

Presentation

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WEEK

Managing water across borders

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Major Insights from 2009

- *Look outside the basin* (into the ‘problemshed’ or ‘opportunityshed’)
 - water/energy/trade nexus
 - economic and political trade-offs / opportunities
 - benefit-sharing ‘beyond the river’ (bearing in mind the difficulties)
- *Lessons:*
 - Potential for transferability or increased reach of legal conventions (ECE, groundwater guidelines, Watercourses Convention);
 - Water flows uphill towards \$\$ and power
 - IWRM is a process (not a static concept)
 - Separate negotiation from cooperation

‘wicked problems, uncomfortable knowledge, clumsy solutions’

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Opportunities for Progress

- Leverage the interest in CC to promote water issues (and consider interaction of hydro and carbon cycles)
- Potential of third parties for data gathering and mediation
- Virtual water and food trade as partial solution for water resources management
- *Technology* : Data gathering and analysis technologies; Improved treatment technology makes unconventional water resources more readily available; Improved alternative energy technology
- *Tools assisting with 'effective cooperation'*
 - *Legal*: 2008 Groundwater Principles; Extension of ECE; 1997 UN Convention
 - *Policy*: Transboundary Water Opportunity Analysis; benefit-sharing; issue-linkage, etc.
 - *Institutional*: educational programmes, capacity-building
 - *Analytical*: interaction matrix, power analytical
 - *Knowledge/Data*: Datasets; increasing use of GIS

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Challenges and obstacles to progress

- *Data*: Asymmetric access to data; Limited knowledge of TB aquifers
- *Misc*: Ever-present gap between theory and practice; Inconsistent consideration of ecology in IWRM; Lack of awareness of the potential effect of climate change on water resources; Increased demographic/consumption pressures; Unresolved tensions between sovereignty and transboundary waters
- *'Cooperation'*: Inadequate basin-wide processes; Lack of trust; Size and complexity of the basins/aquifers
- *Asymmetry*: Unfair distribution of *water*, costs and benefits; asymmetric access to information; unlevel playing fields;
- *Political economy*: Power asymmetry; economic and political instability; global crises
- *Institutional*: gaps in international infrastructure; poor capacity; Inefficiencies/duplication/complexities (hydrocracies); Absence of monitoring mechanisms

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Conclusions and Recommendations

- Try out innovative (but grounded) approaches:
 - Seek alternative financial sources within basins
 - Explore the role of technology in conflict resolution (e.g. desalination in the Middle East)
 - Develop more resilient and flexible approaches to transboundary water (management structures, law, institutions, policies).
 - Consider opportunities deriving from interdependence
 - Consider bottom-up approaches and initiatives of non-hegemons
 - Reconsider notion that all conflict is bad and any cooperation is good
- Don't give up on proven ways
 - Test (and learn from) positive and negative experiences
 - Harmonize data
 - Consider the utility of legal instruments
 - Invest in training and capacity building

'better to do the right thing a little poorly than the wrong thing extremely well' (T Allan)