
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Committee on Environment and Development

Fourth session

Bangkok, 11-13 November 2015

Item 5 (g) of the provisional agenda*

Outcomes of key regional dialogues on sustainable development: workshop on water and green growth in Asia and the Pacific to prepare regional inputs for the Seventh World Water Forum

Experiences on water and green growth in Asia and the Pacific

Summary

The present document contains a summary of the Workshop on water and green growth in Asia and the Pacific, which was held in Bangkok from 23 to 25 February 2015. The main outcome of the workshop was the publication of good practices/case studies from Asia and the Pacific, which is available from www.unescap.org/resources/case-studies-water-and-green-growth-asia-and-pacific. The publication was provided as input to the water and green growth thematic regional processes of the Seventh World Water Forum, which was held in Daegu and Gyeongbuk, Republic of Korea, from 12 to 17 April 2015.

The Committee may wish to take note of the information contained in the document.

1. Water underpins agriculture and food production, which is the main source of GDP for many developing and under developed countries. Water will have direct linkage with long term prospect of economic growth, necessary to reduce poverty and job creation.

2. With rapid economic growth and accelerated urbanization in Asia and the Pacific, demands for water increases with huge pressure on supply of water. Waste water in the region is generally released untreated into the natural systems, polluting the natural waterways, further increasing the pressure on water supply. Concurrently the region is also worst affected by disasters, further exacerbated by impacts of climate change.

* E/ESCAP/CED(4)/L.1.

3. Green growth is a new paradigm to sustain economic growth by investing in eco-system and natural resources including water. Current paradigm of maximizing short term GDP at the expense of the well-being of people and the planet is undermining long term prospect of economic growth of many developing countries of the region. Green Growth is an attempt to reconcile short term policy focus on economic growth with the long term policy goals of environmental sustainability by closing the time gap between the short term economic efficiency with the long term ecological efficiency, thus ensure long term economic prospect critical for poverty reduction can be sustained.

4. Green growth attempts to transform the way our economy produces and consumes, by restructuring the visible and invisible structures of the economy. Water is a critical component of the visible structures of our economy. Applying green growth approach means “investing in long term water resource management” and “improving economic and ecological efficiency of water supply and demand” so that water can continue to support rather than to limit long term economic growth prospect critical for poverty reduction and job creation.

5. These will include improving ecological efficiency of water resource management through IWRM and improving economic efficiency of water supply and demand through water-energy-food nexus related with man-made water system, agriculture, sanitation and hydropower. Applying green growth approach will also focus on balancing the role of public and private sector as the public sector plays a critical role in setting up long term goals and strategies of water resource management while private sector is focusing on short term economic efficiency of water supply and demand.

6. By linking green growth with water resource management, Asia and the Pacific countries can sustain their long term economic growth prospect, support rapid urbanization and drive agricultural and industrial development while improving their resilience to water related disasters and be better prepared for water shortage and drought, and improve their sanitation, critical for the well-being of people of the region. Green growth is a concept that can steer the region to sustainable development.