

4th Marcelino Botín Foundation Water Workshop,
Re- Thinking Paradigms: Water And Food security,
Santander (Spain), 22–24 September 2009

"Water Commoditization: An Ethical Perspective for a Sustainable Water Use and Management in the Arab Region"

By

Dr. Magdy Hefny



And / OR

Water A Human Right



A Commodity

Content

1. Water Management Problematique: The Debate Globally and Regionally, Where We Are?
2. Towards A Balanced Water Strategy, in view of the Arab Regional Major Challenges
3. Basic Ethical Principles in the Process of Re-Thinking Water and Food Security in the Arab Region
4. A Strategy Building with An Ethical Framework



Water A Human Right



And / OR



A Commodity



Water Management Problematique: The Debate Globally and Regionally, Where We Are?

1.



Water A Human
Right



And / OR



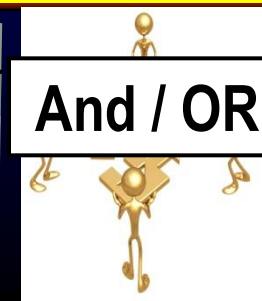
A Commodity

first: water management problematique

- ❖ The problematique here is “how a water strategy would advocate a framework for water ethics, within the context of the Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM).
- ❖ Having in mind, that the main aim would be to **enhance effective water governance** and **achieve poverty alleviation** goals.



Water A Human
Right



And / OR



A Commodity

second: three basic elements in decision making needs to be taken in a comprehensive and multidisciplinary way

- (a) economic efficiency** is an issue of considerable importance in economic theory, and is even more important today,
- (b) social equity** and human equality for all persons ought to be provided with what is needed on an equitable basis, having due to *human rights and dignity*, as there is no life without water, and those to whom it is denied are denied life, and
- (c) Environmental sustainability**, which is centered on water conservation and sustainability of its uses for future generations.



**Water A Human
Right**



And / OR



A Commodity

third: the problematique according to the chairperson of COMEST

-- Mrs. Vigdis Finnbogadottir, Chairperson of COMEST, guided the work of the Sub-Committee on Water by putting three questions:

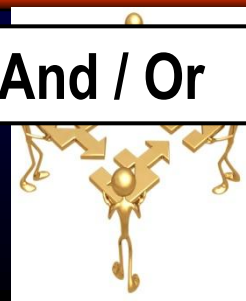
- How to balance the right to water as a prerequisite for life with the right of ownership?
- How to agree on preventing contamination or selfish exploitation of a shared basic resource?
- Access to freshwater has increasingly been identified as a major potential threat to world peace in this century.



Water A Human
Right

And / Or

A Commodity



all debate around water as a commodity started with the issuing of The Dublin Statement in (1992)

In preparation to Rio Conference in 1992, a **statement** issued in Dublin in January 1992 to emphasize that water should be recognized as an economic good. This had a greater impact. Out of this preparatory meeting came the **Dublin principles**:

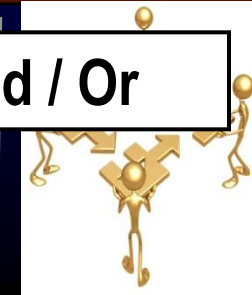
- ❑ - Freshwater is a finite and vulnerable resource, essential to sustain life, development and the environment;
- ❑ - Water development and management should be participatory— involving users, planners, and policy makers at all levels;
- ❑ - Women are central to providing, managing, and safeguarding water;
- ❑ - **Water has an economic value in all its competing uses and should be recognized as an economic good.**



Water A Human Right



And / Or



A Commodity

Announced Millennium Development Goals

Table 1: Millennium Development Goals*

To be achieved by 2015

- 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- 2 Achieve universal primary education
- 3 Promote gender equality and empower women
- 4 Reduce child mortality
- 5 Improve maternal health
- 6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
- 7 Ensure environmental sustainability
- 8 Develop a global partnership for development

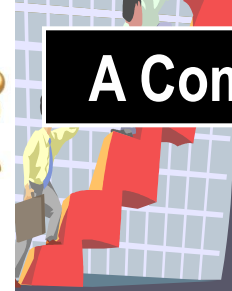
*Within the framework of the 8 goals, there are 18 targets (and 48 indicators) to measure progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. Table 2 on page 5 highlights how improved water resources management and access to water supply and sanitation aids in achieving many of these targets.



Water A Human Right



And / Or



A Commodity

What happened in World Water Forum (Five) ? the Debate Escalated and took new forms

- Over Twenty countries challenge Ministerial Declaration of World Water Forum (5), which defines water as a human need rather than a human right,
 - Through a counter-declaration. Latin American States have played a key role in gathering signatures onto a declaration that recognizes access to water and sanitation as a human right and commits to all necessary action for the progressive implementation of this right.
- Source <http://www.newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/March2009/22/c3162.html>



Water A Hu
Right



And / Or



A
Commodity

nine countries challenged Ministerial Declaration of World Water Forum Five, even asked for having an alternative forum

- In addition, nine countries have also signed on a statement that calls on States to develop a global water forum within the framework of the United Nations based on the principles of democracy, full participation, equity, transparency and social inclusion.



Water A Human
Right

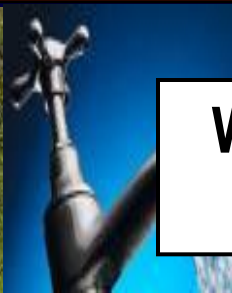
And / Or

A Commodity

trends and developments for commoditization

THE DEBATE : GLOBAL LEVEL

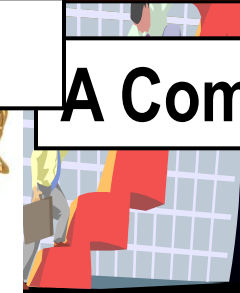
- ❖ Demonstrating and shouting “water for life, not for profit.”
- ❖ Deportation of activists outlawed
- ❖ “No Risky Dams” The security was tight, even Turkish police was firing tear gas and detaining protesters,
- ❖ “The Forum is a big trade show”, corporate driven,
- ❖ “World Water Forum is bankrupt of ideas”,



Water A Human
Right

And / OR

A Commodity



concluding bilateral water deals

- ❖ On March 25, 2004, Israel and Turkey concluded an agreement for the sale of 50 million cubic meters of water per year for twenty years.
- ❖ The water will be taken from the Manavgat River in Turkey, purified in Turkey and then transported in converted oil-tankers to Ashkelon in Israel.
- ❖ The Israeli Foreign Ministry described it as a landmark agreement, and this turns water to be accepted as international commodity.



