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Responsible Person: Sibylle Vermont, François Muenger

- Switzerland thanks the Secretary General for the excellent documentation on water and the other topics, all relevant to water management.
- Indeed land use is extremely important to water management.
- If recognition of the role of water-related terrestrial ecosystems such as forests and wetlands is growing, do you coordinate your integrated water resources management plans with your national forest programs? ¹
- Intersectorality can only be effective if natural resources supporting the water cycle are valued and appreciated economically, i.e. through **market-based approaches**.
- We depend on ecosystem services but we do not value them.
- The economic value in terms of ecosystem services of wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar convention on wetlands is assessed to some 70 billions US\$ per year.
- Yet, the ecosystem values do not get any recognition in national income accounts or measures such as gross domestic product (GDP).

Let me give you an example on Forests and water:

- Forests, as rightly said in the SG document, provide critical services for water management.

¹ It is in this context that the Ministerial Conference for the Protection of Forests in Europe adopted a resolution last November on Forests and Water:

24: assess the economic value of forest services related to quality and quantity of water resources and flood alleviation from which society benefits,

25. incorporate the economic valuation of water-related forest services into relevant policies and strategies on forests and water.

26. facilitate the development and implementation of measures, which may include economic tools such as payments for ecosystem services (PES)¹ in order to broaden and diversify the financial basis for sustainable forest management and to maintain the protective functions of forests.

- To maintain its services, a forest must be in good health. Forest degradation has now got some focus with REDD (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation)
- The Bali Action Plan², adopted under the Climate Change convention last December, offers a great opportunity for water experts to work with their forest colleagues. Indeed carbon storage as well as water suffers from forest degradation.
- Bundling of services, i.e. carbon storage, water management and biodiversity will contribute to the reduction of deforestation and forest degradation, as well as improve water management. Payments for these services will reward the stewards of these ecosystems, securing the services while securing them a livelihood.
- In 2006, the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes of the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations (UNECE) has been the first MEA to adopt Recommendations on Payments for Ecosystem Services in Integrated Water Resources Management³.
- The 2007 Ministerial Conference for the Protection of Forests in Europe adopted a resolution on Forests and Water, recognizing the importance of the payments for the ecosystem services.

Water and Agriculture

- We share the many concerns over the perspectives of extending agricultural land over forests and wetlands, that will degrade their services so important for the water cycle.
- We see little discussions on other scenarios, such as improved management and technologies, increase of soil fertility, provision of extension services, promotion of rainfed agriculture, and finally better management of produced food from field to fork. (50% get lost in all the countries).
- In 10 years from now, less than 50 countries will be self-sufficient in terms of water resources. The agrofuels production is setting a great stress to water resources (1000 to 5000 liters of water for one liter of agrofuel). In addition to overabstracting water, the production of agrofuels will also pollute water thus further impacting on the ecosystems. It will even apply more pesticides and fertilizers than for food production.
- Dear colleagues, I am talking about an emergency situation, Agrofuels will even impact TWICE on water and food production: inland and at sea: The dead zone in the gulf of Mexico, due to eutrophication caused by agriculture is empty of fish and measures more than 22'000 km².
- We should promote far more rainfed agriculture than irrigation.
- It is the right time to examine whether a “World Commission on Irrigation” on the model of the “World Commission on Dams” might contribute with recommendations to a wiser and more efficient irrigation.
- If we talk about agriculture and water, we need to look at groundwater:

Groundwater

- Groundwater is going to be a major challenge in the next few years.
- We welcome the draft articles on the law of transboundary aquifers by the UN law Commission.
- Nevertheless measures should also be taken at the national level.

² Which calls for examination of “policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries

³ http://www.unece.org/env/water/publications/documents/PES_Recommendations_web.pdf

- The overabstraction of groundwater, its pollution are far from being solved.
- Overabstraction does not only mean less groundwater in the future but also a high risk salt intrusion, for areas near the sea.

Finally

- Switzerland believes that all this review and the new emerging issues and future directions in water must absolutely be part of the CSD17 Decision.