

Media Release

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Balancing water, food and energy equation a global challenge

Gland, Switzerland: One of the world's key challenges in an increasingly challenging future will be balancing the water, food and energy equation, WWF predicted at the conclusion of this year's World Water Week.

"We are already exceeding the limits of the planet in many ways, but it is the availability of fresh water that will have the biggest impact on the food security and energy security of billions," said Dr Li Lifeng, director of WWF's global freshwater programme.

WWF was endorsing the meeting's Stockholm Statement (attached below), this year urging nations at the forthcoming Rio +20 global summit on sustainable development to commit to "universal provisioning of safe drinking water, adequate sanitation and modern energy services by the year 2030".

The Stockholm Statement also seeks 20 per cent by 2020 targets that include increases in crop and energy water efficiency and water recycling, and reductions in water pollution.

The Statement also calls for special attention to water, sanitation and energy needs of "the bottom billion", noting that access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation services have now been defined as human rights.

"We all too often overlook the increasing water intensity of energy production, and the potential impacts on food production," said Dr Lifeng. "As we eat our way up the food chain, the water intensity of many foods is also increasing in the face of depleting groundwater reserves and climate change impacts.

Solving the water, energy and food equation for the world has to be a global priority."

Suggesting that the world might need to look at coherent overall management of water, food and energy, Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) Director Anders Bertell said "There are tremendous opportunities to save water and stimulate development by cutting water losses in energy generation, by generating energy from water reuse and by reducing the losses and waste of food from the field on its way to the consumer".

For further information:

World Water Week, attached.

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WWF *for a living planet*

About WWF

WWF is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organizations, with over 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

About the World Water Week in Stockholm

The World Water Week in Stockholm is the annual meeting place for the planet's most urgent water-related issues. Organised by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), it brings together 2,500 experts, practitioners, decision makers and business innovators from around the globe to exchange ideas, foster new thinking and develop solutions. www.worldwaterweek.org

About Stockholm International Water Institute

The Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) is a policy institute that contributes to international efforts to combat the world's escalating water crisis. SIWI develops and promotes future-oriented and knowledge-integrated policies, towards sustainable use of the world's water resources leading to sustainable development and poverty eradication. www.siwi.org

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The Stockholm Statement to the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro (Rio+20 Summit)

Water is the bloodstream of the green economy. Water, energy and food are interlinked and interdependent; securing them is central to alleviating poverty and to creating a climate resilient and robust green economy. 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 per cent. 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.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012 (Rio+20 Summit) provides an opportunity for global leadership to harness economic activity at all levels to create new and sustainable development and eradicate poverty. 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 these as a human right.

Accordingly, over and above achieving the Millennium Development Goals, we call for a universal provisioning of safe drinking water, adequate sanitation and modern energy services by the year 2030.

We call on local, municipal, and national governments and all major groups participating at the Rio+20 Summit to commit to achieving the following intervening targets by 2020:

- 20% increase in total food supply-chain efficiency; reduce losses and waste from field to fork
- 20% increase in water efficiency in agriculture; more nutrition and crop per drop
- 20% increase in water use efficiency in energy production; more kWh per drop
- 20% increase in the quantity of water reused
- 20% decrease in water pollution

In addition, we strongly urge that the following outcomes feature prominently within the Rio+20 Summit's thematic focus areas:

- i. Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication
 - o All governments commit to sufficient investments in safe drinking water and sanitation services and hygiene education for its people
 - o The current measurements of economic performance are expanded and complemented by indicators on environmental and social sustainability
 - o Economic and social incentives are created to promote water use efficiency and protect freshwater ecosystems
- ii. Creating an institutional framework for sustainable development
 - o Commit to policy and institutional reforms that create an enabling environment for the coherent and integrated management of water, energy and food
 - o Enact national legislation that guarantees access to water and sanitation for all and protect freshwater ecosystems
 - o Create cross-cutting frameworks that bridge ministries and sectors, leading the way to water, energy and food security in a green economy

The achievement of the aforementioned targets and outcomes would help the global leaders assembled at the Rio+20 Summit to deliver a new model of human and economic development and ensure a real impact on human well-being across the world.