Water A Human
Right

And /Or

A Commodity



WTO negotiation advocating freer trade

- ❖ GATT rules, no country can prohibit the export of its water once it has been 'commoditized' (which means: taken out of its natural state and diverted or transferred into containers of any size)..
- ❖ Example: water in a lake, a river or an aquifer is protected from bulk-water export as long as it remains in its natural state. (Canadian legislation),
- ❖ I'm sorry, but communism is dead. And, the GATT is not a complete resource-sharing regime. For a while, water export will take place by means of treaties between Governments.
- ❖ Subsidies for the poorer people can deal with unequal wealth distribution..



Water A Human
Right

And



A Commodity

the trend is going on and the cat came out of the bag for years

- ❖ Water is recognized as a "good" by the European Court.
- ❖ Water is sold as a "good" by Lesotho to South Africa at the rate of 88 cubic meters per second.
- ❖ Iran has just inked a \$2billion deal with Kuwait (June 2001) to pipe water from northern Iran to Kuwait.
- ❖ Israel is negotiating the price of water to be tankered from Manavgat in Turkey to Ashkelon. International tankering of water takes place in the Caribbean and the Philippines.
- ❖ One can easily say that the cat came out of the bag for years.



...r A Hum
Right

And / Or

A Commodity



Premises of commoditization and areas of disagreement

- ❖ **Economic Globalization** with its implications for developing countries, (Social divide)
- ❖ **Role of giant Water Transnational Corporations** in determining the future of water: developing new technologies for water desalinization and purification, infrastructure, bottled industry...
- ❖ However, a closer and well-documented examination of **TNCs practices** tells a very different story: higher customer rates, dramatic corporate profits, corruption and bribery, lower water quality standards, and overuse of the resource for profit. While the companies argue that the privatization of water services is socially beneficial.



premises of commoditization and areas of disagreement

- ❖ Privatization of water ensures that decisions regarding the allocation of water center almost exclusively on commercial considerations. Corporate shareholders are seeking maximum profit, not sustainability or equal access.
- ❖ A growing number of people believe that the imperatives of economic globalization-unlimited growth, a seamless global consumer market, corporate rule, deregulation, privatization, and free trade-are the driving forces behind the destruction of our water systems.



Water A H
Righ



And / Or



A Commodity

THE DEBATE:

WATER AS A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT IS GUARANTEED IN THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR)

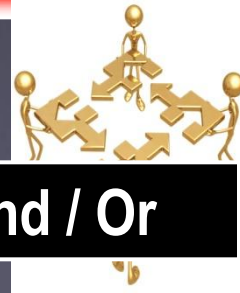
- ❖ Rejection of commoditization by different movements:
 - they warn of increasing numbers of countries that are facing water stress and scarcity and over a billion people lack adequate access to clean drinking water.
 - ❖ By consensus, they recognize the terrible reality that by the year 2025, as much as two-thirds of the world's population will be living with water shortages or absolute water scarcity, (pubs/backgrdrs/2001/s01v7n3.html#1)
 - ❖ They rely on (UDHR) and relevant international law provisions for development.



Water As
Human Right



And / Or



A
Commodity

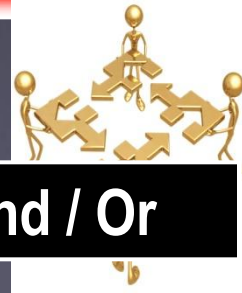
THE DEBATE:

WATER AS A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT IS GUARANTEED IN THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR)

- ❖ Rejection of commoditization by different movements:
 - they warn of increasing numbers of countries that are facing water stress and scarcity and over a billion people lack adequate access to clean drinking water.
- ❖ By consensus, they recognize the terrible reality that by the year 2025, as much as two-thirds of the world's population will be living with water shortages or absolute water scarcity,
(pubs/backgrdrs/2001/s01v7n3.html#1)
- ❖ They rely on (UDHR) and relevant international law provisions for development.



Water As
Human Right



And / Or



A
Commodity

THE DEBATE: THE GREEN VIEW

- ❖ Sustainability has become a mantra for the 21 century. It embodies the promise of societal evolution towards a more equitable and wealthy world in which the natural environment and our cultural achievements are preserved for generations to come.
- ❖ This promise touches upon elementary hopes and fears, which have both guided and challenged scores of scholars in the past.
- ❖ The quest for economic growth and social equity has been a major concern for most of the past 150 years. By adding concern for the carrying capacity of natural systems,



Water A
man Right



A
Commodity

THE GREEN VIEW (CONTINUED)

- ❖ sustainability thus ties together the current main challenges facing humanity.
- ❖ While there has been work on all three problems over the past four decades it was only the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio that brought the widespread acceptance of politicians, NGOs, and business leaders that none of the three problems can be solved without also solving the other two (Keating, 1993).



Water A
man Right

And / Or

A
Commodity

THE GREEN VIEW (SUSTAINOMICS CONTINUED)

- ❖ I agree with the approach Muhan Munasinghe in a major work entitled "Making Development More Sustainable" (MDMS)). He presented, in "an e-book of the Encyclopedia of Earth" the sustainable development triangle and balanced treatment of economic, social and environmental aspects.
- ❖ chapter 12, he explored the question of *how to make water resource management more sustainable?*, (Munasinghe and Najam, 2007).
- ❖ *Sustainomics* is introduced as a new language to explain the transdisciplinary integrative comprehensive balanced heuristic and practical framework for making development more sustainable.

