Governing and Managing Water Resources for Sustainable Development

SUMMARY OF ONLINE CONSULTATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

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WEEK 5:
GOVERNING AND MANAGING WATER RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Key Messages

- Governance matters for improved management of water resources but governance situations are different and no blue-prints apply.
- Shortage of capacities on water governance and integrated management remains an important challenge.
- Improved coordination is needed across different water using sectors and between ministries.
- It's important that any future SDGs on water resources are few, distinct and measurable.
- It was suggested that water resources goals and targets could be based on the following two topics: 1) Water for socio-economic development and environmental protection and 2) Implementing an integrated water resources management approach.

Key Issues for Follow-up

- Better assess the types of governance architecture that can deliver on sustainable water development. Identify the top 2-3 most important measures to improve governance and under what conditions.
- Better assess the capacity needs with regard to water governance and management.
- Suggest goals and targets for water resources related SDGs.
- Feed in consultation outcomes to other relevant processes.

Governance matters – from local to global level

Consultation responses confirmed that governance matters and that improved governance provides a foundation for sustainable water development. Governance is, among other things, critical in order to mitigate and reduce conflicts of interests in water resources development. Clearly defined water development objectives accompanied by clearly defined responsibilities for water resources management, makes transparent who makes the decisions and why.

One of the major pillars of water resources management that ensures equitable resources sharing, efficient water use and environmental sustainability is proper legal frameworks. Water legislation is needed to provide for a statutory framework that makes clear who has decision making authority about each aspect of water resources management e.g. that water policy is the domain of the government in cooperation with its citizens, regulatory and licensing agencies should be managing the resource sustainability and water supply authorities should address infrastructure.

Several of the responses in the consultation draw attention to governance at different levels or scales. Governance systems at local levels are very critical, particularly for developing countries where the majority of the people are very much dependent upon water and other natural resources for their livelihood. As water is renewed and enjoyed in the local scene it is necessary to develop management strategies with multiple levels of government, aimed at local and community development.

Lack of capacity – a major challenge in managing water

Lack of capacity came up in the consultation as one of the key challenges in managing water at national and local level. A country might have most management tools and systems in place, such as a water policy, a water billing system, an IWRM plan and institutions. However, if there is limited capacity to implement and monitor water use, assess the resources and update the information system, water management will not be fully realised.

Another challenge that came up was the management at local levels. The management at the local level needs to be strengthened, both for municipalities and communities. There also needs to be mechanisms to facilitate cross-relations between the countryside and the city, to avoid increasing pollution of water bodies and unsustainable outtakes of surface- and groundwater.

Reluctance of water users to cooperate, the lack of funding to maintain and improve hydrologic networks and the lack of political will are examples of other challenges. Moreover, politicians can point to water supply pipelines, tanks etc. in their campaign for re-election, but fail to understand that good water resources management is critical to sustaining a reliable and safe water supply.

Capacity building has to be targeted and linked to needs so it translates into improved water resources management.

Water resources management contributing to sustainable development – coordination between sectors needed

There was a general agreement in the consultation that governance and integration are critical for managing the world's water resources, if we are to achieve a more sustainable form of development. A lack of joined up thinking in government is a barrier to water resources management and thus development. To ensure that development is sustainable for present and future generations coordination across different constituencies and sectors needs to be improved. Managing water resources thus needs an integrated approach that makes sure policy, plans, laws, pricing, subsidies etc. are not contradictory. By working in narrow traditional sectors water issues will not be properly addressed.

Participants recognised that in all countries everything depends on water – energy, food, industry, health, environ-

ment and so on. Coordination across sectors, as well as taking account of environmental and climate issues, is complex. It requires a new way of thinking and governing. We are still stuck in a rigid sector approach with institutions operating in isolation. Better policy cohesion is required between these institutions, what has been called joined-up government. Addressing such issues is challenging and political but complexity can be managed if the political will is present. Innovative thinking, institutional change and finance are also essential.

Water resources management will be a critical issue in the future in most parts of the world, but it is usually low on the political agenda as it is not seen as directly related to growth. More advocacy is needed in countries so governments sign up to water as a major theme in the Sustainable Development agenda after 2015.

A sustainable development goal that explicitly considers water resources would be useful – how could it be monitored and reported?

The ability to determine the carbon footprint has contributed substantially to create commitments to reduce the impacts of greenhouse gases. Similarly, universally accepted indicators could attract more attention to the care of water.

Existing MDG indicators for water access should be improved, for example to take account of rural-urban disparities but. The challenge today is not only access to services but water resources management to ensure the availability of quality resources in time and space and practices to maintain quality. It was suggested that water resources goals and targets could be based on the following two topics:

- Water for socio-economic development and environmental protection.
- Implementing an integrated water resources management approach.
- More work is needed to develop indicators to capture these two topics and set up a system to monitor and report on them.

