

UN-Water on the Road to Rio: water in the green economy for development and poverty eradication

Bonn 2011 Conference. The Water, Energy and Food Security Nexus. Solutions for the Green Economy

Moderator: Johan Kuylenstierna, Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI)

Speakers: Fritz Holzwarth, Director for Water, German Government; Sulton Rahimov, First Deputy Minister for Melioration and Water Resources, Tajikystan; Zafar Adeel, UN-Water Chair (UNU); Nicolas Bertrand, United Nations Environment Programme; Alexander Muller, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); Olcay Unver, World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP); Kenza Robinson, UN-Water Secretary (UNDESA); Anders Berntell, Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI); Joakim Harlin, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); Josefina Maestu, Coordinator of UN-Water Decade Programme on Advocacy and Communication (UNW-DPAC); Bert Diphooorn, UN-HABITAT; Robert Bos, World Health Organization (WHO); Peter Bjoernsen, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP-DHI); Ania Grobicki, Global Water Partnership (GWP); Alice Bouman: Women for Water Partnership (WfWP)

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Background

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), 20-22 June 2012, is one of the most important events in the UN agenda. The first conference or 'Earth Summit' in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 summoned representatives of almost all the nations of the world to create a shared vision for reconciling economic growth with environmental protection and building a more equal world. Progress is uneven. Today one out of five people in the world – 1.4 billion – currently lives on \$1.25 or less a day and almost a billion go hungry every day. The world is facing major and overlapping global crises – the economic and financial crisis, accelerating environmental degradation, water scarcity and pollution, and emerging impacts of a changing climate. Drinking water and especially sanitation services for the poor are lagging behind in key regions of the world, with at least 3 to 4 billion people not benefiting from fully adequate services. All of these challenges impede efforts to eradicate poverty, promote economic development and achieve an equitable society.



Moderator: Johan Kuylenstierna, Centre Director and Deputy Director Operations, Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI)

Of critical importance to the success of Rio+20 will be the way in which the needs and concerns of developing countries are addressed. A reoccurring and legitimate concern relates to the provision of support to enable these countries to advance towards a green economy. There are also concerns



about the introduction of new conditionalities that might restrict or distort trade, financing and official development assistance, and limit public policy space to protect environment, regulate markets and pursue social objectives.. The principle of ‘common but differentiated responsibilities’ was enshrined as a cornerstone of sustainable development at the 1992 Rio Declaration and provides a framework for sharing fairly the costs of global environmental protection. Notably, developed countries must support the less developed countries in making the transition, through capacity, technology transfer, and reforms to the global economic and financial structures.

The need to speed and scale up the provision of basic drinking water and sanitation services for the poor and improve the management of the world’s water resources – specially for productive uses and dealing with extreme events - has been underlined at previous international conferences on sustainable development. Both Earth Summits in Rio (1992) and Johannesburg (2002) called for actions to improve the delivery of services to the very poor and improve the way water is managed and used. Rio+20 presents a unique opportunity to boost commitment from governments and other stakeholders to implement these actions.

Political Expectations for Water and from UN-Water in Rio

In the preparatory process some Member States have supported the idea of water being a key emerging issue to be addressed at the Rio conference. This is an encouraging sign for those keen to see water feature prominently at Rio+20. Germany and Tajikistan have provided leadership on water issues and they have explained some of their expectations for water in Rio and their expectations about the role that UN-Water could play.

The German Government is engaged in raising awareness for the nexus perspective. The difference with Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) is that while IWRM is water community driven, the nexus perspective proposes a two way dialogue with the sectors. It is a wakeup call to the sectors to say that the water community is eager to share experiences. It also helps clarify what the responsibilities of the sectors are. Otherwise it is difficult to set up measures and take action. Vice-versa the water community needs to also take on board the experiences from other sectors. UN-Water can be a cross cutting link to other sectors. In the agenda of other similar groupings in the UN is not possible to find a reference to water. Water seems to be forgotten. Some countries are counting on UN-Water to bring water and development to the Green economy and sustainability agenda. It needs to be clear that the Green Economy is not a technology blue print that will solve problems. The message needs to be that without a good governance structure we will not be able to implement nexus perspectives. Global governance has to improve and this includes that the UN is “more nexus” and cross sectoral, overcoming the Silo debate. UN-Water can be a proper institution to communicate the nexus in depth and implement it in the UN system.



