of Asia.

## Statistical and Content Analysis

The 2,409 articles selected for this review and analysis were published in Japanese, English, French, German, Spanish and Chinese. A native speaker of the language in which the story appeared read each article for content. The articles were analyzed for subject matter, relations to activities conducted at the Forum, whether they dealt with reports issued at the Forum and on experts and officials quoted.

Some 50.3 percent of articles were classified as straight and factual news stories, and were considered informational, neither positive nor negative. Another 44.9 percent of the articles were either favorable opinion articles or were news stories that contained enough positive attitudes towards the Forum to be classified as positive.

*Graph: Distribution of Articles by General Attitude (percent)*



The analysis also demonstrated that coverage of the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum was the most extensive and positive of all three of these global water gatherings. Media coverage of the 1<sup>st</sup> World Water Forum, held in Marrakech, Morocco in 1997, was minimal. Coverage was just half as extensive for the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Water Forum, held in The Hague, the Netherlands, in 2000, than the 2003 meeting in Japan.

“In the articles that highlighted pertinent water problems, 37 percent mentioned lack of access to safe water, nearly 30 percent described lack of adequate sanitation and more than 20 percent cited that several million people die yearly from water related diseases, so that the Forum definitely got the message out to our global audience,” says Mr. Hiroki.

## Part 1 -- General Information on Analyzed Articles

Most of the articles reviewed were published in March, the month in which the Forum took place. Several articles appeared in January and February that previewed the upcoming Forum, and more were published as follow-ups to the conference in April.

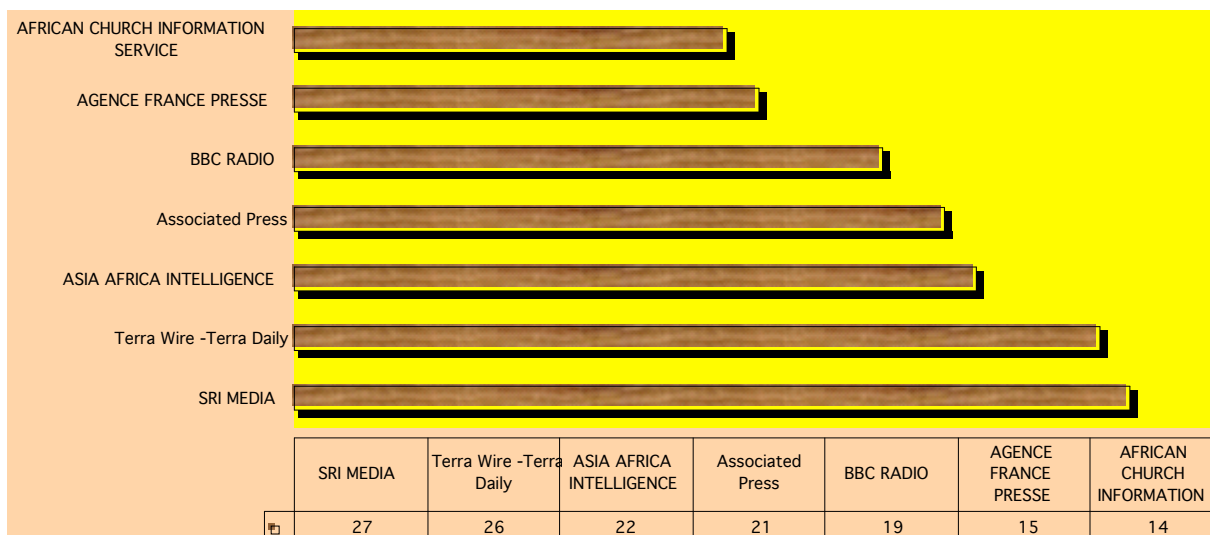
### Identification of Most Frequent Media Outlets

#### A) Distribution by Name of News Outlet

Japanese newspapers published the greatest percentage of articles. Of the non-Japanese articles reviewed, the largest number of stories were published by SRI Media (Social Responsible Investing News Information), Terra Wire-Terra Daily (a web-based daily scientific and environmental newspaper), Asia Africa Intelligence (news service dedicated to coverage of stories of interest to those continents), the Associated Press, BBC World Radio, Agence France Presse and the African Church Religious Information Service.