WEEK 5:

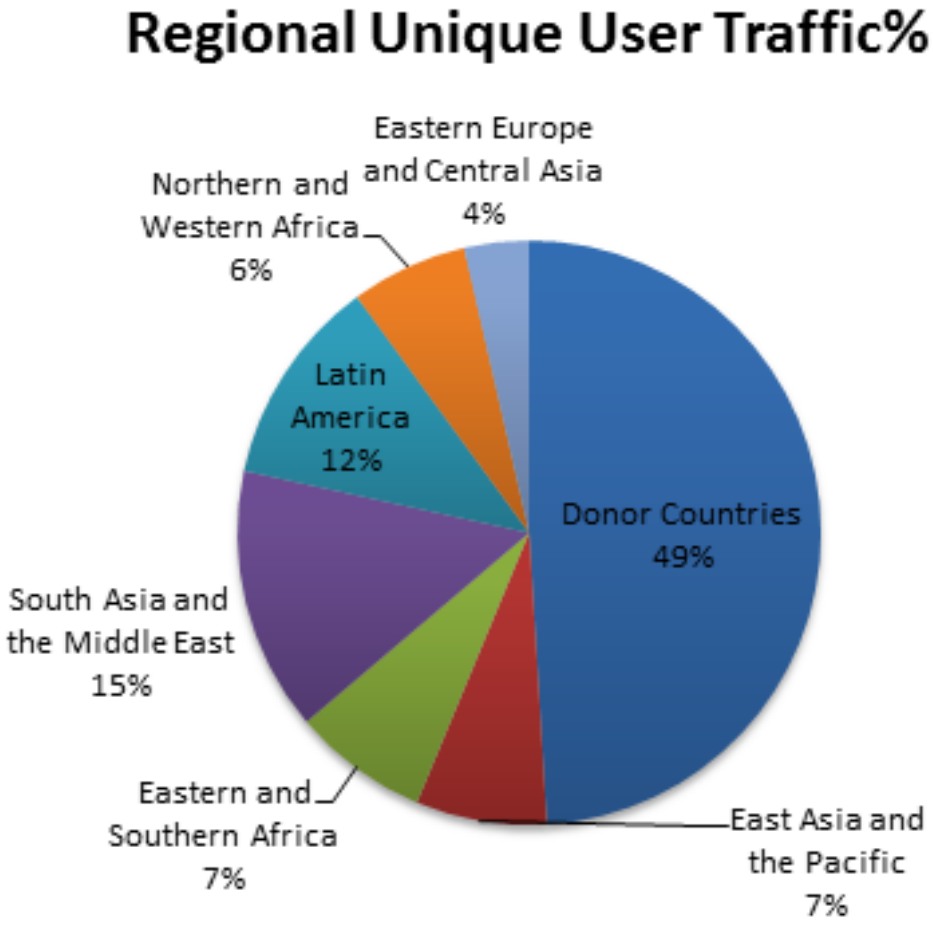
THE POST 2015 WATER ON-LINE CONSULTATION USER TRAFFIC ANALYTICS

Participants came from a wide range of countries with different water resources issues (e.g. from Benin, Ghana, India, Colombia, Sri Lanka, Namibia, Ethiopia, Jamaica and Uganda, although many participants did not give their country of origin). Governance and integration were highlighted as critical for managing the world's water resources if we are to achieve a more sustainable form of development. Improved coordination across different constituencies and across different sector users of water was highlighted, as well as the need for more joined-up thinking in government. These are key barriers to water resources management and thus development.

We were also approached by persons who informed us about technical problems and that they could not log on and make contributions. How big a problem this was is not known.

Water Resources Management – Week 5

- Total Page Views, 2,015 – the total amount the water resource management page was accessed by users.
- Unique Page Views, 1,144 – the total number of unique visitors to the web page.
- Average Time User Spends on Page, 2 min. 16 sec. – the average for week 5 was 1:56.
- Bounce Rate, 7.28 per cent – percentage of users who view only one page during a session, the platform average for week 5 was 24.11 per cent.
- Stats from live stream (one hour):
  - Averaged 324 views at any given time.
  - Average Time Duration Users Tuned In: 29 min. 51 sec.
  - The most users who view the Q&A at one time was 392 Users.



The chart above displays the percentage of Unique Page views by region. The same chart is displayed for all the sub-consultation weeks.

Stats (latest update February 22, 2013).

Consultation Statistics

1. **It has been said that the "global water crisis is in fact a crisis of governance," do you think that this is true?**
   318 views, 26 comments
2. **What are the challenges of managing water in your country and what can be done to improve the situation?**
   123 views, 10 comments
3. **How can water resources management contribute to sustainable development in your country?**
   118 views, 11 comments
4. **Do you think a sustainable development goal that explicitly considers water resources would be useful – how could it be monitored and reported?**
   127 views, 9 comments

Water Resources Week 5 Poll

What aspect of water governance is most important to improve in your country?

- **Institutional Reforms: 23.73 per cent (14 votes)**
- **Better Coordination Between Ministries: 23.73 per cent (14 votes)**
- **Stakeholder Participation: 23.73 per cent (14 votes)**
- **Addressing Corruption: 16.95 per cent (10 votes)**
- **Better Policies: 11.86 per cent (7 votes)**

Total votes: 59

The UNDP Water Governance Facility (WGF) at the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) is an initiative that was launched by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Swedish Agency for International Development Cooperation (Sida). The programme is a mechanism to implement parts of the UNDP Water and Ocean Governance Programme.

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