**Dr. Fritz Holzwarth, Water Director
Federal Ministry for the Environment,
Nature Conservation and Nuclear, Germany**



Tajikistan considers that much has been achieved in water management. However, demand for water resources and lack of resources are becoming real problems. In this context it will be difficult to achieve Sustainable Development. Rio+20 is an opportunity for new political commitments in water where developed countries support Least Develop Countries (LDCs) by investing in projects, support the use of renewable resources and the implementation of sustainable consumption and production practices. It has to acknowledge that water plays a key role in development and is fundamental in the transition to a Green Economy. In Rio+20 water should be given highest priority and Rio should even be fully water oriented. UN Water is a key player and some Member States are ready to assist.



Sulton Rahiimov
First Deputy Minister of
Melioration and Water
Resources, Tajikistan

The Dushanbe 2011 Preparatory Conference on water cooperation has proposed to include a thematic section on water cooperation in the agenda for Rio+20. In Central Asia cooperation is of outmost importance to improve the welfare of the population. It may need to be based on acknowledging the important net economic benefits that result from cooperation, while there may be different sectoral and political interests.

UN-Water, the Green Economy and the development agenda

UN-Water messages for Rio

Momentum has been building to highlight water as a priority issue for Rio+20. The main messages of UN-Water for Rio to participants of the Rio+20 Summit highlight the importance of sustainable water management and the efficient provision of adequate drinking water and sanitation services, investment in water infrastructure and water-based adaptation to climate change, for successfully achieving a green economy. They emphasize the importance of targeting the poorest to help lift them out of poverty and realize their human right to basic drinking water and sanitation services. The Stockholm statement (agreed in the Stockholm World Water Week 2011) calls for effective water management to help adapt to the impacts of climate change and promote economic growth.



Zafar Adeel, Chair UN-Water
United Nations University
(UNU)

Water policy and institutional reform is urged, in order to promote water use efficiency, protect freshwater ecosystems and achieve water, energy and food security. Increasing the water resilience and sustainability of cities is identified as a priority area, as is agriculture where there is a need to increase efficiencies along the whole food supply chain from water use through to reducing food wastage.



Key UN-Water members and partners initiatives

There are some key initiatives that have been important to explain the role that water needs to have in Rio as part of the Green Economy and the development agenda. These include the UNEP Green Economy initiative, the World Water Development Report, the FAO Agriculture and the Green economy, and the Stockholm Statement.



Nicolas Bertrand,
Programme Officer
United Nations
Environment
Programme (UNEP)

There is no green economy without water and good water resources management. The green economy serves to implement the three pillars of sustainable development (environmental, economic and social). The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) define a green economy as one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities.

The green economy concept has already served an important purpose: acting as a catalyst and rallying individual, national and international actors to work together towards a common vision. While it is evident that 'business-as-usual' is not working, articulating the details of a green economy and identifying possible pathways to get there will be a major task for the Rio+20 Summit.

The business as usual approach must change. The forthcoming World Water Development Report 4 emphasizes that this requires that we address “out of the water box issues”. This is so because the key drivers impacting the condition, use and management of water resources are all external to the water box. The framework within which water managers operate are drawn by the decisions of those leaders in the governments, civil society and private sector at large, in many cases without water being taken into account. Today, this also requires recognizing and dealing with the uncertainties and associated risks involved in the planning, management and operation of water-related systems which have increased in number, severity, and complexity.



Olcay Ünver, Coordinator,
United Nations World Water
Assessment Programme
(WWAP)

We are still having problems to integrate economic tools, and inequity in water management. Most solutions for this come from outside of the water box. We cannot be talking bilaterally –water and other sectors- but we need to do it triangularly so that we can take account the co-benefits and trade offs that decisions can create and that appear via water resource management. Tools, such as scenario building or foresight tools and modeling, help consider tangible and less tangible benefits for the sectors, to take informed decisions.



