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COMMUNICATING ABOUT THE NEXUS

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Securing sufficient access to water, energy and food in order to permit what will soon be 10 billion people living together on the earth is a pressing challenge for all of humanity. To help governments and international institutions to make more optimal use of the, more and more, scarce natural resources, a new concept is gaining increased attention in the international community: the «*water, energy and food security Nexus*».

What does this concept mean to you?

«Nexus» simply means «interdependence». This concept highlights the fact that water security, energy security and food security are inextricably linked. It means that investments or actions in one of these sectors have also implications in the other sectors. Hence, planning and management decisions to increase access to water, food and energy, should be achieved and agreed in a more coordinated and integrated way.

What is the «Nexus approach»?

The «Nexus approach» is a multisectoral approach that takes this interdependence

between sectors into account at all levels: from top-level policy making, investment planning, to on the ground operational management. A smart approach that favours solutions that permit to produce more energy without threatening access to water and/or food. Solutions that allow to secure availability of more food without penalizing the production of affordable energy. And last but not least, sustainable solutions that respect our environment. In other words, solutions that are based on constructive dialogue, listening to each other's needs and constraints.

What are the benefits of implementing this approach?

The benefits of multisectoral cooperation for increased water, energy and food security leads obviously to more profitable investments and to more optimal management decisions. It also reduces the risks of conflicts between those who compete for scarce resources.

How do you see the potential of applying the Nexus approach at various levels in the future?

The Nexus concept is simple. But, translating it into reality is a complex challenge. Changing the way of

policy-making and of managing institutions is indeed a long-term undertaking.

At the national level, it first of all requires a strong political will. The will of reforming the well-established sectorial approach, of sharing information and of working jointly on the improvement of existing national policies and strategies. Although very challenging, this may have huge positive impacts.

At the regional level, high-level conferences and summits can generate the necessary impetus, and provide valuable guidance.

For basin organizations, multisectoral cooperation is already the usual way of doing business in the scope of

the so-called Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). Simply stated, for the water people, the Nexus concept is seen as a part of the broader IWRM concept, but with a more specific focus on the interdependency between water, energy and food.

Finally, at the local level, applying the Nexus approach means above all more stakeholder dialogue and participation in the design and management of solutions to local water, food, and/or energy issues. A typical example is multi-sector stakeholder consultation for the building and operation of multipurpose dams.

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The Water, Energy & Food Security Resource Platform
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