The Associated Press is top news wire agency in the world, sending stories to 16,000 newspapers, radio stations and TV networks around the world. BBC World Radio is beamed to many countries on all continents in various languages.

#### *Graph: Distribution by Name of News Outlet (frequency)*



The Associated Press, which sends its stories to practically every country on earth, to multiple clients in each country, appeared high on this list, an indication of the global reach of news that came out of the Forum.

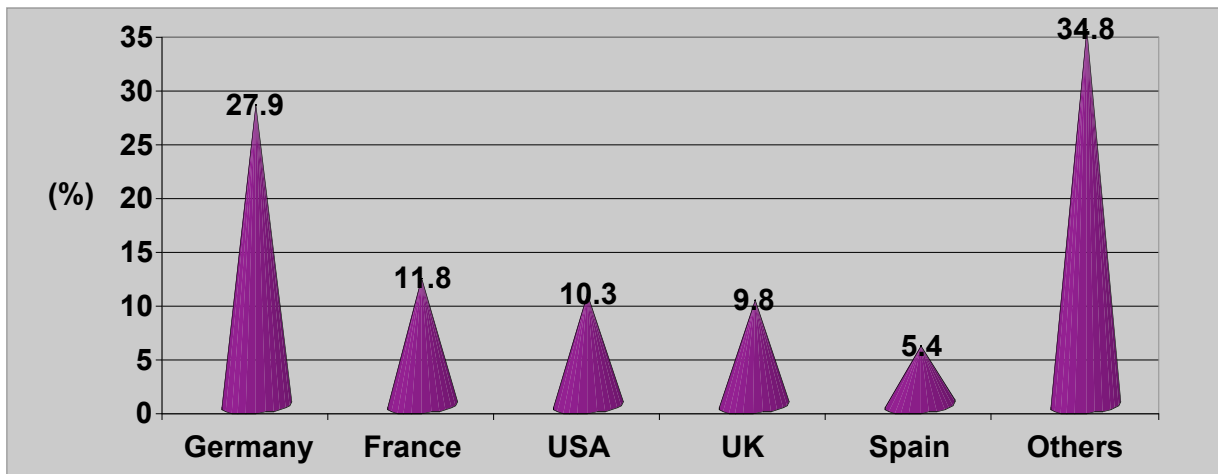
## B) Word Count

The average number of words in the articles reviewed came to 504 words. The longest single article contained 4,623 words.

## C) Publication Country

The highest percentage of articles was published in Japan with 59.2 percent. The articles published outside of Japan were published in countries shown in the graph below. Among them the highest percentage of articles were published in Germany with 27.9 percent, followed by France with 11.8 percent, USA with 10.3 percent, UK with 9.8 percent, and Spain with 5.4 percent.