The need to improve efficiency. During the World Water Week 2010 the Stockholm Statement was issued. It declares that “water is the bloodstream of the green economy”. A number of specific targets are proposed for participants of the Rio+20 Summit, such as a “20% increase in water use efficiency in agriculture” and a “20% decrease in water pollution” by 2020.



Anders Bertell,
Executive Director.
Stockholm International
Water Institute (SIWI)

There are losses of about 50%. In our own homes there is a lot of waste that can be avoided. We have to move on and implement IWRM by the sectors.

Water and agriculture in the green economy. On 22 March 2012, World Water Day will draw international attention on the relationship between water and food security. Agriculture is a key issue for the green economy as it accounts for 37% of employment, 34% of land use, 70% of water use and up to 30% of greenhouse gas emissions, globally. Food **production has been successful but we** lose 40% of food and we have 599 million people hungry. Agricultural production will have to increase to achieve food security for a growing population, whilst using fewer natural resources and reducing poverty through improved rural livelihoods.



Alexander Müller, Assistant
Director-General for Natural
Resources, Food and Agriculture
Organization (FAO)

The Nexus perspective helps us go beyond Integrated Water Resources Management (IWR) and supports that the sectors take action to improve resilience. FAO has prepared the “first report on the state of land and water resources for food and agriculture”. There are risks today and there will be more tomorrow. This could mean less food and ecosystem services to achieve resilience if we do not address the nexus.

The major outcome of the Rio+20 Summit will be a ‘focused political document’ on the objectives and two themes of the conference. This output will be the subject of intense discussion and negotiations in the months to come, and of course during the conference itself. At the second



meeting of the Preparatory Committee in March 2011, the conference Bureau issued an invitation *to all stakeholders* to provide comments and input for a draft working document – the Zero Draft – which will form the basis for the outcome document of the conference. This Zero Draft is being compiled by the Bureau of the UNCSD Preparatory Committee based on the contributions from stakeholders and Member States and presented in January 2012 when a three-day meeting will be convened to discuss the contents.



**Kenza Robinson, Secretary
UN-Water. United Nations
Department of Economic and
Social Affairs (UNDESA)**

The General Assembly recognized that water cooperation is a main challenge in water management and there is a need to identify ways to strengthen cooperation and dialogue, demonstrating best practice, and showcasing effective approaches for the joint management of transboundary water resource. This needs to be a key issues considered for water in Rio highlighting the importance of water cooperation ‘for peace and security’, ‘for sustainable development’, ‘for poverty alleviation’, ‘for environmental sustainability’, and ‘for universal water access’.

Developing countries are very diverse. Equity issues need to be dealt with. So far there are international initiatives. We do talk about the bottom billion but dealing with equity entails that we need to involve them too. This means encouraging engagement of the users. In the preparatory process of Rio we have started by including inputs by stakeholders and this may have an impact on how we engage the national and local level.



Discussion points



Water in Rio and a green economy

- ✓ Green Economy for water can be seen as a reformulation of what sustainable development stands for in its original definition: development, including economic development, which is socially just (based on equality and sharing) with due consideration for the environment and safeguarding our ecosystems that we ultimately depend on for the survival of our planet. If we stand by the values agreed in Rio, the green economy applies to all development efforts at all levels.
- ✓ We have objectives and targets. Agenda 21 is still valid. Many countries have embarked on implementing it and we need to ensure that we follow through. The MDGs are all water related. However, there may be a disconnect between national priorities and actions and those at international level. National priorities



**Joakim Harlin, Senior Water Resources Advisor
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**



and experience has to factored into policy making and normative work.

- ✓ There are concerns and disagreements on the very definition of the green economy. Some consider that this may mean new conditionalities to trade and aid. Some countries would like to discuss market access so that there are not further restrictions.
- ✓ **The Rio+20 summit can help frame the areas - especially environment and perhaps climate related - that should be factored into the next set of goals** – The Sustainable Development Goals, that will follow after 2015. They need to reflect what the countries themselves state and perceive as important.
- ✓ **Being green’ intrinsically means being water friendly:** It is fundamentally impossible to be green without being water friendly. The problem arises when actions in other domains ignore or misunderstand that water underpins the entire green economy, and that without planning for good management of freshwater resources the entire sustainable development is put at risk.. While different sectors can be ‘in competition’ over water, it is clear that all the benefits of water are required for sustainable economic development, and therefore ‘green’ policy should be based on the premise that water unpins the entire ‘green’ process.

