



Side Event on “Strengthening integrated responses to water and energy as a strategy for climate actions”

**Co-Organized by ITAIPU BINACIONAL and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)
With support from the Government of Spain**



**Wednesday, 26 September 2018, 14:30 – 16:30
Cervantes Institute, New York**

SUMMARY

Welcome Remarks (Mr. Ignacio Olmos, Executive Director, Instituto Cervantes, New York)

1. Mr. Olmos welcomed all participants to Cervantes Institute, highlighting the public institution was created by Spain for the promotion and the teaching of the Spanish language and for the dissemination of Spanish and Spanish-American culture. Mr. Olmos specially welcomed the presence of Ms. Cristina Gallach, High Commissioner for the 2030 Agenda of Spain, as well as of other distinguished delegates.

Opening Remarks (Mr. Rafael Conde de Saro, General Consul, Consulate General of Spain in New York)

2. Mr. Conde de Saro welcomed all participants and especially thanked the high-level delegates and speakers for their participation at the event. Mr. Conde de Saro emphasized the relevant experience of Spain in managing the water and energy nexus and the cooperation with other countries.

Session I: Sharing the vision

Moderator (Mr. Juwang Zhu, Director, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, UN DESA)

3. Mr. Zhu excused Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Liu Zhenmin, who was not able to join on this relevant occasion due to conflicting engagements at the UN General Assembly, and expressed his gratitude to Spain for hosting the event. He stressed the importance of water for life and noted that solving the global water and energy challenges is crucial to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Republic of South Africa (H.E. Mr. Gugile Nkwinti, Minister of Water and Sanitation)

4. H.E. Mr. Nkwinti underlined the importance of implementing solutions on the ground. He provided an example of an energy self-sufficient housing project in his country. He mentioned that in this eco-village the extraction of water and the treatment of effluents are done through solar energy, which reduces the cost of living dramatically. He noted that this project was financed by the private sector and that it had received national recognition.

Spain (Ms. Cristina Gallach, High Commissioner for the 2030 Agenda)

5. Ms. Gallach highlighted that Spain seeks to translate the 2030 Agenda into practice at all levels, noting that Spain is committed to work for the Agenda not only in the country, but internationally. Ms. Gallach further noted that Spain understands water governance as a key instrument to face the scarcity of water, and in this regard highlighted the Government's work on this issue in Latin America through CODIA and in the Mediterranean basin in the framework of the 5+5 Dialogue for the Western Mediterranean basin. She concluded highlighting Spain's commitment to support the Global Network on Sustainable Water and Energy Solutions.

Brazil (H.E. Mr. José Antonio Marcondes de Carvalho, Under- Secretary General for Environment, Energy, Science and Technology of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil)

6. Mr. Marcondes presented his condolences to the Government of South Africa for the passing of Mrs. Edna Molewa, Minister of Environmental Affairs. Mr. Marcondes explained about the water scarcity period that occurred in his country. He underlined Itaipu's work as the largest generator of renewable clean energy in the world, highlighting the share of renewable energy in the Brazilian energy mix to have reached 80%. Mr. Marcondes stressed the importance of sharing good practices on sustainable energy production such as the integrated management of watersheds promoted by Itaipu Binational. He further provided an example of the country's experience producing ethanol from the waste of sugar production, which is less water-intensive. Mr. Marcondes concluded by highlighting the important challenges that climate change is posing in Brazil and globally, emphasizing the need to develop a joint vision and a global agenda to overcome these challenges.

World Farmers Organization (Ms. Arianna Giuliadori, General Secretary)

7. Ms. Giuliadori described the importance of the water and energy nexus for rural communities through providing an example of WFO's experiences in Zambia. She told a story of a farming community that did not have access to water was able to mobilize efforts jointly and acquire solar energy to supply water to their farms, which allowed them to cultivate and diversify the production. Ms. Giuliadori also provided an example of a community in Cambodia, where cooperation with various institutions allowed the community to build tanks to store water and cultivate again. She highlighted that in both cases, the most challenging part to implement these successful projects was their "kick-offs". She underscored the importance to share good practices and demonstrate that the commitments are viable in order to achieve both the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. Ms. Giuliadori concluded by noting that farmers would like to be seen not only as part of the problem, but as part of the solution.

