

**Title of roundtable:** Water – helping to grow the green economy

**Arranging organization(s):** SIWI, Global Water Partnership, Swedish Water House

**Rapporteur** Name: Lovisa Selander, Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)  
Email: [lovisa.selander@siwi.org](mailto:lovisa.selander@siwi.org)  
Telephone: +46739143986



## Roundtable discussion summary – DRAFT

Concluding 3 main points from the table:

---

1. We cannot deal with water as a separate sector - it is a cross cutting resource. We need water for energy production; for industry, food production and agriculture. Water is a key element in climate change, for health and wellbeing. Water can also spark both cooperation and conflict, which means that it is important to find strategies for dealing with transboundary water resources. The Rio+20 outcomes need to acknowledge this interconnectedness and include perspectives on water in all thematic discussions.
2. Water is the great life support of our planet, yet it lacks its own coordinating platform. There has never been an international body in charge of water issues. There are many users of water, but there is a risk in them all dealing with the resource from their own perspective; silo approaches do not lead to innovation.
3. Water is an underemphasized global challenge. The younger generation calls for increased awareness on water and sustainability among the general public. In today's world we have better tools and technologies for information dissemination and participation than ever. How can we reach out in social media, and draw on internet and mobile phone use? Knowledge helps people make the right decision.

Other remarks:

---

Water is a precious resource necessary for life. This was already clear in Stockholm in 1972, but the already urgent lack of water in some areas of the world is now apparent, and is worsening with climate change, population growth and lifestyle changes. Water scarcity very clearly strikes the poor the hardest with already devastating consequences for human health.

Water is not a separate sector – it is a resource upon which all other sectors depend. It is necessary for ensuring food and energy for everyone, and a key element in tackling the consequences of climate change. Today 1.4 billion people lack access to electricity, while 1 billion people are hungry. To address these needs, huge amounts of water will be needed – more than we have, if we continue as we have done. But there are great potential for efficiency gains and improvement in water use. What is needed is an increased awareness of the interconnectedness of sectors, and how water is linked to agriculture, energy, health and climate change. This perspective is missing in many international negotiations today. Rio+20 needs to fully recognize the crucial role of water for sustainable development, by integrating water in all sectorial and thematic discussions.

The Stockholm conference in 1972 set the agenda for reaching an understanding on the uniqueness of our planet. Those attending then speak of commitment and dedication sparked by the discussions which focused on the basic environmental challenges. Today, as environmental awareness and sectors have grown, there might be a need to go “back to basics” – to avoid a development where we get lost in new terms and concepts, and not venture outside of our sectorial perspectives.

One of the biggest challenges moving forward is the one of urbanization. More people than ever live in urban settlements. How do we supply an increasing number of urban dwellers with the food they need and the energy they use, without depleting nearby water sources? To ensure human health and dignity, particular focus needs to be put on wastewater management in urban spaces.

[Maximum one page summary of the whole session]