Coherence in Policies and Actions for Securing Water For All

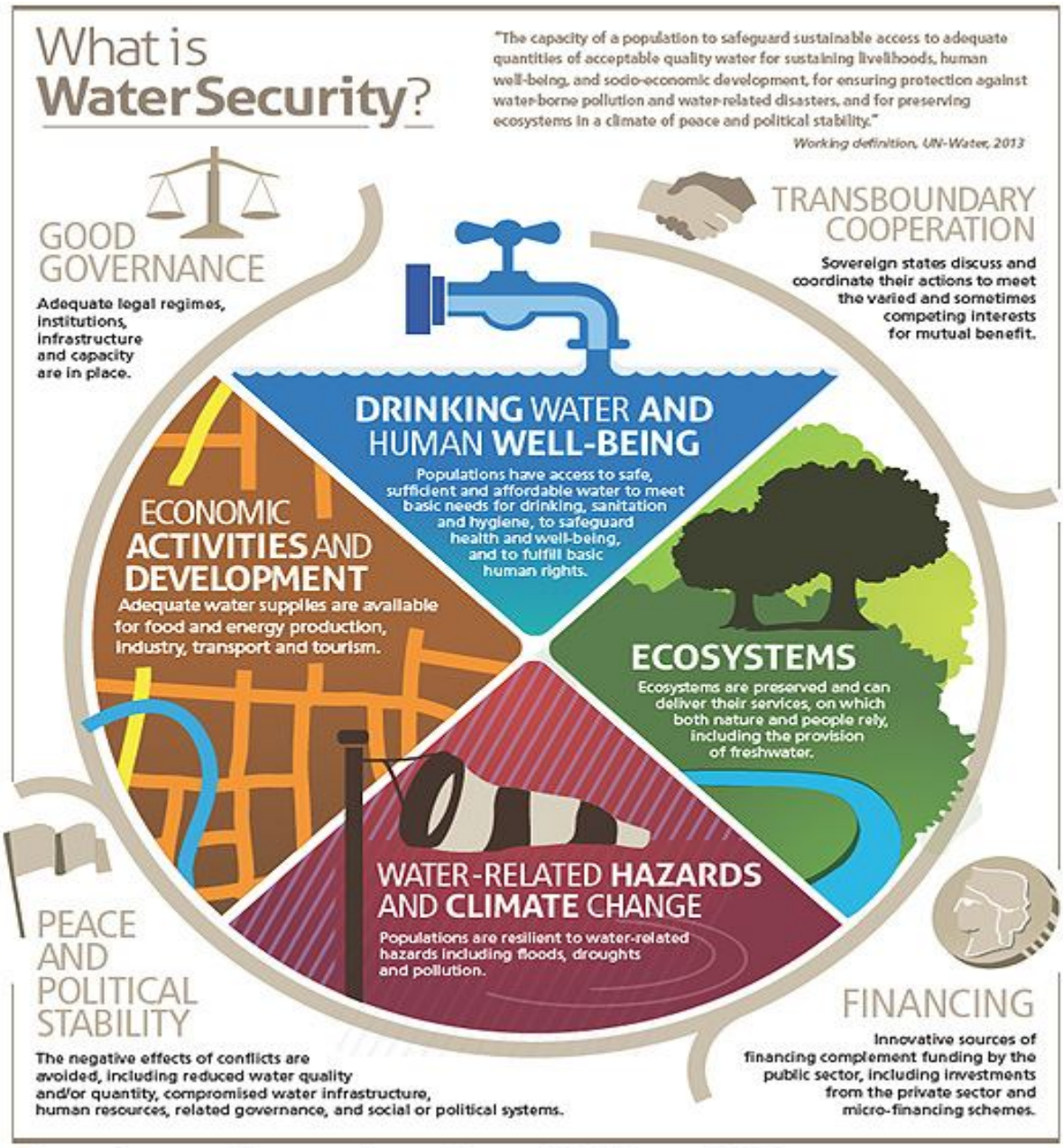
Media brief

INDIAN NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

THE CLUB OF ROME

What is Water Security

Water Security is defined as the capacity of a population to safeguard sustainable access to adequate quantities of acceptable quality water for sustaining livelihoods, human well-being, and socio-economic development, for ensuring protection against water-borne pollution and water-related disasters and preserving ecosystems in a climate of peace and political stability.