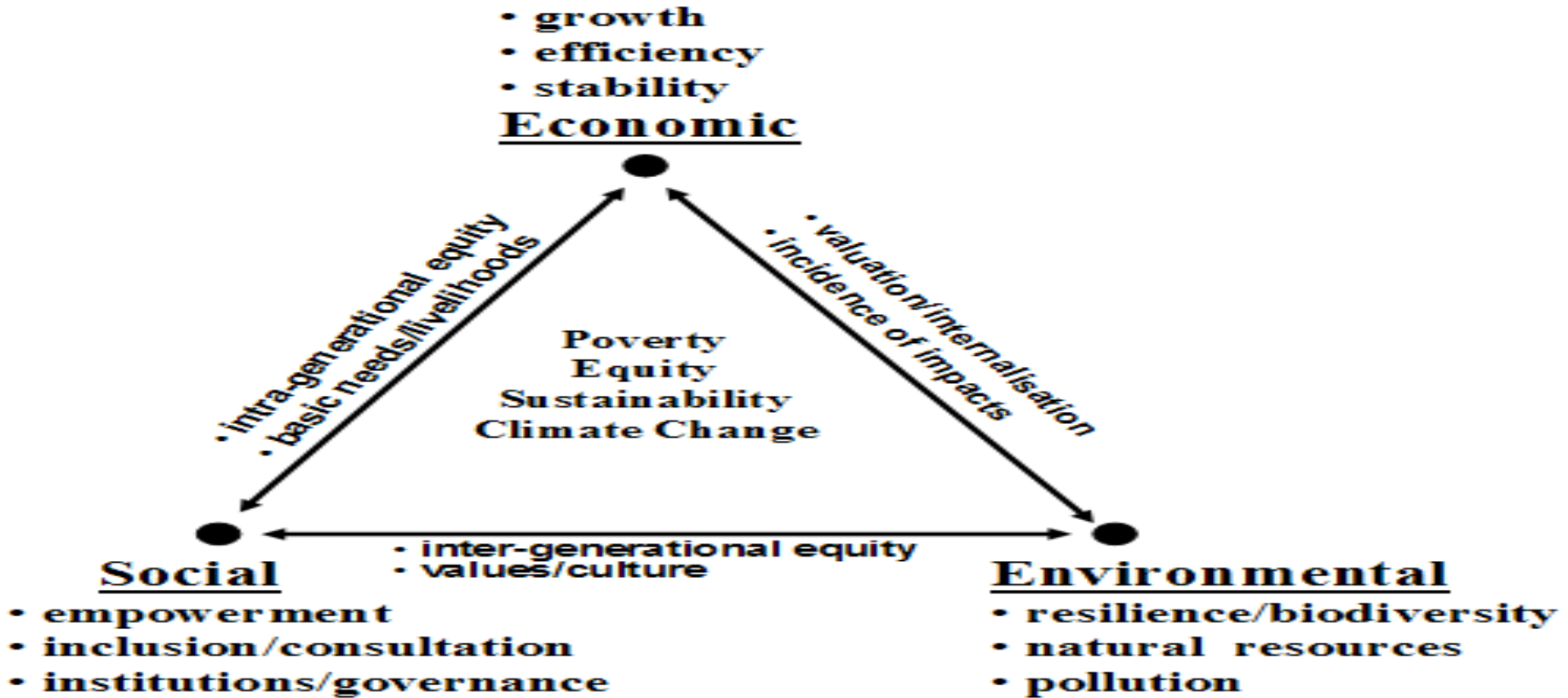


Water A
man Right

And / Or

A
Commodity

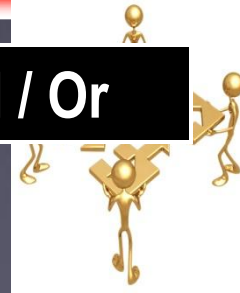
THE GREEN VIEW: SUSTAINOMICS (MUHAN MUNASINGHE)



Water As
Human Right

And / Or

A
Commodity



2.

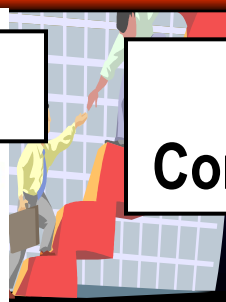
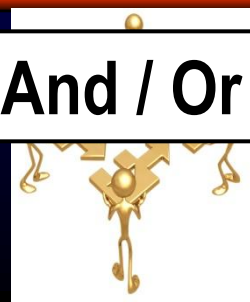
Towards A Balanced Water Strategy, in view of Arab Regional Major Challenges



Water a Human
Right



And / Or



A
Commodity

Regional Water Challenges:

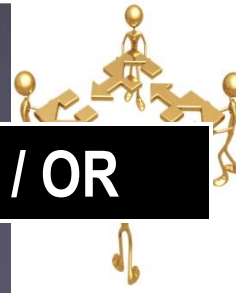
A Complexity Question, the Arab Region is vulnerable, with rising model of uncertainty



**er A Human
Right**



And / OR



A Commodity

most challenging are:

- The water cycle is changing?
- Increased risks of climate change?
- Growing vulnerability?
- More disasters ?
- Less water for people?
- Crisis is looming?
- What crisis? Global, Regional and local?

Source: International Hydrological Programme (IHP)