The business as usual approach must change.

- ✓ **The idea that water is a sector that can operate and be managed in a vacuum is one of the major barriers to progress.** In



Participants attending the session

reality, water cuts across all social, economic and environmental activities. As such, it cannot be confined to one sector; its governance requires cooperation and coordination across diverse stakeholders and sectoral ‘jurisdictions’. Water availability must be understood within the context of the hydrological cycle, which is influenced by multiple factors, trends, uncertainties and the associated risks that extend beyond a narrow sectoral focus. Without taking into account water’s interactions with other sectors

within the energy/food/health nexus. It is vital that the overarching goal of sustainable development explicitly features water as a key component in the decision making process.

- ✓ **There is a need to promote a more in-depth change of practice in the face of climate change.** A first global study based on climate change scenarios for 2020 and 2030 showed



that there are differences in resilience for different types of water supply and sanitation systems and services. Clearly, adaptation of existing systems and incorporation of resilience parameters in systems currently being planned needs to be the focus, particularly in urban settings. This issue now needs to be taken up by national governments and municipal authorities to create or strengthen the institutional arrangements that encourage climate change scientists, water supply and sanitation planners and engineers to work together. Such an approach will fit very well with addressing the needs of an aging infrastructure that needs upgrading in any case to ensure the level of service required to ensure basic needs and minimize public health risks.

- ✓ In order to **work in the nexus** water professionals may need to familiarize themselves with the problems in other sectors and identify ways by which "water" can contribute to the solutions of their challenges. No-one is waiting for more challenges to tackle, especially if they are perceived to be outside of one's own institutional remit (i.e. health problems are a problem for the health sector to deal with). The key could be to put an economic label on problems (transfer of hidden costs) and on solutions (multiple economic benefits for different sectors from one particular intervention).

UN-Water heading for Rio: moving to action

Messages from the 2011 UN-Water Conference on Water in the Green Economy in Practice

UN-Water has already been contributing to the process of moving to action. The UN-Water Toolbox on water on the green economy in practice explain that the challenges related to water are unquestionably great, but there have been many examples of successful sustainable water management which delivers the so-called 'triple bottom' benefits for economies, people and the environment. Six tools are proposed which can be used to facilitate change and support the transition towards a green economy: (1) economic instruments; (2) green jobs; (3) cost recovery and financing; (4) investments in biodiversity; (5) technology; and (6) water planning.



Josefina Maestu, Coordinator. UN-Water Decade Programme on Advocacy and Communication (UNW-DPAC)

These tools can enable us to 'do more with less', overcome barriers, harness opportunities and change behaviours in order to achieve a green economy. It is essential to underline that countries are different and are at different stages of development; that some preconditions must be met for successful implementation of the different tools.



UN-Water actions and the Road ahead

UN-Water members and partners will continue contributing in the preparation of Rio+20, specially insuring that they support moving to action. There are specific actions that may be most appropriate in cities in Least Development countries; actions and targets that have helped in progressing with improved water resources management objectives; actions helping to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and beyond; including the role of women empowerment in insuring the progressive realization of goals.

Water and cities in a green economy. Half of humanity now lives in cities, and within two decades, nearly **60%** of the world's population will be urban dwellers. Cities cannot be sustainable without ensuring reliable access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation, as well as wastewater treatment and stormwater drainage. However, water supply and sanitation services in urban areas have generally failed to keep pace with urban population growth. Global economic expansion also contributes to increased water demand through the rising number of consumers, desire for higher levels of service and changes in consumption patterns.

Although worldwide the proportion of people with access to water and sanitation gradually increases, in 2008 there were more urban dwellers without access to improved water sources (**114 million** more) and basic sanitation (**134 million** more) than in the year 2000. Urban growth is most rapid in the developing world, where cities gain an average of **5 million** residents every month. This brings along many challenges, especially for the urban poor.