Water Security Poster adapted from UN Water, 2013

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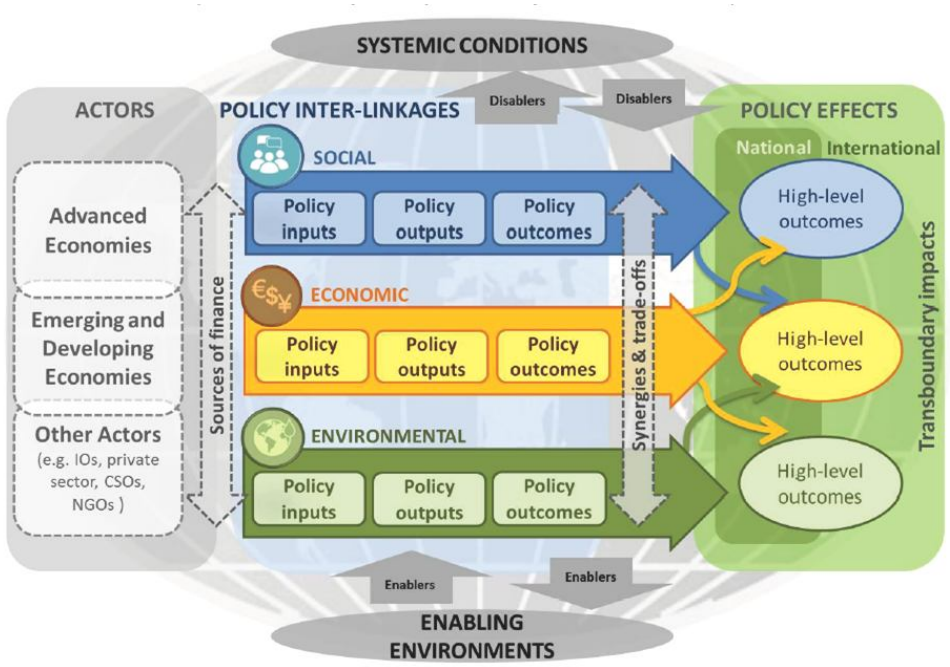
What is Policy Coherence

'Policy Coherence Analysis' attempts to integrate the economic, social, environmental and governance dimensions of sustainable development at all stages of domestic and international policy, as in the following tabulation:

Analytical Framework for Policy Coherence for Water Security Development



Source: OECD PCD Unit, inspired by the work of UNECE/OECD/Eurostat Task Force on measuring sustainable development.

'**Policy Coherence Analysis**' attempts to integrate the economic, social, environmental and governance dimensions of sustainable development at all stages of domestic and international policy, as in the following tabulation:

TARGETS	GOAL Securing sustainable water for all
Universal access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene	
Sustainable use and development of water resources	
Equitable, participatory and accountable water governance	
Reduce untreated wastewater, nutrient pollution & increase wastewater reuse	
Reduce mortality and economic loss from water-related disasters	

Keys:

ECONOMIC

SOCIAL

ENVIRONMENTAL

Note: This visualization of the subjective estimates, rather than any attempt at numerical precision for the intensity of each pillar of sustainability, is indicated in the diagram above.

Evolution of Water Security concepts

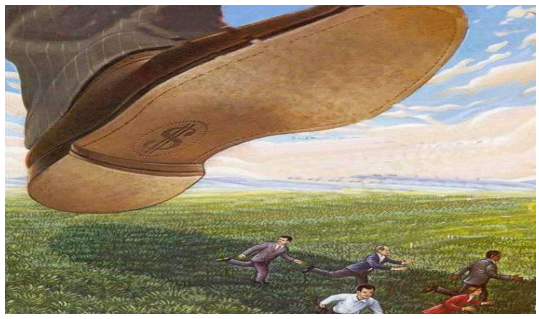
There is considerable scope to improve water resource utilization, as the amount of food produced per unit of water input is low, and access to water serves neither socio-economic nor environmental objectives. Water scarcity occurs when the demand for freshwater exceeds supply in a specified domain. It arises as consequence of a high rate of aggregate demand from all water-using sectors compared with available supply, under the prevailing institutional arrangements and infrastructural conditions.