Water A H
Righ

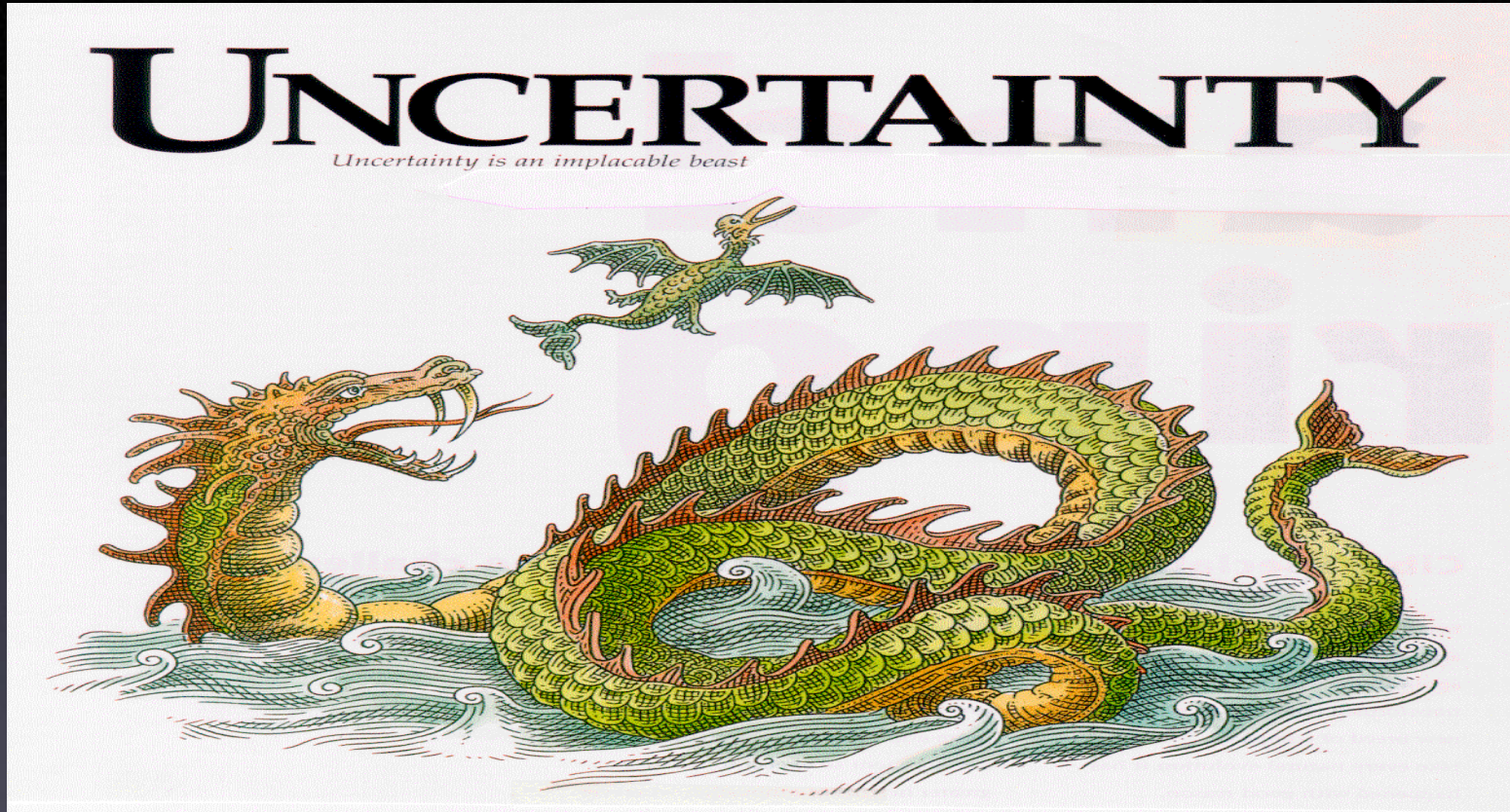


And / OR



A Commodity

rising model of uncertainty



Water A H
Right



A Commodity

And / OR

Climate changes (CC)

- “Climate changes are of concern from an environmental viewpoint, and in regard to regional water supply”,
- CC has “social ramifications in countries of the Middle East, and could result to politically destabilize the region, by causing waves of environmental refugees from several countries, and this has happened in the tragic case of Darfur, Sudan.
- The expected damage to the economic base and to the residential areas of hundreds of thousands of people in the Middle East could lead to grave political implications.”



