IA Washington

Matthias Bosma (stagiair) en Jantienne van der Meij (IA), meer informatie: www.agentschapnl.nl/ia-netwerk

Improving sustainable watermanagement with World Water Scenarios


Professor Dr. Pavel Kabat, Director and CEO of The International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) and professor of earth system science at Wageningen University, introduced the new global water initiative in the United States during an event on the 21st of March 2013 at The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in Washington, DC.

IIASA

The five-year initiative is a partnership between IIASA, UNESCO, the World Water Council, the International Water Association and the Korean Government (the Republic of Korea is the organizer of the 7th World Water Forum in 2015). The project is coordinated by IIASA, which is an international, interdisciplinary scientific research institute that is located in Laxenburg, Austria. IIASA conducts policy-oriented research in the field of environment and natural resources, population and society and energy and technology. Most problems researched by IIASA are complex and of global concern (e.g. climate change, population growth and energy and water security). This institute is funded and governed by National Member Organizations (NMOs) from twenty different countries. The United States (US) is represented by the National Academy of Sciences, which is a private, nonprofit organization and a founding member of IIASA. Collaboration between the IIASA and the United States has been with a number of US federal agencies, universities and international nonprofit organizations.

Long-term systems approach needed

Solving global water problems (e.g. worldwide one billion people lack drinking water access) will contribute to solve global challenges related to development and poverty alleviation. At the moment, agriculture is responsible for approximately 60% of all global water use and of all the continents Asia uses approximately 64% of all the global water use. Since Asia also has the fastest growing population, water use in the region will grow further in the near future. This is going to be a serious problem because of the limited supply of fresh water which both agriculture, industry and households compete for.

In order to make sustainable and equitable decisions on water resource issues, realistic future scenarios that take into account the many external factors influencing water management (such as climate change, demography, technology, politics, societal values, governance and law) are needed. Based on results of UNESCO’s World Water Scenarios, the initiative World Future’s and Solutions: World Water Scenarios will build “a variety of scenarios on global and regional level, while linking to scenario processes at national and local levels”. To fulfill the aim of this initiative “the scenarios are developed by decision-makers in water resource management and a number of other sectors and disciplines, experts from both government and the private sector, and other stakeholders”
representing a broad range of geo-political and social settings.” The scenarios can be used as a scientific tool to make plans, set goals and identify robust options for action.

The United States acknowledges the global and national challenges related to water resource management. Prof Dr. Kabat showed that the water scarcity problems are not only present in Asia and Africa, but also in the central part of the United States. In the previous years, it has not rained as much as other years and the summers were dryer than before. This is becoming a big problem for the agriculture and the farmers that traditionally live in this part of the United States. Therefore, in October 2011, federal agencies and stakeholders published a National Action Plan to improve the national management of freshwater resources. The plan recommended that decision-making tools should be improved, using complete, current data and the newest scientific insights.

Sources

http://www.iiasa.ac.at/web/home/about/leadership/director/Global-Water-at-a-Crossroads1.en.html

http://www.iiasa.ac.at/web/home/research/Global-Water-Futures-and-Solutions--World-Water-Scen.en.html

http://www.iiasa.ac.at/web/home/about/nationalmembers/National-Member-Organizations.en.html

http://www.iiasa.ac.at/web/home/about/nationalmembers/countryprofiles/netherlands.html

http://www.iiasa.ac.at/web/home/about/whatisiiasa/informationkit/flyer-iiasa_2.pdf


http://www.iiasa.ac.at/web/home/about/nationalmembers/countryprofiles/USA.en.html


http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq/initiatives/clean-water

Keywords: Verenigde Staten, water management.