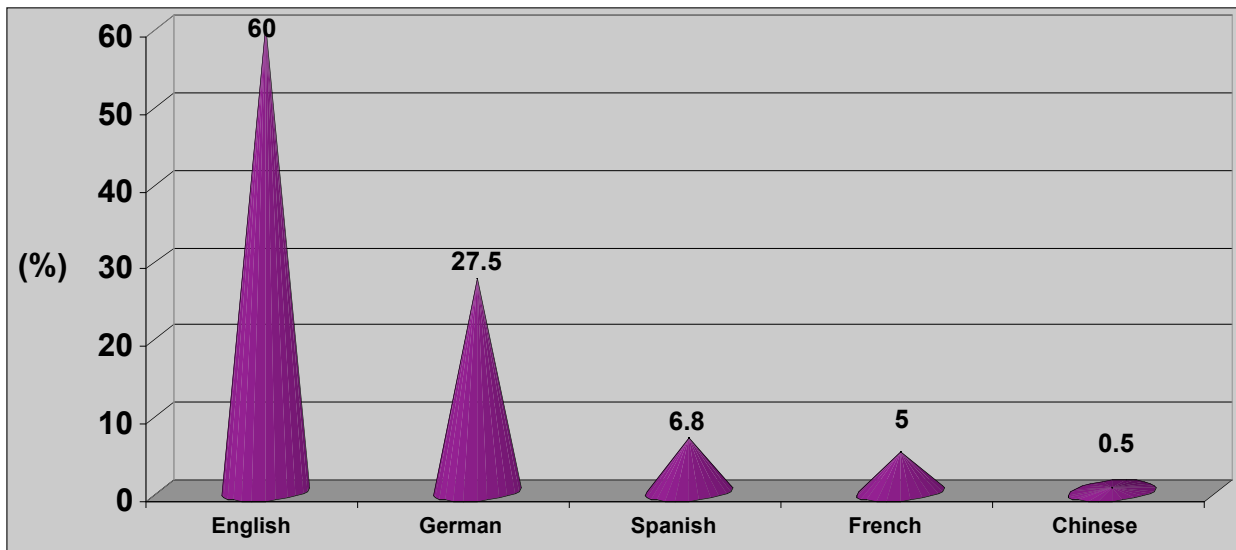
*Graph: Distribution of Publication by Country (percent)*



## D) Publication Language

A total of 55.7 percent of the articles were published in Japanese. Among articles published in other languages, 60.0 percent of the articles were published in English, 27.5 percent of the articles were in German, 6.8 percent were in Spanish, 5.0 percent in French, and 0.5 percent were in Chinese.

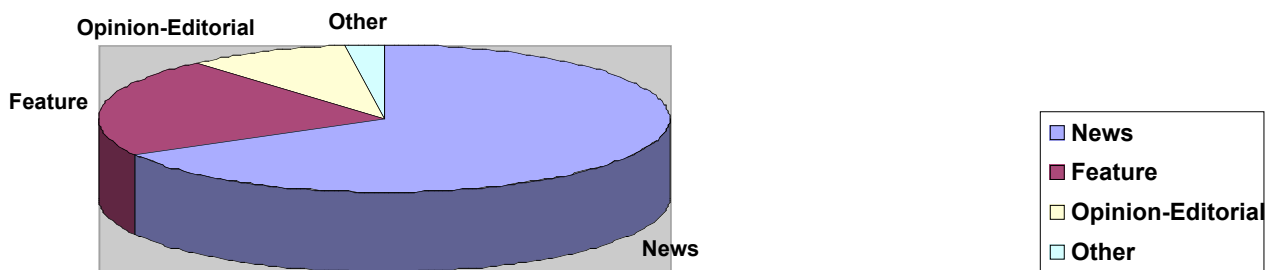
*Graph: Distribution of Articles by Language (percent)*



### **E) Type of Article**

A total of 66.9 percent of the articles are categorized as being ‘news stories,’ (generally focused on developments of that particular day at the Forum); 21.7 percent were “feature stories” (generally long and detailed examinations of one particular aspect of the water crisis or an in-depth look at one Forum initiative); 9.2 percent were classified as “opinion/editorial” articles; and 2.2 percent were other types of articles.

*Graph: Distribution of Articles by Type*



## Part 2 -- Attitudes and Themes

### General Themes of Analyzed Articles:

#### A) Distribution of Articles by Focus

The table below illustrates whether articles in four categories, labeled as “news,” “feature,” “opinion,” or “other” focused on water solutions (for example, stories focusing on final statements from the Forum, or stories based on speakers offering water solutions), or water problems (such as water-related diseases, lack of safe water, etc.) or general topics in percent.

*Table: Distribution of articles by focus on water solutions, water problems or general topics*

<b>Main Focus</b>	<b>Water Solutions</b>	<b>Water Problems</b>	<b>General</b>
<b>News</b>	45.3	49.8	4.9
<b>Feature</b>	45.9	49.7	4.4
<b>Opinion</b>	45.7	48.9	5.4
<b>Other</b>	18.5	77.8	3.7

In general, the analysts said that the attitudes contained in the different types of articles were divided fairly equally between water problems and water solutions, and very few expressing a neutral attitude. The above table shows the distribution of the attitudes versus the different types of articles.