**Bert Diphhoorn, Director,
Human Settlements Financing Division
UN-HABITAT**

Looking at Rio and beyond from an urban perspective needs to consider that we are looking at a nexus in an urbanizing world. The figures show that growth takes places in the secondary towns. For these cities urbanization may be an opportunity because it has so many advantages. Cities are centers of innovation and of economic activity and there are economies of scale for services and production. However, we have to have plans. Urban and regional planning is essential to be able to take advantage of the many benefits of city growth. This requires to work with stakeholders and Local governments, majors and city planners. This is necessary for utilities to be able to provide adequate services, reduce and clean up pollution.



Universal coverage and scaling up sanitation. An important issue for discussion at Rio+20 is the future of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Ever since their inception, the eight MDGs have catalyzed and directed international development efforts. The year 2015 will likely be met with some successes and some failures. The target to halve the proportion of people without

The 1978 Almaty declaration on Health and Development focused on the interlinkages/cross cutting and health co-benefits supporting the environmental argument. However, the reality is that competition exists in society for limited resources and there is no funding for intersectoral collaboration. Ministries and agencies are organized sectorally. The reality is that taking health on board by other sectors has not been so successful. For the future we need to look at the Human right to Water and Sanitation and what does this means?. Improving Accountability has been helpful for achieving the MDGs in drinking water before 2015 but this has been achieved with huge inequalities-For universal coverage we need to establish targets based on progressive realization!!



Robert Bos, Coordinator. Water, Sanitation, Hygiene and Health, World Health Organization (WHO)

sustainable access to safe drinking water is on track for being achieved globally, but the sanitation target lags seriously behind. There is as yet no global framework looking beyond 2015 and the question of ‘what next’ bears on the future of the sustainable development agenda. Initial discussions led by the WHO and UNICEF on post-2015 monitoring of drinking water and sanitation indicate broad agreement that further goals, targets and indicators are still necessary.

One possible outcome is the conversion of the water and sanitation targets into a goal of universal coverage for both. There is support for new global targets but which are better linked to national level targets and accompanied by continued assessment of the enabling environment (e.g. policy frameworks, institutional arrangements, human resource base, financial flows) to identify bottlenecks in implementation. A key message to Rio+20 is that water and sanitation targets should reflect the General Assembly Resolution 64/292 which declared these services as a human right. The human rights concept of progressive realization should be implemented through rolling five-year interim targets allowing for ongoing monitoring and revision.

Women for Water is about involving this immense segment of the world population that has no adequate access to drinking water and sanitation, food and energy for their daily needs, and those of their families. Many of them live in rural areas. Women, if they get out of their isolated position and when being empowered to take development into their own hands, become self sufficient. It is all about creating an enabling environment for women and their organisations to play that role at the various levels, to further womens’ leadership and to ensure that women can participate on an equal footing, especially in the social settings where this is not readily accepted. And particularly at local level, where implementation takes place.



Often, the appropriate level for provision of watsan services is the community level. There women as an organized group have a role to play; they ensure community empowerment complementing governments in the creation of an enabling environment for local action. In Tanzania for instance, cooperation of women” s Major Group with local and national authorities created functional water user associations and –with little money – adequate water & sanitation provisions were realised preventing children from dropping out of school and helping to curb the negative consequences of AIDS. The resistance of donors to valuing expert advice over local insights was effectively overcome resulting in community ownership and use of local skills.



Alice Bouman-Dentener, President. Women for Water Partnership

Women for Water Partnership brings the Rio/Dublin Principles into practice: We further women leadership and ensure that women can participate on an equal footing, especially in the social settings where this is not readily accepted. We particularly support women’s groups at local level, where the implementation takes place. We do this by giving them means to develop themselves; by giving them exposure; by jointly articulating views and needs; and by making sure that they are equal partners in their own development and not target groups for the development efforts of others. If you take into consideration that women and their organizations themselves receive less than 1 % of the total development budget, I would say, there is room for improvement.

There is still a way to go in **improving water resources management**. To this end, UN-Water has undertaken a global survey of 122 countries to take stock on the progress that has been made so far and to identify implementation gaps. A global status report on the ‘application on integrated approaches to the development, management and use of water resources’ will be delivered to Rio+20. Preliminary findings from the survey indicate that most governments have made progress with water sector reform; but that the implementation process which sees principles turned into policy, laws, strategies and plans is slow. Some countries have difficulty moving beyond the first political steps and targeted support is needed to help bring all countries up to speed.