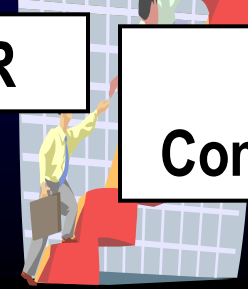
Water A Human
Right



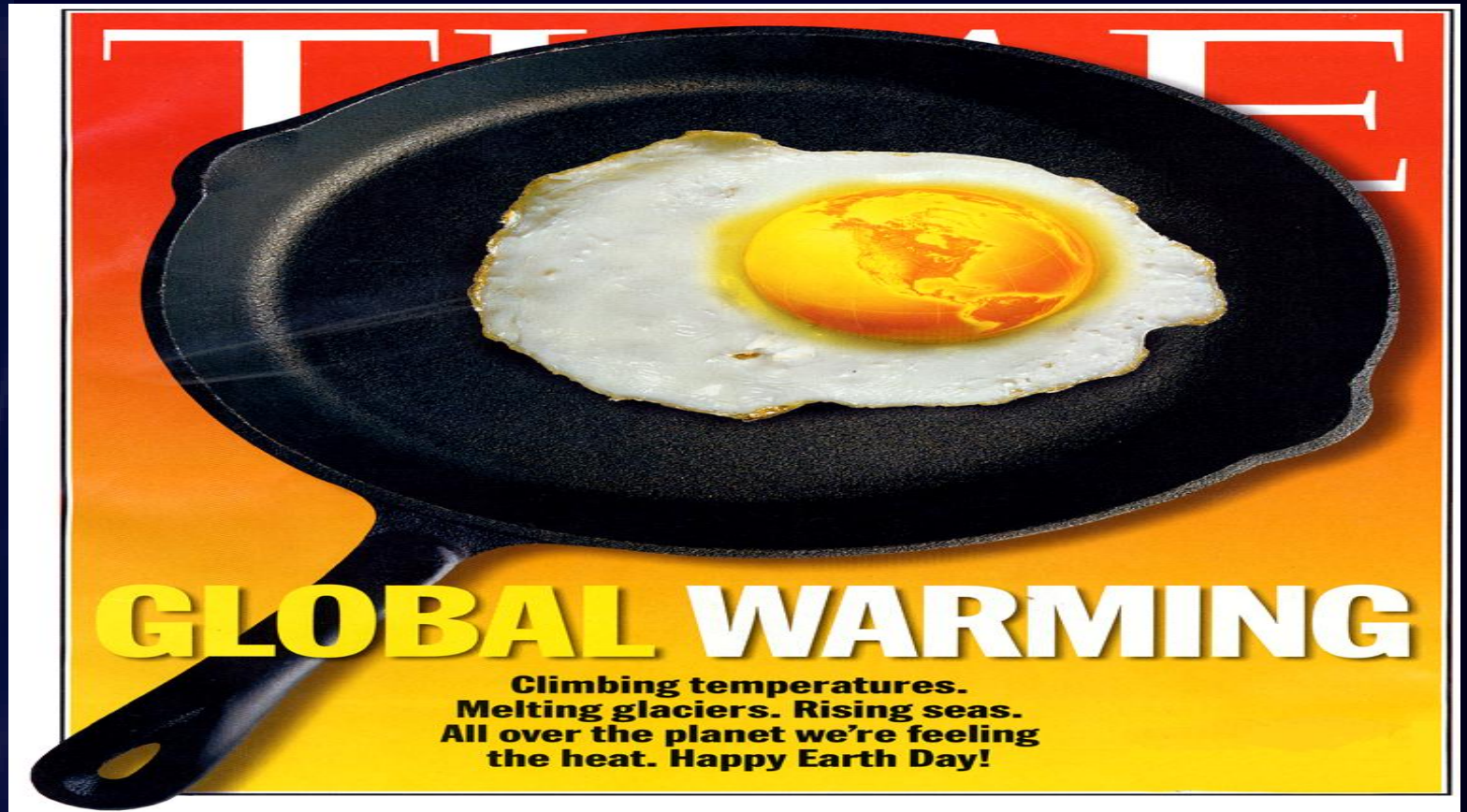
And / OR



A
Commodity



most challenging is climate change :



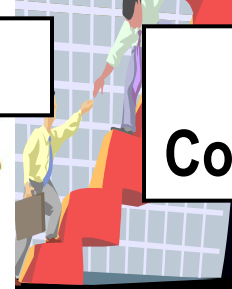
Water A H
Right



And / Or



A
Commodity



- Fragile water situation, and
- A wide gap between the **domestic daily use** per capita in different countries of different regions: ranges from **85** liters in Jordan, **125** liters in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Egypt, to nearly **165-250** liters for every European,



Water A Human
Right

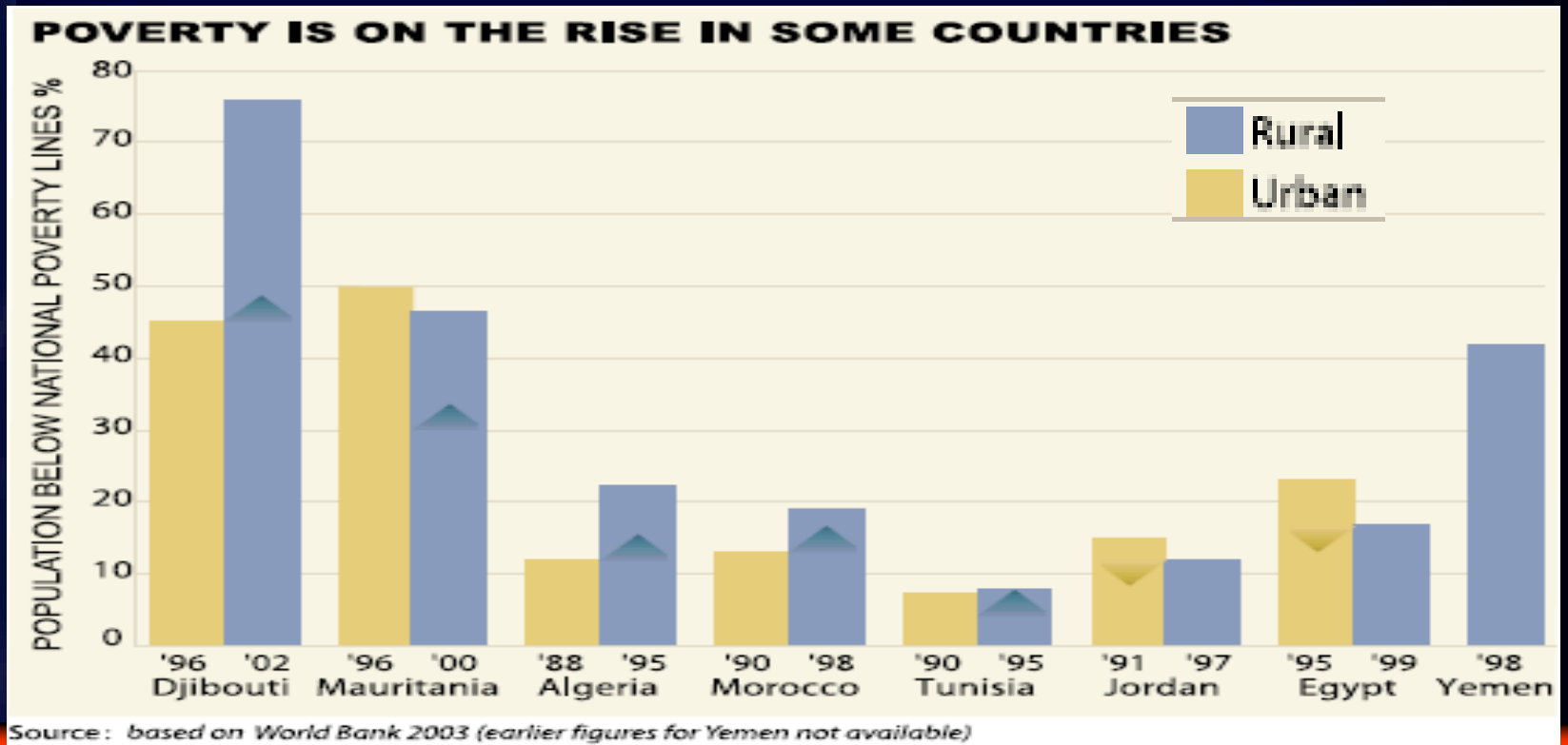


A Commodity

And / OR



Poverty is on the rise in some countries



Water A Human
Right



A Commodity

And / OR

Challenges, problems are interconnected

- Water Pollution

Shortages are compounded by pollution. Contamination by fertilizers and pesticides, dumping of municipal and industrial wastewater into rivers and lakes, solid waste deposits along river banks, and uncontrolled seepage from unsanitary landfills -- all these factors are degrading freshwater resources and imposing health risks

- It Is An Issue of Food Security

Most of the Arab countries are import deficit countries (dependant on food imports)

Poverty Level

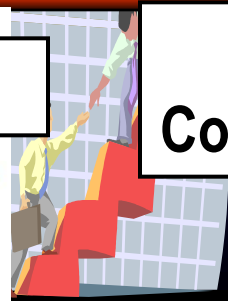
The most recent figures indicate that poverty affects around 10 per cent of the population in Jordan and Tunisia, about 20 per cent in Algeria, Egypt and Morocco, 40 per cent in Yemen and 46 per cent in Mauritania.



