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Sound governance crucial for water resource management, UN official says



ESCAP Executive Secretary Noeleen Heyzer

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Sound governance and knowledge of water management principles are crucial for sustainable water resources, a top United Nations official in the Asia-Pacific region has told the opening session of a regional conference on the issue.

Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific ([ESCAP](#)), told a meeting in Singapore of South-East Asia water ministers yesterday that “sound governance is crucial for sustainable management of water resources threatened by pollution, natural disasters and climate change,” according to an agency [press statement](#).

“To overcome challenges in the water sector, it is imperative for policy-makers, water agencies, international organizations, financing institutions, and the civil society to understand the underlying principles of sound water management policies, supported by innovative technological solutions, especially in the face of water scarcity and climate change,” Ms. Heyzer said yesterday at the opening of the five-day Singapore International Water Week.

Ms. Heyzer said growing water scarcity is a constraint to inclusive and sustainable development in the subregion. Together with the impact of climate change, possible water shortages in the dry season could affect economic growth and progress towards the Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#)).

Ms. Heyzer highlighted the importance of sound governance in water management in the context of recent disease outbreaks from contaminated water resources and water shortages caused by natural disasters and mismanagement. The growing competition for water resources calls for new water management practices that integrate a global approach and smooth the divide between urban and rural areas.

The ESCAP chief underlined the importance of green growth and inclusive approaches, as well as the role of ESCAP as a key driver for regional cooperation in water resources management, the agency said.

Ms. Heyzer said the UN regional arm also plays a vital role as a knowledge hub on water resources management for inclusive and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific.

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