#### B) Distribution of Graphics Used

Of the 2409 articles reviewed, 838 articles contained graphics or photographs. This came to nearly 35 percent of all stories. The table below shows the percentage of these 838 articles that contained graphics relating to water solutions, water problems, or water in general.

If a picture showed a polluted river, for example, it would be classified as illustrating a “water problem.” If a graph demonstrated how reforms could help to lower the number of people without access to safe sanitation, it would be classified as showing a “water solution.” The 838 articles containing graphics are classified according to whether they were “news,” “features,” “opinion,” or “other” types of articles.

*Table: Distribution of graphics used in analyzed articles of all types (news, feature, opinion, other)*

<b>Main Focus</b>	<b>Water Solutions</b>	<b>Water Problems</b>	<b>General</b>
<b>News</b>	63.4	34.2	2.4
<b>Feature</b>	47.7	42	10.3
<b>Opinion</b>	42	50	8
<b>Other</b>	15	85	0

More than 60 percent of the “news” stories containing graphics focused on water solutions. “Features” and “opinion” articles with graphics used them to illustrate a more balanced mix on both water solutions and water problems.

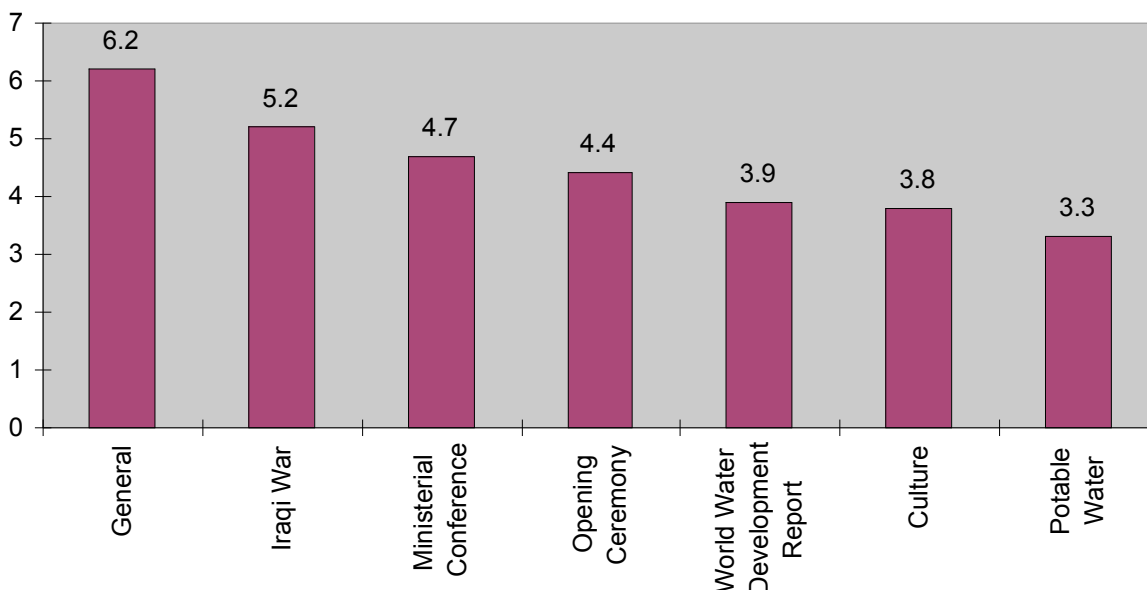
### C) Specific Themes of Articles

Each analyst was asked to identify the top five themes in each article. An article could be identified as centering on just one theme, or on up to five themes. A maximum of five themes was identified in each article.

The U.S.-Iraqi war broke out during the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum. Many journalists therefore sought out stories that linked the Forum and its main issues to the war. The general themes of the articles were distributed as follows: some 6.2 percent of stories focused on general themes, 5.2 percent around the Iraqi war, 4.7 percent on the Ministerial conference, 4.4 percent around the opening ceremony, 3.9 percent around the World Water Development Report, 3.8 percent around culture and 3.3 percent were focused on potable water problems and solutions.