Water A Human
Right



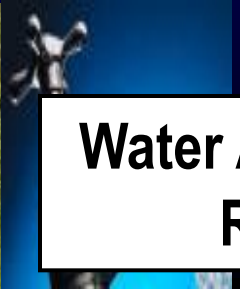
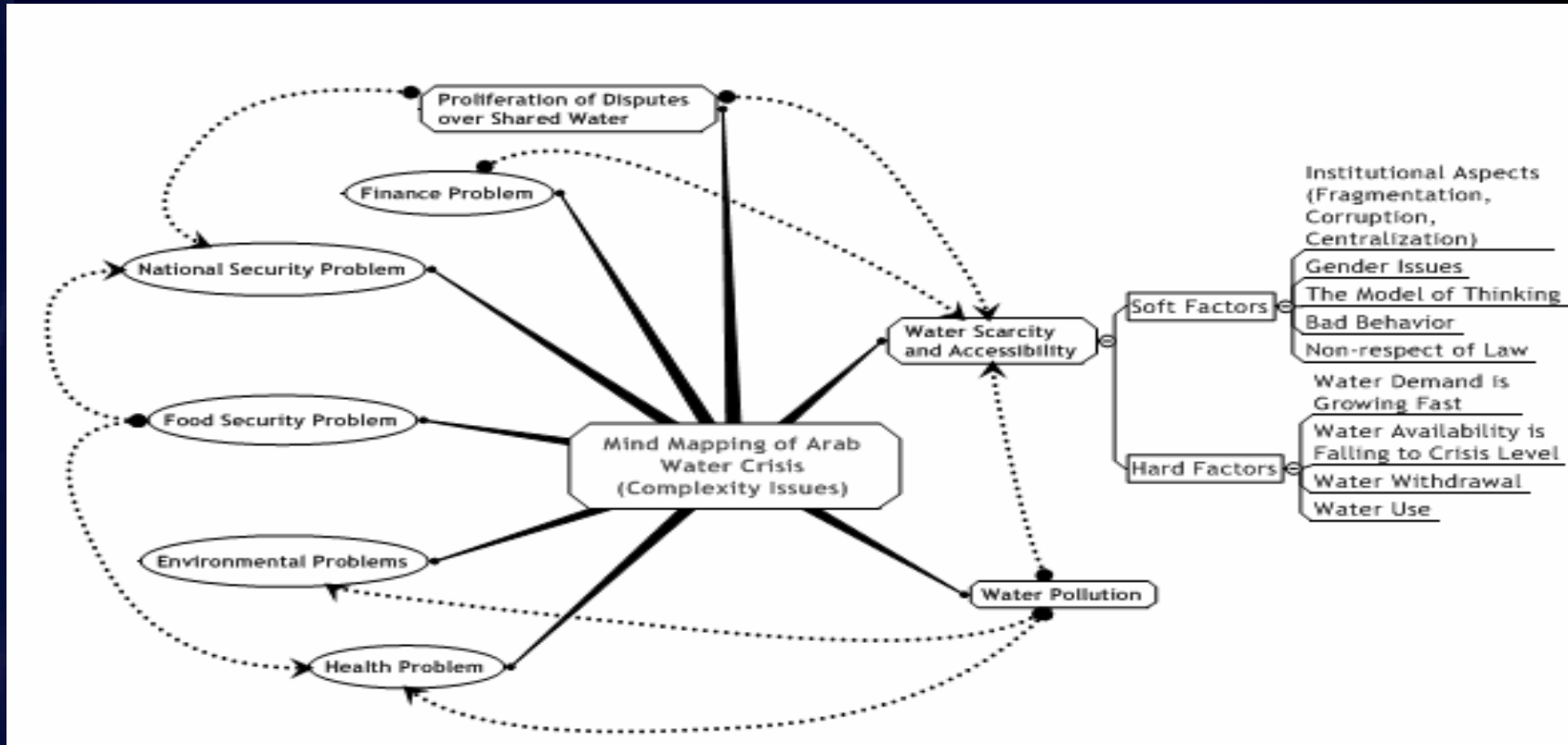
And / OR



A
Commodity

Mind Mapping of Water Crisis in the Arab Region

Mind Map of Arab Water Crisis



Water A Human Right



And / OR



A Commodity

where are the most important gaps to cover by a balanced water strategy and good governance?

- ➔ **Food Security.**
- ➔ **Water Pollution.**
- ➔ **Capacity building and institutional development**



