



International Conference:

Asia Pacific Policy Dialogue on Water, Energy and Food Security for Poverty Alleviation in Dryland Regions

23-25 November 2016, Rawalpindi, Pakistan

Co-hosted by UNESCO and PMAS-AAUR

Recommendations

Background

In order to realize Agenda 2030, UNESCO and PMAS-Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi, Pakistan with the support of Japan Funds-in-Trust and Malaysia Funds-in-Trust, are taking the lead in highlighting key issues, available solutions and policy directions for poverty alleviation and improved livelihood in dryland regions in Asia and the Pacific region. The agricultural productivity has seen a rapid growth since the late 1950s due to introduction of new crop varieties and fertilizer use. However, the boost in agricultural production has remained limited to irrigated plains, while the dryland regions are still facing food insecurity and poverty. The situation is further worsened due to non-adaptability of modern technologies and lack of mechanization resulting in decreased water productivity. There is dire need to improve water use efficiency and energy inputs on sustainable basis for substantial increase in food production. Keeping in view the scarcity of water, energy and food, the upcoming conference will provide an opportunity to hold an international dialogue between policy makers, scientists, academicians, other experts and stakeholders for exploring new dimensions to increase water and food security and alleviate poverty in the resource deficient dryland regions worldwide, in Asia and the Pacific region, and particularly in Pakistan. Participants in this dialogue will discuss the thematic areas and propose policy guidelines and strategies for effective use of resources to ensure water, energy and food security. This conference will help facilitate the integration of the newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into national development plans of respective member states / countries, particularly on SDGs 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 15 and 17.

Pakistan Vision 2025 and 2030 Agenda

1. The implementation of 2030 Agenda cannot be achieved without a very strong political commitment and coordinated and synergetic planned actions from all major sectors: energy, food, water and disaster.
2. Pakistan vision 2025 is an exemplary illustration of a comprehensive multi-sectors integrative approach for national development planning in line with 2030 Agenda.

3. Partnership and collaboration between different stakeholders is key to ensure effective implementation of 2030 Agenda, Academia and the UN system having a major role in promoting and strengthening joint initiatives for sustainable development.

Disaster Risk Reduction

4. Natural disasters' impacts are cross-cutting issues and the delivery of 2030 Agenda cannot ignore efficient DRR/DRM and enhancement of regional, national and community based mitigation and resilience capacity.
5. It is necessary to take an integrative approach of disaster management with a multi-disaster approach, for instance considering flood and drought management jointly.
6. For an integrative approach and to raise preparedness to climate change impact, real-time transboundary reliable data sharing mechanisms should be efficiently implemented.

Nexus approaches and livelihood

7. The management of UNESCO sites (World Heritage, Biosphere Reserves, Geoparks, HELP and Ecohydrology sites) promotes integrative and socially inclusive approaches and models for local, national and regional sustainable development. It also provides an implementation and a monitoring framework.
8. A regional mechanism and platform for sharing UNESCO sites good practices, know-how, successful experiences in local development shall be strengthened, for instance by creating, maintaining and enhancing regional and sub regional networks in South and Central Asia
9. Involvement of local communities in sustainable development initiatives is necessary to achieve the ultimate goal of improving their livelihoods and welfare.
10. Academia needs to play a major role in analyzing and recommending good practices and mechanisms including indigenous and local knowledge put in place by local, national and regional champions to trigger socially inclusive long term sustainable development pathways.

Agricultural Sustainability

11. Developing collaborative efforts between disciplinary experts and civil society to construct a collective and integrated vision for the future agriculture that balances and enhances the sustainability goals given in UN 2030 Agenda.
12. Pursuing research and extension that integrate multiple disciplines relevant to all goals of agricultural sustainability, for instance identifying and researching system characteristics that increase resilience and adaptability in the face of changing conditions.
13. Adjusting the mix of farming system types and the practices used in them at the landscape level to address major regional problems such as water overdraft and environmental contamination.
14. Encouraging and accelerating the development of new markets and legal frameworks that embody and pursue the collective vision of the sustainable future of agriculture.

Water Planning in the nexus approach

15. Achieving long-term water security is a necessary condition for sustainable development at local, national and regional levels and it is only possible through integrative water planning at all levels.

16. Because water is essential to strategic sectors such as energy and food, efficient water management and planning needs to be supported by integrative, nexus approach based, socially inclusive water policies and governance.
17. The role of academia is determinant in providing new tools and platform for integrative water resources management which enable the use, capitalization and dissemination of new types of data and information.

Food Security

18. The “Agriculture and Food Security Policy” announced by the Government of Pakistan in Vision 2025 must be implemented in letter and spirit. Food security discourse adopted must incorporate the entire food value chain, from ‘production to plate’.
19. Local-level attempts to empower people and to create sustainable rural livelihoods is important for future success, for instance education of farmers through mass media, short courses, and exchange programmes among other South Asian states.
20. Agricultural Universities may focus their research on high value crops, livestock, fisheries, forest conservation, post-harvest handling, irrigation water management and management of soil problems need to be given much higher priority.
21. The productivity of the food crops can be substantially enhanced through innovative technologies such as quality seeds, proper fertilizers, and efficient and effective use of irrigation.

Energy in the nexus approach

22. As the third pillar of the nexus approach, energy security should be considered through its interrelations with water and food security for synergetic actions.
23. Energy has a major role in reducing poverty and contributing to achievement of 2030 Agenda and SDGs.
24. Innovative solutions for sustainable development are available and shall be promoted (e.g. hydroelectricity).
25. As a priority sector in national development plans, strong political commitment and awareness of global trends are essential for efficient energy policies development and implementations.
26. Transboundary and regional collaboration should be enhanced to fully maximize the energy potential of the region.