Side event on Water and Climate Change at COP21 by UN-Water

The pivotal role of water in climate change adaptation and mitigation

7 December 2015, 18.30-20.00, Observer Room 01

Draft programme

- **Welcome address** – Mr Michel Jarraud, UN-Water Chair (10 min)
- **Panel discussion** – experts with questions from the moderator and the audience (75 min)
  
  **Moderator:** Ms. Karin Lexen, Director, World Water Week, International Processes and Prizes, SIWI
- **Closing remarks** (5 min) – Ms. Blanca Jiménez Cisneros, UN-Water Vice Chair

**Topics for panelists** (all panelists will be asked to touch upon gender and Human Rights Based Approach issues in their interventions):

1. How to mainstream water-related adaptation in planning processes at national and local level?

**Speaker:** H. E. Ms. Nomvula Mokonyane, Minister of Water and Sanitation, South Africa

**Questions to speaker:**

1. How to integrate water-related adaptation in NAPs, NAPAs, INDCs, river basin management plans? What are the barriers?
2. How are the projected climate change impacts on water resources considered in national and basin-wide water policies, strategies and plans? How should they be integrated in these processes and documents?
3. How can the collaboration between national ministries/ sectors be improved in addressing the climate change impacts on water?
4. Climate change is water change. How can water issues be better integrated into climate policy and the national and international climate finance architecture? What would be barriers in doing this and how can they be overcome?

2. Synergies and potential trade-offs between adaptation and mitigation

**Speaker:** Ms. Angela Kallhauge, IRENA

Adaptation measures may hinder or facilitate climate change mitigation measures and vice-versa, however, such interrelations are often overlooked at the national and at the transboundary level.
Questions to speaker:

1. How to increase synergies between adaptation and mitigation in water-related adaptation or mitigation initiatives?
2. What are the potential trade-offs?
3. What are good practice examples and lessons learned in this regard?
4. How to consider or reflect this issue in the negotiations and in the possible Paris agreement?
5. What would a target of 2°C mean for the water community?

3. Water-energy-food-ecosystem nexus

Speaker:

Representative of Ministry of Energy, Mining, Water and the Environment, Morocco (tbc)

Competition — and in some cases even conflicts — between different water uses, often in different riparian countries, is a common challenge. Climate change impacts are expected to further aggravate such competition. The nexus term in the context of water, food (agriculture) and energy refers to these sectors being inextricably linked so that actions in one area commonly have impacts on the others, as well as on ecosystems. A nexus (or inter-sectoral) approach to managing the interlinked resources can enhance water, energy and food security by increasing efficiency, reducing trade-offs, building synergies and improving governance across sectors. To “climate proof” the practices and operation of the various sectors, will mean, from a nexus perspective, finding ways to use resources more efficiently, elaborating more coherent strategies for development across sectors and assigning clear responsibilities and mandates to take action.

Several aspects of a nexus approach resonate well with efforts to adapt to a changing and variable climate: for example improving water use efficiency — advocated as a nexus measure — also reduces exposure to climate-induced physical water scarcity. Shifting to more appropriate crops according to climatic conditions, land type and water availability is another example of an adaptation measure that has intersectoral benefits — with less agricultural inputs needed and a reduction in the impact on ecosystems and shared water resources — and it can therefore be considered a nexus solution.

Questions to speakers:

1. What policies, technologies, actions can make economic activities more robust in the face of climate change, while at the same time have beneficial effects across sectors (e.g. efficient use of resource inputs)?
2. When water demands for both energy (hydropower, cooling of thermoelectric power plants) and for agriculture are expected to increase, how can an effective coordination of plans be reached?
4. What do Ecosystems offer as solutions?

Speaker: Mr. Bernard Giraud, President of Livelihoods Venture, Senior Adviser Sustainability & Shared Value, Danone

Ecosystems play an important role in carbon storage and as natural infrastructure to manage water. Ecosystems can play an important role in climate change mitigation and water-related adaptation including helping regulate water, including its quality, and in disaster risk reduction.

Questions to speaker:

1. What is the business case for using natural infrastructure?
2. Please give us practical examples of how business has been investing in natural infrastructure
3. What do you see as the key challenges and barriers to up-scaling successes? How does one make a business case if the value is the not happening of damage? Who will invest in such a business case?

Crosscutting topic: Climate finance

Climate finance is highly relevant to the negotiations and would help leave the audience with a sense of where some of the solutions to the water and climate challenges may come from. WaterAid’s climate finance research, which shows that there is much room for improvement in terms of spending climate finance on water issues, would be a good basis for a discussion on this. Climate finance spending must be on the basis on poverty and inequality, and avoid the perverse situation when the quest for ‘additionally’ means that money is spent adapting existing services when some populations are still without any service.

Questions to speakers:

1. Climate change is water change. How then can water issues be better integrated into climate policy and national and international climate finance architecture? What would be barriers in doing this and how can they be overcome?
2. How can agencies responsible for water activities be better included in climate finance governance structures and sector planning processes?
3. What role does climate finance play in merging the SDG and climate agendas?
4. How can we make sure that spending on climate change does not run the risk of crowding out urgently needed spending in other priority sectors?
5. How can funds, like the GCF be encouraged to better consider water as a priority funding area?

Possible questions for discussion in the end:

1. How to underline importance of water in the draft Paris agreement?
2. How can we link national adaptation plans to SDG targets and indicators?
3. What are incentives that have proven to work in motivating people to invest in preventing damage rather than creating profit?
4. How do we link this to Sendai?