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**International Desalination Association Applauds the Leadership of the
Ministry of Environment Brazil for Implementing Circular Advanced Water Treatment
Projects that Empower Rural Communities**

São Paulo, Brazil, October 20, 2017 – Water sustainability is the world’s most critical challenge. Rural communities in Northern Brazil have been facing this challenge for decades. Today, the Ministry of the Environment (MoE) Brazil, Governor of Rio Grande do Norte State, and Mayor of João Camara welcomed the former President of the [International Desalination Association \(IDA\)](#), Emilio Gabrielli, and IDA’s new Secretary General, Shannon McCarthy, on a visit to the Maria da Paz community project in Northern Brazil. They were joined by representatives from the World Bank, Global Solar Council, Abdul Latif Jamil World Water & Food Security Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Department of Solar Energy & Environmental Physics at Ben Gurion University of the Negev.

The Maria da Paz community project is one of the 500 installed projects of the Aqua Doce program. Together these projects benefit half a million people suffering from lack of drinking water.

“Desalination technologies and water reuse are becoming mainstream water supply solutions in creating a circular water strategy to meet growing water needs. Desalination plays a very important role in providing a reliable supply of new water in regions where brackish water or seawater is available, and coupling desalination systems with solar power, such as Aqua Doce’s Mara da Paz community project, opens the door to providing clean water to many more people who currently lack access to adequate supplies of fresh water,” said Shannon McCarthy, Secretary General, IDA.

A local elementary school teacher said, “Until two years ago, the children suffered from chronic diarrhea and looked unhealthy. However, since the desalination unit has been in operation, the children feel and look healthy.”

The semiarid region of Northern Brazil represents over 22 million inhabitants of which nine million live in rural areas and suffer from extreme poverty and the effects of climate change that impact fresh water availability. Using a reverse osmosis (RO) solar powered unit, the project in Maria da Paz offers an environmentally sustainable option to provide clean drinking water for more than 60 rural families. The concentrate from the RO unit is utilized to provide water for livestock.

At other community sites of the Aqua Doce program, the process is fully circular using the reject water to grow Tilapia fish (excellent, for sashimi) wherein water from the fish tanks is further used to irrigate halophyte plants to provide fodder for feeding goat and sheep.

A key benefit of the Agua Doce program is the social participation of the community in managing the desalination units and integrated production systems. IDA has provided volunteer technical guidance to the Agua Doce program, and with a newly signed cooperation agreement between IDA and Global Solar Council, the IDA further endorses the strategic adoption of circular water programs using solar-powered RO units for rural community development.

About IDA

The International Desalination Association (www.idadesal.org) is a non-profit association that serves more than 2,600 core members in 60 countries and reaches an additional 4,000 affiliate members. Its membership comprises scientists, end-users, engineers, consultants and researchers from governments, corporations and academia. IDA is associated with the United Nations as part of a growing international network of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

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