More than seven percent of the rest of the articles were centered on other specific themes, with none attaining more than one percent. Some 70 percent of the articles either did not list any relevant theme or listed themes that were mentioned solely.

**Graph: Distribution of Articles by Specific Themes, excluding the war (percent)**



## D) Global Water Problems Mentioned

The analysts also examined each article to decide whether it addressed any of the top three water problems – lack of safe water, lack of safe sanitation, and global deaths from water-related diseases. Any single article could have mentioned one, two or three of these problems, or none at all.

Among the water problems cited in the articles, 37 percent discussed access to safe water, 29.6 percent mentioned lack of adequate sanitation, 20.7 percent mentioned the problems of the several million people who die every year of water related diseases.

The following table reflects these figures.

*Table: Water Problems Mentioned*

<b>Access to safe water</b>	<b>37 percent</b>
<b>Lack of adequate sanitation</b>	<b>29.6 percent</b>
<b>People die each year of water-related diseases</b>	<b>20.7 percent</b>

## E) Most Expressed Opinions on Major Water Issues

The analysts read each article to decide whether the main theme of the article “strongly agreed,” “agreed,” “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” with a wide range of water issues. Based on the analysis, the 10 most expressed opinions on major water issues are as follows:

- Water Forum is an important meeting;
- International community must take action;
- Water is human RIGHT;
- Water is a human NEED;
- New technologies /approaches are needed to meet the development goals;
- Japan is taking an active role in preserving global water resources;
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum is the BEST venue for addressing global water problems;
- Articles advocating water preservation;
- Articles advocating building water basins;
- Articles advocating public / private partnerships.

## F) Major Forum Reports Mentioned

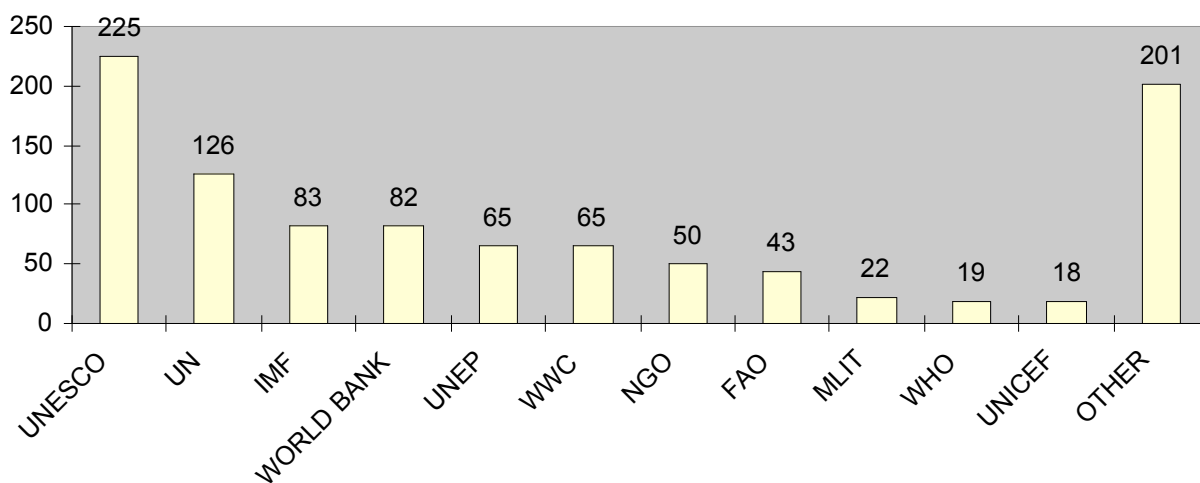
Many organizations involved with water issues issued major reports to coincide with the Forum. Some of these reports were issued before the Forum begun.