Peter Bjoernsen. Director. Centre for Water and Environment United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP-DHI)



Reforms are too slow. The UN-Water survey show that priorities vary between developed and least developed countries. Least Developed Countries focus on immediate needs for water and sanitation while developed countries prioritize environmental goals. However, challenges are common. What can we do? Moving to new concepts should not override existing process. We have not been good at monitoring the water management reform processes and this is important because it helps bring credibility. We cannot have goals on water resources management that nobody owns. We need to be much more concrete about different priorities and targets.

The shift from principles to practice has only just started in water resources management. Taking the Rio process as a baseline, we are only just gearing up towards implementation of the agreements and action plans. Much emphasis has been given in the past decades to legal and institutional frameworks. And rightly so. Now that we have this sufficiently in place, particularly at the international level, but in many instances also at national level, decision maker would need to engage in full speed implementation. This requires a different mindset and a different set of actors. It also implies: going from government to governance. (GWP-TAC paper on effective water governance). Diversity and inclusion are key. This requires re-allocation of available funds to reflect the different roles and to make sure that all key actors – including the Major Group Women- can indeed participate on an equal footing.



Ania Grobicki. Executive Secretary, Global Water Partnership (GWP)

More people are becoming more aware that there is a crunch coming in water that will affect all sectors!! The turning point is there. The terminology is clear. There is no contradiction between Integrated Water Resources Management, Sustainable Development and Green Economy. To work intersectoral means more understanding of the economic underpinning. Understanding the economic value of water for the different sectors and have the information available to make the point to policy makers. There is no enough time but the monitoring frameworks that need to be developed after Rio would require to put more emphasis on the economic value of water. if you treasure it, measure it!! As people start to appreciate the value of water, because it is becoming

Discussion points

On access to basic water and sanitation services

- ✓ Before we focus on universal coverage as a time bound goal we should compare our experiences and lessons learned from the 1980s international drinking water and sanitation



decade with those of the MDG period. In brief (1) aspirational goals are great motivators for once - but they leave a "hang-over" perception because they are not reached. So the often impressive results are overshadowed by this negative feeling at the end; (2) clear goals defined on the basis of a rational analysis (with perhaps 10% aspiration added) work very well as long as they are defined in a workable way (the weakness of the MDG drinking-water target is its proportional nature, so goalposts are moving as the population increases) with a limited number of measurable indicators; (3) emulating a well-designed target and applying it to another related area is a mistake; the failure to meet the MDG sanitation target may have more to do with the fact that the target was copied from the drinking-water one without a rational analysis than with the incapacity of countries to deal with sanitation.

- ✓ Looking at coverage as the ultimate goal forces us to deploy a framework of rational targets on the short-term and to adapt them as needed based on effective monitoring. Post 2015 means sustainable development and human rights indicators. The important political choice that needs to be made is whether the focus should be entirely on the 50% that has not benefited from the MDG incentives (a group that will be hard to reach) or whether a more differentiated approach along the water and sanitation ladder has to be pursued.

Are we addressing women's empowerment so far?

- ✓ We need to reach the 'Bottom Billion': the immense segment of the world population that has no adequate access to water and sanitation, food and energy for their daily needs. Many of them live in rural areas. The majority of them are women. The general perception is that the lowest cohorts of this 'bottom billion' are in no position to get out of the poverty trap. Their situation in terms of health, education etc. is such that they are too distant from being able to be a potential contributor to the economy. Their entire focus is on survival and they lack the limited means to even invest in anything but the basics. The cost of engaging with them is enormous for development practitioners. The "second" cohort immediately above however, when getting support for basic services, will have the motivation and energy to start developing themselves (World Development Report). Research indicates that this layer in society is the highest performer with respect to social return on investment. Many of the women's groups belong to this segment or directly work with them.
- ✓ There are numerous examples to show that such women, when being empowered to take development into their own hands, organise themselves, become self sufficient, and become the driving force for further development of their communities. Moreover, engaging these groups in WATSAN development early on, ensures appropriate solutions: solutions that are not only technically adequate, affordable and maintainable but also suitable and acceptable in the socio-cultural environment they live in.
- ✓ When we look at the objectives and targets for MDGs, thus far action is mostly on gender equality and women as victims of discrimination, violence, etc. Women's empowerment however is something else. Empowerment is being in a position to take your own decisions.