**Water A Human
Right**

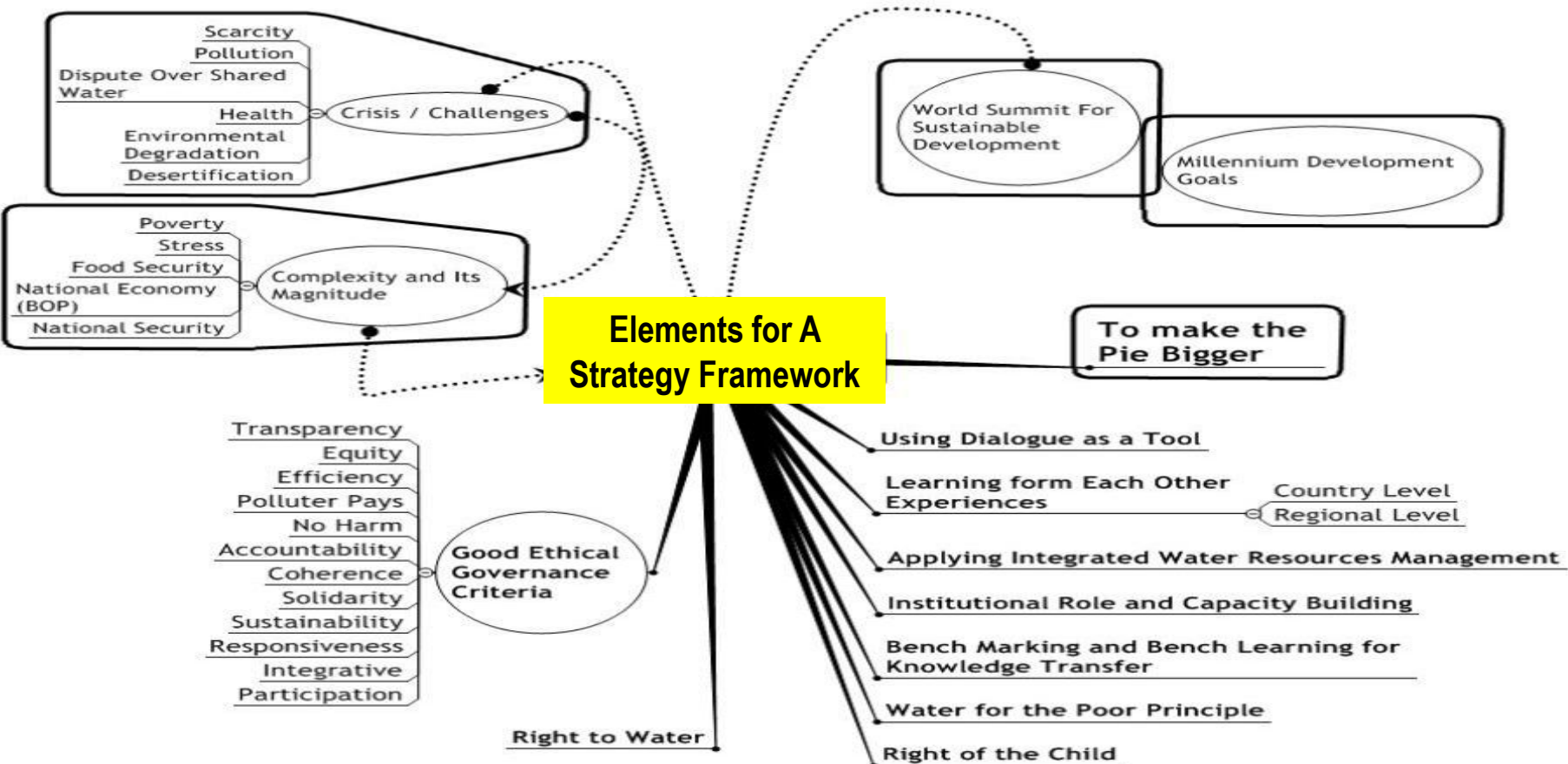


And / OR



A Commodity

Towards A Balanced Water Strategy



On the Basis of the suggested Strategy first Message: Virtual Water Trade could be Policy Option for the Arab States

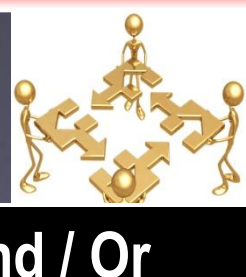
- ❖ One of the major challenges is water / food challenges , which is facing the region and its implications for the food economy.
- ❖ By accounting the volume of virtual water embedded in food imports into the countries concerned, a close relationship between water endowment and food import dependence is clear.
- ❖ Although virtual water trade is ongoing in the region, it is yet to be considered as a policy option in planning and allocating water resources.
- ❖ However, considering virtual water as a policy option is often faced with skepticism and fear of economic or political control.



A Human
Right



And / Or



A Commodity

second message

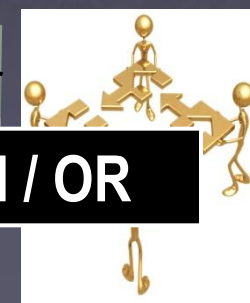
1. Water must be dealt with by all the stakeholders (local authorities, companies, NGOs, researchers...)
2. Enhancing co-ownership and promoting a more balanced partnership
3. The focus should be on: " to be more visible and relevant, it should have a strong project focus.
4. Improved institutional governance through a Joint Permanent Committee, representing all.



Water A Human
Right



And / OR



A
Commodity

third message

“Sustainability is about connections. It is about connecting sectors, so that there is one unified agenda instead of separate economic, ecological, and social agendas. It is about connecting today to tomorrow..... And it is about connecting big ideals to small, practical solutions..”

Source: Quoting the Prime Minister of Netherlands (Delft University, 2007)



Water A Human Right



A Commodity

And / OR

3.

Basic Ethical Principles in the Process of Re-Thinking Water and Food in the Arab Region



**Water A Human
Right**



An / OR



A Commodity

Idea One: Time is running out

Planning for the future starts now :



Water A Human
Right



A Commodity

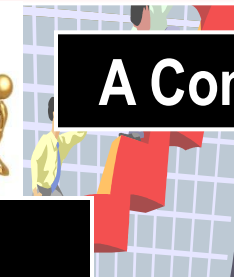
And / OR

Idea Two: A new Paradigm is Needed !!

What is needed is rather :



er A Human
Right



A Commodity

And / OR

Idea Two (continued)

- Duty to Cooperate
- Conjunctive Management
- Integrated Management
- Equitable Utilization
- Sustainable Use
- Minimization of Environmental Harm
- Integrative Projects that include all dimensions (social, political, economic, environmental),
- Projects are managed by Results-Based System



Water A H
Righ



And / OR



A Commodity



Idea Three

- There are some obvious **applied research** needs. Clearly, many basic physiological and ecological studies of the **effects of changes in atmospheric and climatic conditions** are necessary.
- The most pressing need over much of the region is for **sound assessment** and **monitoring programs** to establish current baselines and **identify rates of change**.



er a Hum
Right



A Commodity

And / OR

Idea Three (continued)

filling gaps in water resources research

WATER AVAILABILITY AND QUALITY

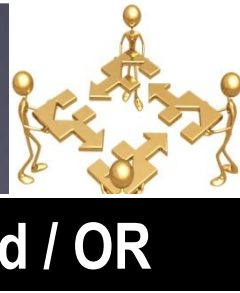
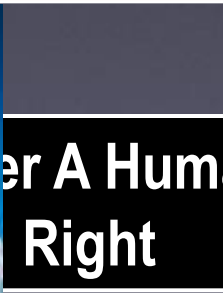
Development of Supply Enhancing Technology
Water Quality: Fundamental and Applied Studies
Improving Hydrologic Forecasting and Prediction
Need for Adequate Hydrologic Data

WATER USE

Determinants of Consumptive Water Use
Agricultural Water Use
Environmental Water Use

WATER INSTITUTIONS

Legal and Political Issues
Economic Institutions
Emerging Social Science Issues



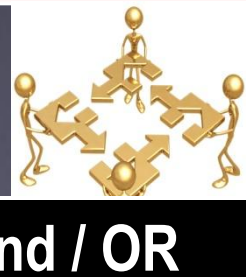
And / OR

4.