The Club of Rome—India's view

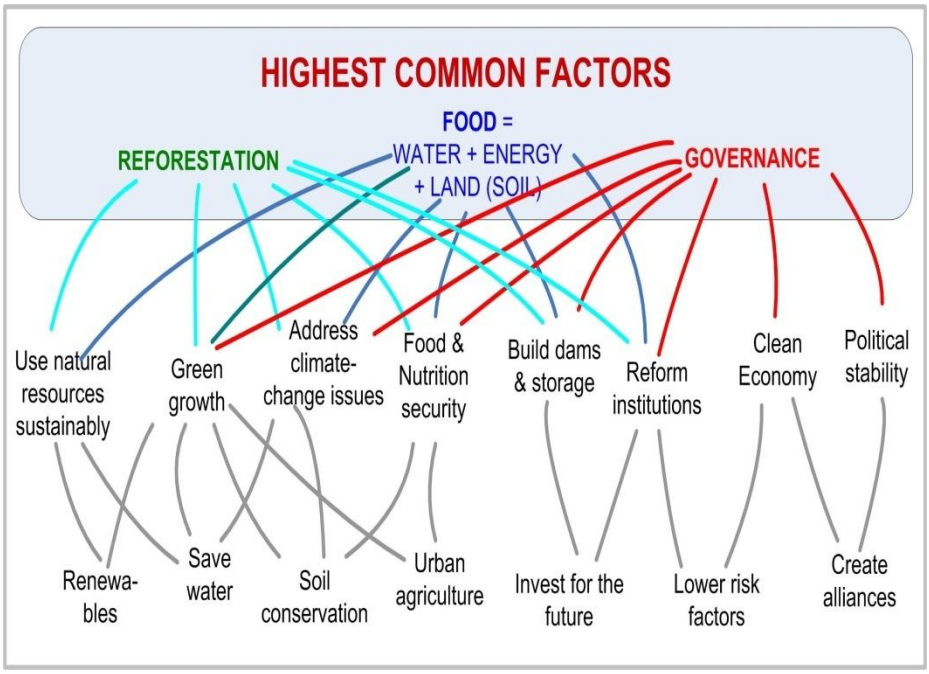
Global society should reduce its ecological footprint per unit of consumption, and start doing so in time to avoid global overshoot. The task would be greatly simplified if **human society moved away from its fascination with growth**, both in population and economic value.

For example: **Large scale food production** has become a **money-driven business** instead of a **health-driven business**.

Non-renewable resources are used to transport food over large distances causing **a third of all man-made emissions**, while losing quality, nutrients and freshness in the process.

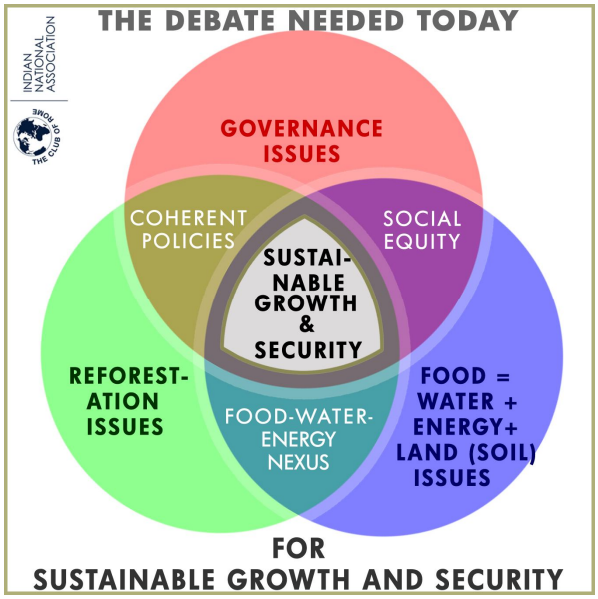


How to obtain security in general with minimum environmental impact



It would therefore appear that focussing on: (a) **Food** [which is a nexus of Water, Energy and Land (Soils)]; (b) **Reforestation** (or **Forest Restoration**); and (c) **Governance** would be the **highest common factors** for solving most of our security-related problems.

From a Holistic Viewpoint



The three most important **socio-economic**, **socio-technical & socio-cultural** issues for achieving **sustainable growth and security** are:

1. FOOD = WATER + ENERGY + LAND (SOIL)

These are things that people need most. If they are plentiful, then green growth and energy security is guaranteed. These are also automatically obtained, if **REFORESTATION** and **GOVERNANCE** are **alive**, **well** and **pre-existent**.

2. REFORESTATION is the natural or intentional restocking of existing forests and woodlands that have been depleted. While its main benefits: recharging the water table, combat climate change, reduce carbon emissions and soil erosion, create biodiversity and such are well known... **its long-term impact (say, in 15 – 30 years) on society is not well known.**

3. GOVERNANCE means: *the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented)*. We now have **enough laws and rules**, which are ignored. **Mismanagement** and **non-compliance** are the big issues within mis-governance. So! A new and **participatory Constitution** will help to empower the *hoi polloi* and ensure that the **checks** and **balances** are put in place, respected and are effective.

We need to promote **primary education**, **health** and **knowledge services**, as key social services, to promote **good governance**, in a repetitious cycle of desired actions.

CONCLUSION

Good water governance (a) relies on **well-designed, empowered institutions** to enact and enforce legislative and policy instruments and (b) are conducive to the **attainment of predetermined social, economic and environmental goals** associated with water security.

Reforestation helps not only to green our environment, it also **naturally promotes food, water, energy & land (soil) security, by promoting biomimicry and reducing the burden of actions on humanity** to achieve security.

Food [which is a nexus of Water, Energy and Land (Soils)] is the **ultimate product** that is needed for **human development**, **security** and **peace**.

We conclude that coherent policies and actions for the promotion of **good governance**, **forest restoration** and **food production** can solve almost all our security-related problems, including the current focus on **securing water for all**.