This and other governance related aspects (corruption, human rights, stakeholder empowerment, pro-poor etc) are fundamental to UN work. Both bottom up and top down.

- ✓ Addressing empowerment means: to create an enabling environment for women (and other Major Groups for that matter) to actively take part in development. Is enshrined in Agenda 21 and the Dublin/Rio Principles for participatory approaches in Integrated Water Resources Management at the lowest APPROPRIATE level (Principle 2). The Women’s Major Group has an important role to play in reaching out to and involving the ‘bottom billion’. It is a social process that requires time and investments, but is essential to achieve effective water governance and sustainable change.

On improving water resources management



Participants attending the session

- ✓ **Dealing with trade offs** There is evidence produced on the economic benefits from improved access to water and sanitation services, but the challenge has been to scale that down to national levels. The information needs to be specific to be usable by national decision makers. Global analyses can be done to most people's satisfaction. However, this is more difficult at national level, as political perspectives, in-country inequities and the lack of capacity, may create local obstacles.

- ✓ **Slow water management investments:** There has been declines over the last 20 years in investment both in water infrastructure and in data collection –The demand for water coming from various sectors (agriculture, energy) is a very important part of this process – not water only for the sake of water, but water for the sake of the human lives and the production of goods and services that depend on it. Those sectors: agriculture, cities, health – they need to be calling for more investment in water, in order for governments to hear the call.



Franz Marré, Head of Division of the Water, Energy and Urban Development, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and Prof Jan Lundqvist, Senior Scientific Advisor at the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)

- ✓ **Intersectoral collaboration:** It is an institutional issue-we all tend to focus on what is in front of us. The challenges that we



now face, as the constraints on the planetary systems become more apparent, demand that we move out of our comfort zones, and work with people in other organizations that are quite different to our own. Intersectoral collaboration is hard because (1) professional training conditions us to work within the boundaries of a specific area of expertise or focused on a narrowly defined problem. We accept a reductionist approach to problem solving, because a comprehensive approach has to recognize that in the end all things are connected to all other things. Priority setting then soon becomes political. We are taught to operate well within our comfort zone and ignore anything outside, and we accept that a partial solution on the short term is better than no solution at all; (2) we have to operate in an environment of limited resources (very topical at this time of financial crisis) and we therefore are geared towards competing rather than towards collaboration. This tendency is enhanced because we have to report back to our own constituency with its vested societal interest. Examples of successful intersectoral collaboration usually have elements of exceptional visionary leadership, unlimited availability of resources and/or issues where the vested interests around cooperative action are greater than those around singular approach within clear sectoral boundaries.

Communications, attendance and documents

The Session was widely advertised in the UN-Water webpage, the UNW-DPAC and UNW-DPC web pages and those of other UN-Water member's and partners. It was also advertised through DPAC media networks and distribution lists and social media- The Conference organizers sent the Session leaflet to the Conference participants, just before the start of the Conference. The session was attended by over 120 people and another 100 attended remotely through live web stream in the UN-Water webpage. The session, and an interview to the UN-Water Chair, featured in the Conference Daily. The video recording of the session is available at the UN-water webpage.

Documents prepared for Rio+20 and on the session, distributed to participants, included:

- ✚ A Statement by UN-Water for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development 2012 (Rio+20 Summit): http://www.unwater.org/downloads/UNW_RIOSTATEMENT.pdf
- ✚ UN-Water Session Brochure and Leaflet: http://www.unwater.org/downloads/UNW_ROAD_TO_RIO.pdf
- ✚ UN Water: A water toolbox or best practice guide of actions. Green Economy Conference http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/green_economy_2011/pdf/water_toolbox_for_rio+20.pdf
- ✚ UN Water Green Economy in Practice: http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/green_economy_2011/pdf/water_in_the_green_economy_in_practice.pdf
- ✚ UN Water: Water Road to Rio and the Way Forward http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/green_economy_2011/pdf/roadmap_to_rio_and_way_forward.pdf

