

ON THE ROAD TO COP 15



TEC BACKGROUND PAPERS

NO. 14

Water Management, Water Security and Climate Change Adaptation: Early Impacts and Essential Responses

CLAUDIA SADOFF and MIKE MULLER
Global Water Partnership Technical Committee members

Water is the primary medium through which climate change will impact people, ecosystems and economies. Water resources management must be an early focus for adaptation. It is essential to recognize that investments in water security *are* investments in adaptation.

A focus on water security is a sound early adaptation strategy: delivering immediate benefits to the vulnerable and building resilience, while strengthening systems and capacities for longer-term climate risk management.

So investment in water resources management capacity, institutions and infrastructure should be a priority for mainstreaming adaptation finance. This will ensure that long term capacity is built and retained in institutions that have to cope with these unfolding changes.

It will also help avoid a proliferation of complex new financing vehicles and fragmented, project-focused initiatives that could dilute essential water resource management efforts.

3 E's + 3 I's = the Art of Adaptation

To achieve a water secure world, invest in the three I's:

- better and more accessible *Information*
- stronger and more adaptable *Institutions*
- natural and built *Infrastructure* to store, transport and treat water

But, tough tradeoffs will be needed and finding the right mix of the three I's is key to achieving the desired balance among the three E's:

- Equity
- Environment
- Economics

Finding the balance is the 'art of adaptation' in water management.

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The simple message for Copenhagen is this: *Energy has been the focus for mitigation efforts, water should be a focus for adaptation efforts. Water security is a first priority today, and a framework for tomorrow's adaptation. Water management does not hold all of answers to adaptation. A broad range of responses is needed. But water is both part of the problem and an important part of the solution. It is a good place to start.*