



17 September 2014 - In the next 30 years, global water needs are going to rise by at least 30 percent, putting pressure on vital yet limited resources, according to Richard Connor, lead author of the 2014 UN World Water Development Report.

Much of the increasing demand for water will come from developing nations whose populations are earning and consuming more, and moving to cities. Ninety percent of the world's urban population increase up to 2050 will be in Asia and Africa, and as a result of the increasing urbanization, the next 30 years will see the world's electricity demand go up by 70 percent. And, argues UN Secretary-General's special representative on [Sustainable Energy For All](#) , Kandeh Yumkella: "With 66 percent of the world population expected to be living in urban areas by then, it will push the demand for more energy."

The problem is that the energy sector is very thirsty.

As the [World Water Week](#), the leading annual global event for concretely addressing the planet's water issues, ended in Stockholm last week, conclusions were clear: Manufacturing,

agriculture and energy sectors are going to have to coordinate their water use much more efficiently if water scarcity is to be avoided, according to experts.

“By 2050 water needs of the manufacturing sector will rise by a staggering 400 percent,” Richard Connor, lead author of the 2014 UN World Water Development Report, told [IRIN News](#)

“This is going to create immense need for water and pressure on the resource that cannot meet all these needs.”



Connor explained that developing countries use most of their water for agriculture and only about 10 to 20 percent for energy. But as countries develop, the demand for energy increases and could account for over half of water usage, leaving less for farmers.

“Ninety percent of global energy production is water-dependent,” Connor said, pointing to hydro-power, and the water used to cool thermal, coal, gas and nuclear power plants. “Even solar electricity generation sometimes uses water to store energy as heat,” he said. To achieve better water management, cohesion must be established across water-consuming sectors - especially electricity, water and agriculture.

Mr Yumkella also regretted the fact that even though the energy and manufacturing sectors are two of the biggest water users, they hardly have any input in deciding a nation’s water policy. Similarly, water experts rarely give input into national energy policies.

“We don’t need to be in these silos any more,” Yumkella told IRIN. An additional fall-out from the lack of a coordinated approach, experts say, is that clean and renewable energy, a vital part of reducing water demand, has not attracted the same [subsidy boost](#) as fossil fuels.

Better water management will have to involve establishing clear priorities and coordinated monitoring mechanisms to avoid shortages. And cooperation means more than reaching out across geo-political borders.

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*UN [World Water Development Report](#)*

*UN [World Urbanization Prospects Report](#)*