Of the 2409 articles reviewed, 10.3 percent reported on the “World Water Development Report;” 8 percent reported on the World Water Council’s “World Water Actions” report; 4.3 percent reported on the “Financing Water for All” (report chaired by former Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund Michel Camdessus); 0.6 percent on the Water and Climate Report “Climate Changes the Water Rules;” 0.5 percent reported on “Water and Sanitation in the World’s Cities” (UN-Habitat); and 3.4 percent focused on other reports.

## G) Organizations Mentioned

Organizations were mentioned a total of 999 times in the articles studied. The **3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum** was not considered in this category, since the articles were selected for their relevance to Forum.

### *Bar Graph of Organizations Mentioned*



UNESCO was mentioned 225 times, or 18 percent (followed by the United Nations with 126 times, or 9 percent; the International Monetary Fund (IMF) 83 times, or 5.8 percent; the World Bank 82 times, or 6 percent; the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) 65 times, or 4.6 percent; WWC, 63 times; various NGOs 50 times, or 3.5 percent; the Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO) 4, times, or 2.9 percent; the World Water Council (WWC) 65 times, or 3 percent; Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and

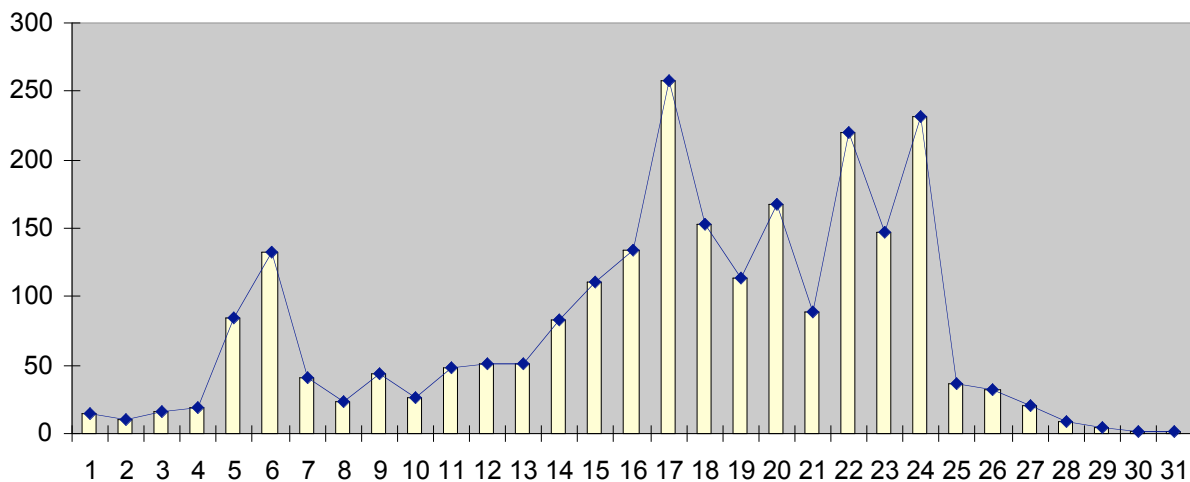
Transport of Japan (MLIT), 22 times, or 1.5 percent; the World Health Organization (WHO) 19 times, or 1.3 percent; and UNICEF 17 times, or 1.2 percent. Other organizations were cited 201 times.

## H) Number of Articles Published

The articles were also examined for their publication date. Articles that were analyzed were published from February through April, though the overwhelming majority of articles appeared in March, when the Forum took place.

### *March Graph*

*(Please note that the top range of articles published in March is 300 articles per day, reflecting the substantial coverage of the month in which the Forum took place.)*



The most intensive publication days came from March 17<sup>th</sup> through March 24<sup>th</sup>. The Forum took place from March 16<sup>th</sup> through March 23<sup>rd</sup>, so that the largest publications came on the days following each day of the Forum’s activities. Also, as expected, the two most intensive publication days, March 17<sup>th</sup> and March 24<sup>th</sup> came respectively on the day after the opening Forum day and the closing of the Forum. The overwhelming majority of the articles published during the Forum centered on activities taking place during the sessions.

\* \* \*