

**13<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development**

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**“Implementing Integrated Water Resources Management”**

The report of the Secretary General on “Freshwater management: Policy options and possible actions to expedite implementation” aims to assess progress towards the attainment of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The report lists priority actions for the near future. IUCN congratulates the Secretary General on this report and commends the governments on their efforts since the Johannesburg Summit.

IUCN shares the commitment of the international community to ensure the provision of clean drinking water and sanitation, and the development and implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management plans. The Secretary General’s report provides appropriate guidance in both areas and establishes a solid basis for reaching agreement on policy decisions during the 13<sup>th</sup> Session of The Commission on Sustainable Development.

IUCN also notes the contributions to the CSD 13 deliberations contained in the “Chairman’s Summary of Interactive Discussions” produced at the CSD 13 Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting, as well as the “User-Friendly Matrix of the Chair’s IPM Summary.”

As this is the first time the CSD has completed a two year cycle for consideration of a suite of issues, it is crucial that the outcomes are relevant and useful since water and sanitation issues will not be back on the CSD agenda for some time. The “matrix” or “policy menu” approach, presented following the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting in March, is a useful way of delineating the wide array of policy options that countries are experimenting with to address water, sanitation and human settlement issues.

From that basis, IUCN encourages the Commission on Sustainable Development to go a step further in its deliberations and outputs. The international community has developed numerous lists of policies and measures, for example at Rio, at various World Water Forums, at Johannesburg, and at the Conferences of the Parties to the Ramsar and Biodiveristy Conventions. CSD can add value to the

outputs of those processes by providing a forum for discussion and learning amongst various parties, to determine what is working, what is not working, and why. This, in turn, requires some analysis of the obstacles to implementation of the measures we have all agreed are necessary, and also of ways to mobilize the political will and financial resources to overcome those obstacles. While a menu might be appropriate - since one size of policy measures does not fit all - we also need to ensure that there are adequate policy outcome monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place. This will ensure the effective evaluation of the individual and cumulative impacts of those various policies and measures in an effort to determine if, on balance, the world is making any progress towards meeting the water and sanitation targets contained in, inter alia, the Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The importance of these monitoring and assessment issues is highlighted in the Chairman's Summary, paragraph 34-36, as well as the importance of creating an enabling environment in paragraphs 37-49.

***IUCN encourages the Commission on Sustainable Development to strengthen international cooperation on international water governance beyond CSD-13 by endorsing an on-going assessment mechanism as a necessary complement to any matrix or menu of policy options, taking into account relevant needs for financial resources, technology transfer and capacity building.***

From the above perspective, IUCN wishes to bring the following points to the attention of the Commission:

### **1. Implement environmental flows**

The Secretary General's report and the Chairman's summary both underline in various places the

importance of environmental flows. Environmental flows offer a set of tools to balance various demands for water, to protect downstream users and ecosystems, and to ensure the long-term prosperity of a river basin. As demonstrated in the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, and as agreed during the Ministerial Conference "Water, food and ecosystems", creating more synergy between agricultural and environmental aspects of water management is absolutely critical.

Experience from a number of pioneering countries encourages government agencies, donors, the private sector and civil society to:

- Set up a multidisciplinary team to build capacity at the national level on the practice of environmental flows, including a repository of reference materials;
- Apply various assessment methods in a trial project;
- Engage with international expert networks on environmental flows methodologies and tools;
- Engage with stakeholder groups to identify main water uses, abstraction levels, and possible flow scenarios.

### **2. Strengthen governance and involve stakeholders**

The Secretary General's report rightfully proposes "launching a multi-stakeholder dialogue to define priorities and inform the preparation of the [IWRM] plan, and enhancing mechanisms for information sharing" (paragraph 22e) as a key element of IWRM plan development. The Chairman's summary rightly highlights the importance of a comprehensive, basin-wide approach to water management and emphasizes the important role that women in particular play in water resource management.

Stakeholder participation is an essential element of IWRM and the following concrete guidance may help in establishing or strengthening such a process:

- Stakeholder dialogues should be extended to include the identification of options and solutions to conflicts in water management, and lead to immediate and collaborative action to improve the status of water resources;
- The review of legal and institutional frameworks is an integral part of improving governance and should be undertaken as part of the IWRM plan development;
- Special care needs to be taken to ensure the dialogue is inclusive, for instance, by specifically targeting communities highly dependent on water bodies and downstream small-scale fishing communities to include poverty concerns;
- Establishment of international cooperation between basin organizations and national institutions may build capacity for the role of stakeholder consultation processes in IWRM;
- Political will for a long-term engagement with stakeholders is important.

### 3. Apply economic valuation and payment for environmental services

Valuation of multiple water use and ecosystem benefits provides decision-makers with additional information that ultimately leads to rational development decisions. Furthermore, valuation is also the basis for the development of innovative payment schemes for environmental services, which help to maintain some of the vital ecological services of freshwater basin ecosystems.

More financial resources should be made available to invest in water supply, sanitation and resource management. Governments, donors, the private sector and civil society are encouraged to:

- Include in IWRM plans the necessity to research environmental services and provisions for appropriate investments for resources protection and maintenance;
- Include ecosystem services valuation in public and private decision-making, and as the basis for incentive schemes;
- Initiate and support the development of a decentralized funding mechanisms for the development of local initiatives;
- Set-up water pricing and incentive schemes that benefit the poorest and establish watershed protection, while discouraging excessive water use.

#### More information:

On environmental flows:

<http://www.waterandnature.org/flow/>

On economic valuation:

<http://www.waterandnature.org/value/>

Created in 1948, IUCN - The World Conservation Union brings together 82 States, 111 Government agencies, 800 plus NGO's, and some 10,000 scientists and experts from 181 countries in a unique worldwide partnership. IUCN's mission is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

IUCN is the world's largest environmental knowledge network and has helped over 75 countries to prepare and implement national conservation and biodiversity strategies. IUCN is a multicultural, multilingual organization with 1000 staff located in 62 countries. Its headquarters are in Gland, Switzerland.