



Energy production and water supply interdependent, and both at risk, shows new UN report

Paris, 3 March – Demand for energy production will increase significantly in coming decades, especially in emerging economies. This may have a negative impact on water resources unless the management and coordination between both domains is not dramatically improved. This is one of the key findings of the United Nations World Water Development Report 2014 (WWDR), which will be launched in Tokyo (Japan) on 21 March, World Water Day.

The extraction, transportation and treatment of water involve a considerable amount of energy, while the extraction of fossil fuels and production of electricity require huge amounts of water. One cannot be done without the other.

Entitled “Water and Energy”, the WWDR highlights the interdependency of the two sectors. Through exhaustive data, analysis and case studies, it shows how the choices made in one area have repercussions in the other: for example, droughts exacerbate energy shortages while energy shortages in turn limit irrigation capacity.

Currently, 15 percent of global water withdrawal is used for energy production. This percentage is expected to increase by another 20 percent between now and 2035 as population growth, urbanization and changing consumption patterns, especially in China and India, drives up the demand for energy.

Several world regions are already facing water shortages and the Report foresees that increasing energy demands will weigh heavily on remaining resources, especially in arid areas. The Report urges improved coordination between the water and energy sectors and greater private sector involvement in these areas. It also makes the case for a revision of water pricing policies, arguing that water is generally considered as a “gift of nature” and that its price rarely reflects real costs.

The United Nations World Water Development Report (WWDR) is prepared by the 31 members and partners that make up UN Water. It is produced by the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP), which is hosted and led by UNESCO, and presents a review of the world’s water resources. Up until 2012, the Report was published every three years. From this year on it will be published annually on World Water Day, with a focus on the theme selected for the Day

The Report is under embargo until 21 March. Advance access is available to the media on demand.

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