



At a recent meeting of An Fóram Uisce, alarm was expressed at the impact which current drought conditions are having not only on consumers but on the wider ecosystem. An Fóram Uisce has called for a national conversation around water resources and has emphasised the need for ‘a radical change in public attitudes and habits in relation to water use, conservation and protection’.

Responding to the emerging environmental and water supply consequences of the on-going drought conditions, An Fóram members acknowledged ‘the positive response by citizens to recent calls for water conservation’, adding that ‘the stark reality of depleted reservoirs had prompted a societal rethink about our capacity to cope with extreme weather events and what they will mean for Ireland’. The statement continued:

‘The various extreme weather events of recent years, and most especially since the start of this year, bring into sharp focus the impact that such events have on our day-to-day lives and show how vulnerable we are to environmental pressures. The danger is that as reservoirs refill, the lessons of this climate event will be forgotten ... until the next time. If we are to avoid this happening and if we are to achieve the radical change that is required, then a national conversation needs to begin on our attitudes and habits in relation to water use, conservation and protection.’

Putting the current crisis into context, Dr. Tom Collins, Chair of An Fóram stated that ‘we need to recognise it as part of a long-term crisis for which we are poorly prepared. The mistaken assumptions that we would always have an adequate water supply and would maintain pristine water sources have been well and truly exposed. These assumptions have resulted in generations of neglect, capital underinvestment and, most worryingly, widespread attitudes of indifference and complacency to water resources.’

‘For these assumptions to change, Irish society needs to be persuaded that human health and well-being, the protection of our natural environment and the development of our economy are all inextricably linked. A conversation about the future of our water resources, led by An Fóram Uisce, is a matter of paramount importance. We, therefore, invite all stakeholders including government, water & wastewater service providers and the general public to engage with us in this conversation and play their part in building the resilience of our water resources.’

30th July 2018

An Fóram Uisce was established as a statutory body in June 2018 to facilitate stakeholder engagement and debate on issues relating to water as a resource, water quality, rural water concerns, issues affecting customers of Irish Water and issues associated with the implementation of the Water Framework Directive.

The Forum consists of 27 representatives from a wide range of organisations with direct connections to issues relating to water quality. These include consumer, community and water sports groups, business and trade unions, environmental sector, Irish Water consumers, the group water scheme sector and a range of other sectors including education, agriculture, fisheries and forestry. An Fóram is chaired by Dr. Tom Collins who has also chaired the Public Water Forum.

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