Discussion

8. A representative from the World Health Organization stressed the importance of water and energy in health services. She highlighted that, while water is basic to ensure hygiene in the health care facilities, 30% of these facilities in Africa still do not have electricity. Likewise, the lack of access to clean cooking has tremendous health impacts due to high levels of household air pollution, which particularly affect women and children.

9. A representative of the nonprofit organization “Temple of Understanding” stressed the importance of taking into account local experiences in order to scale up solutions.

Session II: Best practices on integrated water and energy management for sustainable development and climate action

Moderator (Mr. Minoru Takada, Team Leader, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, UNDESA)

10. Mr. Takada thanked the presence of several members of the Sustainable Water and Energy Solutions’ Steering Committee and Joint Programm Coordination Unit, and introduced the session, as well as invited panelists.

Conference of Ibero-American Water Directors-CODIA (Mr. Eduardo Orteu, Technical Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Ecological Transition, Spain)

11. Mr. Orteu presented CODIA’s efforts to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6 (water and sanitation), through facilitating dialogue among and capacity building within CODIA’s countries. He emphasized that the water-energy equation, which has been on the agenda for a long time, is taking place in a particular context of adaptation to climate change. He explained that, for CODIA, these issues are a matter of water governance. Based on CODIA’s experiences both in Spain and in Latin America, he underscored that the water-energy equation can be properly handled through integrated water resource management approaches, and particularly water planning policies carried out at the basin level in a transparent and inclusive participatory process. Mr. Orteu closed by stressing the need for tailored made solutions that adapt global guidelines to the on-the-ground reality.

Itaipu (Mr. Ariel Scheffer da Silva, Head of Environment Management)

12. Mr. Scheffer introduced Itaipu, a binational hydropower company created in 1973 by Paraguay and Brazil. He noted the company’s mission of generating electricity via socially and environmentally responsible practices for sustainable development. Mr. Scheffer explained how the company, focusing on the nexus between SDG 6 (Water) and SDG 7 (Energy), is supporting also the implementation of other SDGs, in fields such as biodiversity, health and sanitation, among others. He further explained specific actions carried out by Itaipu in support to the implementation of SDG 6 and 7: provision of energy to Brazil and Paraguay, CO₂ emission avoided, conservation of forests, support to access to water and sanitation, promotion of other renewable sources, among others.

World Energy Council (Ms. Andrea Arrobo, Regional Manager, Latin America and Caribbean)

13. Mr. Arrobo introduced the World Energy Council (WEC), an international network which provides a neutral platform for dialogue between government, private sector and academia. She provided country examples, such as Chile, where WEC has supported the creation of working groups on several topics of national interest including storage, integration and efficiency. Ms. Arrobo presented WEC's work on the "Energy trilemma", a tool that ranks countries on their ability to provide sustainable energy through 3 dimensions: energy security, energy equity (accessibility and affordability) and environmental sustainability. She highlighted extreme weather events and the energy-water-food nexus as major risks for energy infrastructure. She closed by stressing the importance of mitigation and adaptation to cope with new and emerging risks, and the relevance of keeping these risks in mind when design and financing energy infrastructure projects.

Sugar Association of Guatemala-ASAZGUA (Marco A. Solares, Head, International Affairs)

14. Mr. Solares introduced ASAZGUA, a non-profit association of eleven sugar mills and three technical organizations respectively specialized in research, sugar exports and social responsibility. He noted that Guatemala is the fourth largest sugar exporter in the world. He explained that the sugar mills also provide energy to the national and regional electricity market. He underlined that the Guatemalan ICC (Private Institute for Climate Change Research) was born from the sugarcane industry and was separated due to its relevance to the country's agricultural activities as well as for the government. He concluded by explaining how the sugar sector and other actors brought efforts together to face Guatemala's water scarcity after "El Niño". He highlighted this intersectoral and integrated work as key to restore the river.

Discussion

15. Participants engaged in a discussion on the technical solutions to minimize the environmental impacts of dams, which included the importance to prevent, mitigate and monitor the impacts, as well as the importance of having transparent and inclusive participatory processes through an integrated river basin management.

16. In closing, panelists and other participants highlighted that tailor-made solutions adapted to the specific circumstances are needed to address water-energy issues, as well as the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships. In this regard, panelists commended the work of the Itaipu and UN DESA partnership, and welcomed the Global Network on Sustainable Water and Energy Solutions currently under development.