

WATER: THE BLOODSTREAM OF THE GREEN ECONOMY

Key messages to the 2012 Rio+20 Summit from the Stockholm International Water Institute

Population growth, expanding cities and accelerating economic activity increase the demand for energy and food and create unsustainable pressure on our water and land resources. By 2030, in a business as usual scenario, humanity's demand for water could outstrip supply by as much as 40 percent. This would place water, energy and food security at risk, increase public health costs, constrain economic development, lead to social and geopolitical tensions and cause lasting environmental damage.

Therefore, the foundation for a resource efficient green economy must be built upon water, energy and food security – and these issues must be addressed in an integrated, holistic manner that values the natural environment and recognises the carrying capacity of the planet. Action is critical at all levels to address inequities, especially for the 'bottom billion' who live in slums and impoverished rural areas and survive without access to safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, sufficient food and energy services.

It is imperative to ensure that adequate water and sanitation services are available to the world's population in accordance with the resolution of the UN General Assembly declaring access to drinking water and sanitation as a human right.

The Stockholm International Water Institute strongly urges for political leadership in Rio. The creation of global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) is important to enable focused and coherent action on sustainable development. We welcome the overall acknowledgement that any set of SDGs must incorporate water. As a cross cutting resource and the bloodstream of the green economy, water is an evident candidate for one overarching SDG, but it also must be reflected in the other SDGs. Further on, a SDG on water should highlight the need for integrating water, food and energy security and for improving the implementation of integrated water resources management at all levels to maintain and enhance ecosystem services, equitable access to water and the efficient use of water for productive purposes.

- Recognising that access to drinking water and sanitation is a human right, a SDG on water must set targets for achieving universal access to safe and affordable drinking water and sanitation.
- Further, a SDG on water must address the urgent need for significantly improved water efficiency, for substantive efforts to reduce water pollution and for improved wastewater management, including a radical increase in the reuse of wastewater.
- Recognising the strong interdependence between long term sustainable energy supply and sustainable water resources management, a SDG on energy must contain clear targets for increased water use efficiency in energy production.
- Recognising the great risk water scarcity poses to food security for all and that addressing food losses and waste is the simplest and most direct route to reducing pressure on water resources, a SDG on food security must include targets to radically increase total food supply-chain efficiency, from field to fork, and to significantly increase water use efficiency in agriculture.

The outcome of Rio+20 should explicitly:

- Recognise the key role of water as a resource and a hazard and address the importance of integrated water resources management in disaster risk reduction.
- Address cross-cutting issues and interlinkages, including those among water, energy, food, health, ecosystems and climate change.
- Promote the necessity to integrate water in climate adaptation and mitigation policy and implementation at all levels.
- Call for more effective cooperation on transboundary waters and in particular the ratification and implementation of the UN Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses.
- Recognise the importance of transparency, accountability and integrity as part of the efforts to improve water governance and prevention of corruption.
- Emphasise that availability and public accessibility of information is central for improved water governance. This also includes transparent budgets, which enables stakeholders to identify priority areas, potential funding gaps and track resource allocations.
- Encourage countries to set up procedures for local stakeholder participation in planning, budgeting and implementation of reforms related to water resources and water supply and sanitation.

For more information, please contact:

Ms. Karin Lexén • Tel +46 8 522 139 93 • Email karin.lexen@siwi.org

www.siw.org