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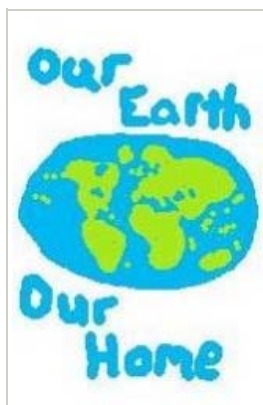
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Our Earth: Water, Climate Change, Waste, Planning - World Water Week

Posted on September 1st, 2011 by winterbanyan in [Our Earth](#)



Last week in Stockholm, over 2600 experts from around the world met to discuss the planet's water problems. Since we were able to cover only a few of those stories in this column, we have decided to continue coverage this week.

You can read more at [Water Front](#), the daily digest of the proceedings.

Stronger links between water and climate change needed

Water must be given a higher profile in global climate negotiations, delegates were told yesterday during a high-level panel discussion on water and climate.

"Water, in all its unique aspects, needs to move up the agenda on climate negotiations otherwise we will fail," said Anders Berntell, Executive Director at the Stockholm

International Water Institute.

Panelists agreed that water is the primary medium through which climate change will affect humans and the environment and it relates to every objective under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

"The water community and climate community speak different languages, so we need to bridge that gap," said Hannah Stoddart from the Water Climate Coalition. She said that there is a need to link policy with those working on the ground to create better all round understanding.

Proposals were also put forward to try and tap into the new Green Climate Fund to move water up the agenda in the global climate debate.

Making money from waste

Speakers at the seminar Recovering Nutrients, Water and Energy from Waste: A Business Perspective emphasised the need for a new breed of sanitation entrepreneurs that can take advantage of the opportunities of making money out of waste.

"There is a need for a paradigm shift in waste management from treatment for disposal to treatment for reuse," said David Molden of the [International Water Management Institute \(IWMI\)](#). "We are currently lacking the private sector in this area but waste really can be a business opportunity. Some people are making a business out of waste."

Rapid urbanisation has resulted in a significant increase in the amount of waste produced. Organisations are now exploring social and economic business models for the recovery of water, nutrients and energy from domestic and agro-industrial waste. This will help them to increase the viability of the sanitation services chain, while addressing water shortages and increasing fertiliser prices.

"I think the economic benefits of waste reuse can be leveraged as a really convincing and compelling argument as to why we should be designing sanitation systems around reuse," said Ashley Murray, founder of Waste Enterprises Ltd., a company that operates waste recovery businesses in Ghana.

"Reuse can be used to reduce the cost of wastewater treatment and perhaps more interestingly can be used to pay for

the cost of sanitation, thereby reducing the financial burden on households, governments and donors, which many of us know is a bottleneck to sustaining long-term operational needs.”

Waste Enterprises operates and maintains a commercial fish farm in one of Ghana's government-owned wastewater treatment plants. Catfish are stocked and harvested in the last phase of the facility's waste stabilisation pond system. The fish farm supplies a new, reliable revenue source that will ultimately pay for a full-time groundskeeper. Nutrients in the wastewater support the fish, so no external food is added. Other inputs and fish density are also carefully limited to avoid compromising water quality or degrading the environment.

“Name a waste medium and we've got a way to reuse it in agriculture whether we are talking about urine, faecal sludge or wastewater,” said Murray. “The informal reuse that is happening all around us is often shunned and we are far from integrating strategic reuse into the planning of large scale municipal sanitation systems.”

Cities must involve citizens in planning for water

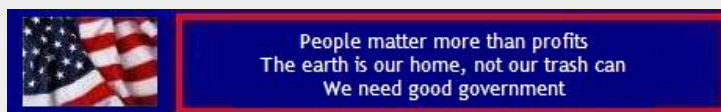
Experts at the session Cities of the Future – Sustainable Urban Planning and Water Management described how cities of the future must not only link urban spatial planning with developing sustainable water systems but must also ensure that their citizens fully understand and appreciate the importance of water.

“I would like to stress the importance of including citizens in the planning of cities and the treatment processes so that they can see the effects of reducing water consumption and understand the significance,” said Brita Forssberg from the City of Stockholm. “Water is such an important part of people's lives. They should know about water, they should understand water, they should like water and they should think water.”

Together with Brita Forssberg, presentations were also given by Hubert Klumpner from the Swiss Institute of Technology, Professor Xiaochang C. Wang from the Xi'an University of Architecture and Technology in China, and Steve Moddemeyer of Collins Woerman, USA.

Moddemeyer highlighted how the city of Seattle has been progressing with its urban planning and sustainable water systems towards attaining a net zero carbon footprint by 2030. Green storm water infrastructure has been implemented across the city, resulting in almost no run off rainwater and savings of between USD 100,00 and USD 250,000 per city block compared to traditional curb and gutter infrastructure.

“Water should be at the centre of the community, while it is important to join land use planning with water planning,” said Moddemeyer. “We must create cost effective strategies that facilitate change towards resilience and adaptability.”



3 Comments on “Our Earth: Water, Climate Change, Waste, Planning – World Water Week”

Jim W

Commented on September 1, 2011 at 6:59 am | [Log in to Reply](#)

Fairfax County VA is using waste water. Here is an [article](#).

Thanks for the post.

winterbanyan

Commented on September 1, 2011 at 6:18 pm | [Log in to Reply](#)

Thanks for the link, Jim. I enjoyed reading it. We use recycled waste water in our county for all kinds of watering where