A Strategy Building within an Ethical Framework



For A Human
Right

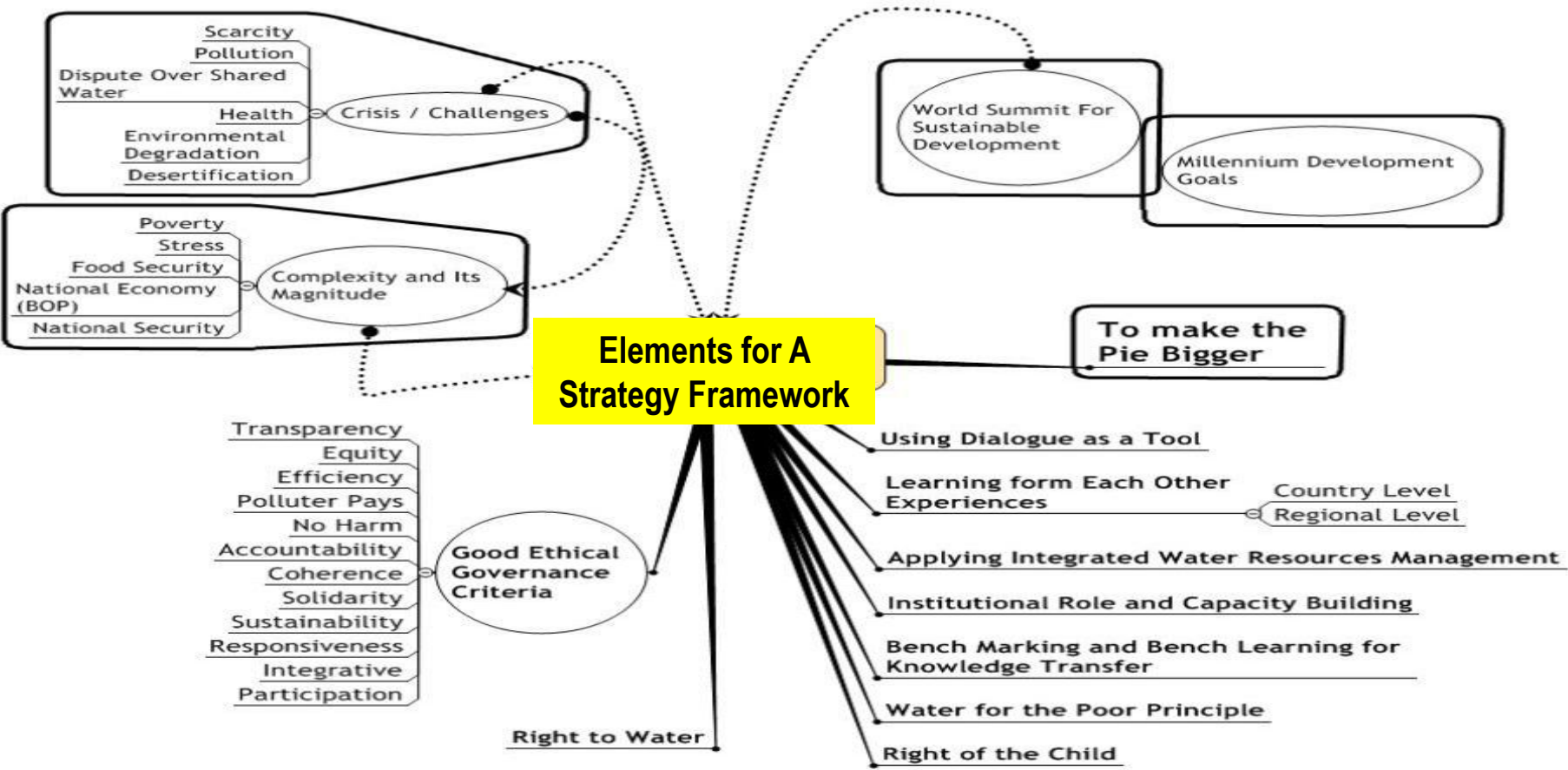


And / OR

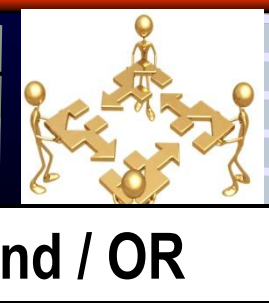


A Commodity

Strategy Building: To be implemented within an Ethical framework



er A Human
Right



And / OR



A Commodity

By Re-Thinking Paradigms: Food Security

Botin Foundation initiative is a driving force for Change: Could it be possible for the Water Observatory to do more on translating ideas of priority into projects for specific hot issues.



Re-Thinking Water Paradigms



Water A Human Right



A Commodity

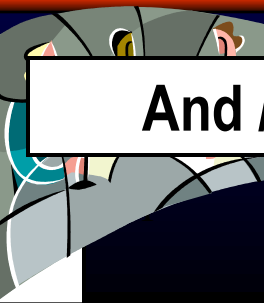
And / OR



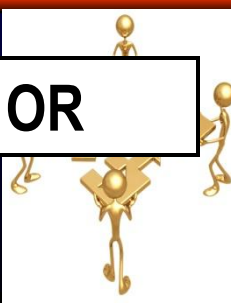
**THE END
THANK YOU**



**... A Human
Right**



And / OR



A Commodity

