



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Side Event on “The Energy-Water Nexus: Managing the linkages between SDG6 and SDG7 for sustainable development”

Co-Organized by ITAIPU Binational and UN DESA

16 July 2018

United Nations Headquarters, New York

SUMMARY

Welcome Remarks (Mr. Zhu, Director DSDG, DESA)

1. On behalf of USG Liu, Mr. Zhu welcomed all participants and highlighted the importance of addressing water and energy interlinkages as key to ensure effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda. He further emphasized tackling water and energy in an integrated manner to have positive implications in relation to climate change. Mr. Zhu noted DESA to be grateful for the strong support from Itaipu Binational and its leadership role on the Itaipu Binational/UN DESA partnership on Sustainable Water and Energy Solutions, which is expected to produce concrete positive actions. Mr. Zhu closed by commending the leadership demonstrated by Tajikistan in the organization of the successful high-level conference on the Decade of Action on Water for Sustainable Development 2018-2028.

Tajikistan (Mr. Mahmaminov, PR to the UN)

2. Mr. Mahmaminov stressed the importance of water and energy as essential elements for life and indispensable factors to achieve well-being, good health, food security, proper education, economic growth and ultimately poverty eradication and sustainable development. He explained that in Tajikistan 95% of the electricity comes from hydropower sources, but that the country is using only 3% of its hydropower potential and that there are still great unexploited hydropower resources all over the world. He concluded his remarks informing participants that his country is planning to have integrated intersectoral programmes for water and energy that will enhance efficiency and will translate into prosperity and reduction of environmental impacts.

Itaipu (Mr. Spalding, Director General Paraguay)

3. Mr. Spalding provided a historical overview of the Itaipu hydropower plant and summarized its major achievements since the beginning of its operation in 1984. He informed Itaipu to be the hydropower plant with the highest generation of energy worldwide, and in the last couple of decades, to have been implementing a comprehensive approach to development that incorporates the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Mr. Spalding further noted the approach and work of Itaipu has been recognized worldwide and the new partnership with UN DESA on sustainable water and energy solutions represents a major effort to share best experiences

and practices as well as knowledge. Mr. Spalding explained that many of the local and regional activities being conducted by Itaipu represent good examples of how SDG 6 and SDG 7 can be linked to other important sustainable development goals. Mr. Spalding concluded by emphasizing four key aspects: (1) intersectoral cooperation; (2) active role at local level; (3) promotion of partnerships; and (4) sharing of good practices.

Spain (Mr. Saavedra, Counsellor Spain Mission)

4. Mr. Saavedra indicated that Spain has extensive experience and a long tradition on water management given the irregular and unpredictable precipitation patterns observed in the country. He explained that about 80% of the water consumption is for irrigation and that the energy sector also consumes a large share of water. Mr. Saavedra noted with respect to energy, Spain depends on external sources for fuel but has incorporated a lot of renewable energy in the last two decades. Mr. Saavedra recognized the importance of having appropriate integrated policies that could secure a balanced and efficient use of energy and water resources. He further noted water policies in Spain to include the human right for water and sanitation, and also stress good governance and inclusiveness in decision making as well as dialogue between nations and transboundary cooperation. Mr. Saavedra closed by highlighting the potential that over 1,200 dams in Spain have as opportunities for future generation of hydropower. Mr. Saavedra explained that the Government of Spain has cooperated with different initiatives over the years and will continue to do so. He underlined that cross-border cooperation must also address energy issues. Mr. Saavedra emphasized that the Government of Spain can attract different actors like CODIA to the Partnership, as well as experiences from GWOPA.

World Water Council (Mr. Medeiros, Governor)

5. Mr. Medeiros provided remarks as the Governor of the World Water Council and as Director of Water Resources in Brazil. He spoke about the successful 8th World Water Forum that was conducted in the city of Brasilia in March this year with participation of over 120,000 people. He stressed the need to empower local participation in the water decision making process and the importance of a new governance based on inclusion and greater cooperation between national and local stakeholders. He acknowledged that new hydropower plants need to be built taking into consideration the social, economic and environmental impacts as well as the balance between water and energy goals. Mr. Medeiros concluded his remarks asserting that many gaps still exist worldwide in relation to water and energy including access, infrastructure, finance, efficiency, etc. He recommended to encourage cooperation and integrated planning with emphasis on the community, providing solutions to real problems. He also recommended solutions that are tailored to each reality. He indicated that decision-makers play an important role in improving legislation and that many countries are identifying legal, administrative and technical gaps. Capacity-building programs should be encouraged, prioritizing the role of young people and women in the process.

ESCWA (Ms. Sedaoui, Chief Energy Section)

6. Ms. Sedaoui explained the interrelation between water and energy and the strong links that these factors have with other SDGs including poverty eradication, food security, sustainable agriculture, economic development and health. She addressed the unique situation of countries in the Arab region with critical and persistent water problems but with abundant energy resources, with thirty-three of the top countries suffering water stress located in the Arab region. Ms. Sedaoui informed ESCWA has been promoting intersectoral and intergovernmental dialogue at national and regional levels to realize

synergies from a water and energy integrated approach. Furthermore, she noted one of the major components of ESCWA's program to be capacity building activities coordinated at the ministerial level. Ms. Sedaoui recognized data availability represents in many areas a major limitation. Ms. Sedaoui highlighted that best practices are not shared and that assessments are not available while indicators are vital in addressing results. Financially, the benefits generated for water and energy are not considered during the technology-selection process. Decision makers should understand that not all technologies are applicable everywhere, they must be appropriate for each area. A dialogue is necessary at a national level.

UNESCO (Mr. Mishra, Programme Specialist)

7. Mr. Mishra stated that if current trends continue in relation to water and energy demand, resources management and availability, the situation will still be critical by the year 2050, with the majority of the unserved population residing in least developed countries and sub-Saharan Africa in particular. He emphasized the vast majority of the growth in demand for water and energy will occur in countries with developing or emerging economies, whereas at the same time, climate change, urbanisation, de-forestation, intensification of agriculture will add to these challenges. Mr. Mishra stressed one of the main problems is the need to intensify education and capacity building, as well as countries to make major investments in human capacities. He therefore noted UNESCO IHP to play a vital role in providing a scientific knowledge base for policy advice to manage and cope with challenges to water resources, including disasters and floods, and to increase the resilience of natural and human systems with an emphasis on vulnerable communities, as well as in promoting international cooperation to mobilize research and supporting human and technical capacity building.

Discussion

8. Participants engaged in a discussion in which several issues were addressed including: (1) how to effectively address the energy-water nexus at the local level and the role of partnerships; (2) challenges related to the construction of new hydropower plants and their impacts; (3) how to engage the local communities in an integrated approach on water and energy; and (4) how to replicate best practices on transnational cooperation similar to the successful approach achieved by Paraguay and Brazil with Itaipu Binational.

Closing Remarks (Mr. Vieira, PR of Brazil to the UN)

9. Mr. Vieira recognized the valuable efforts of Tajikistan on conducting the successful high-level conference on the Decade for Action on "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018-2028, and the new partnership between Itaipu Binational and DESA on Sustainable Water and Energy Solutions. He highlighted the reviews of the SDG 6 and SDG 7 at the 2018 HLPF, and noted the importance to consider the interlinkages between water and energy, as well as the strong links of these two goals with other SDGs. Mr. Vieira concluded by recommending the need to explicitly consider the important interlinkages among SDGs and integrated approaches in the implementation of the sustainable development goals.