

International Conference

# Sustainability in the Water-Energy-Food Nexus

19-20 May 2014 in Bonn, Germany

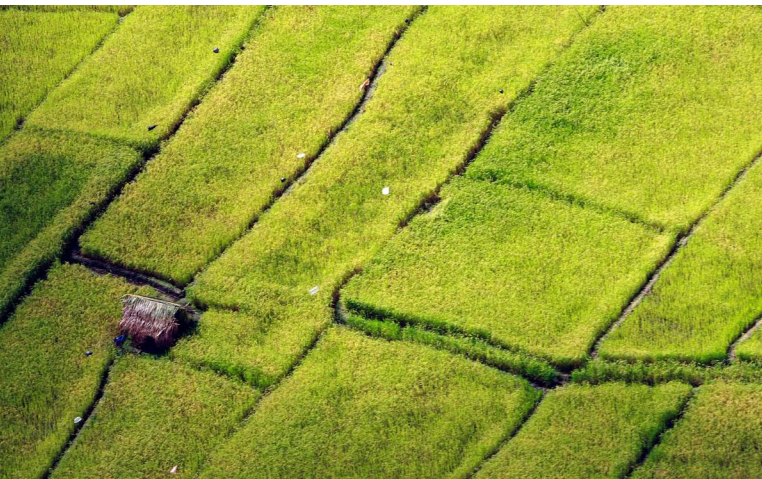


## Conference Report

**Main Issues Discussed**

during the second part of the Conference

# Summary Part II



The second part of the International Conference on the Sustainability of the Water-Energy-Food Nexus meeting on 19/20 May 2014 in Bonn combined three plenary and a number of parallel sessions. Overall, participants agreed that solutions-based approaches to water, energy, and food need to bring together different stakeholders and their interests. This can be done by clearly identifying the benefits which can be gained through a water, energy, and food nexus perspective, and by facilitating coordination mechanisms. The water-energy-food nexus is not ‘reinventing the wheel’, but rather building upon the wisdom and lessons learnt from existing mechanisms including those in capacity development and integrated resource management.

A session on Institutional Capacity Development for Advancing the Nexus Approach, chaired by Jens Liebe from the UN Water-DPC agreed that there’s a need to identify capacity gaps and their relevant capacity fixes. Gaps are not limited to capacity; there are also policy gaps, knowledge gaps; technology gaps and a lack of engagement with the private sector. Zafar Adeel (UNU-INWEH) pointed out that capacity development needs recognition and differentiation between individual and organizational capacity needs.

The session towards UN-coordinated support to the implementation of the nexus was chaired by Dr. Thomas Chiramba (UNEP). Jean-Marc Faurès from FAO and Annuka Lipponen from UNECE presented their organization’s approaches. The need for integrating the nexus approach into the narrative of the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) was broadly agreed upon. UN-WATER’s example was cited as having put an exemplary achievement on the table by uniting its members from the UN system, as well as its international partners to develop one shared global water goal for the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

It was recommended that once all elements of the nexus were individually represented in the Sustainable Development Goals, the inter-linkages should also be addressed, and the targets closely monitored. The perception of the water-energy-food nexus in the media was also briefly discussed: date, the media, and thus the wider public, are not sufficiently aware of the nexus debate. It was recommended for the nexus community to jointly address this challenge, determine what should be communicated about the nexus and how to possibly get the message into the media.

Paul Lucas from the Netherlands Environment Assessment presented an Integrated Model to Assess the Global Environment (IMAGE). The model has been developed to show three different pathways that could achieve the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, such as global technology (e.g. intensive agriculture, high level international coordination such as trade liberalization), decentralized solutions (e.g. local energy and agricultural production for food security) and consumption changes (e.g. less energy intensive life style such as less meat intake). The model showed that, all three pathways could significantly contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Andreas Neef from the Development Studies School of Social Sciences, Faculty of Arts University of Auckland, New Zealand presented on “Resource Grabbing in the Food, Water and Energy Nexus: Discourses, Practices and Impacts” in context of Tanzania and Cambodia. In the case of Tanzania, the presenter concluded that increasing the planting of second-generation biofuel is leading towards ‘Carbon Imperialism’ which includes a threat to local livelihoods, land grabbing, destruction of biodiversity and water scarcity. In the case of Cambodia, the impacts of biofuel are even more severe not only in terms of severe compromise of food production but also impacts on livelihoods, destroys traditional forest, leads to lack of access to resources such as pastures, constraints on transportation routes and water flows, increases poverty and inequality and impacts on the environment, climate change and ecosystem resources. The present political system is encouraging bio-fuel production by foreign and local investors by providing different forms of land concessions without free, prior and informed consent of local communities.

Eloise Biggs of Southampton University UK presented a framework for Environmental Livelihood Security: sustainable livelihoods and the environment nexus. She connected the water-energy-food nexus with a sustainable livelihood approach (SLA). The overarching purpose of the framework is to fill the research gaps between the nexus approach with the sustainable livelihood approach for improving human security in locations where environment-livelihood interactions are strong, especially locations under threat from socio-environmental pressures. She applied

the framework to the Asian Pacific, where it linked water supply, food and water security issues with human, social, physical, natural and financial capitals.

## Call to Action for Implementing the Nexus

The Conference concluded with a Ministerial Panel and a Call to Action for policy makers, practitioners and researchers around the world to start developing and implementing strategies that jointly address water, energy, and food in a comprehensive nexus approach. The key messages of the Call to Action are:

1. Responsible governance of natural resources is the necessary first step for action on the Water-Energy-Food Nexus
2. The nexus is calling for a broad involvement of stakeholders to collaboratively work toward sustainable development
3. It is essential to greatly expand financial, institutional, technical and intellectual resources for nexus research and applications

It includes a set of guidelines which aim to support policy makers, practitioners and researchers as they consider a Nexus approach which focuses on increasing resource use efficiencies, which in turn reduce environmental pressures and maximize the benefits from scarce resources.

Read more online!

<http://wef-conference.gwsp.org>

## Imprint

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The discussion extended passed the conference venue and was taken up on twitter

#WEFNexusConference

<https://twitter.com/hashtag/WEFNexusConference?src=hash>

