Wednesday 30 September 2009
5-7pm – Elizabeth Fry Lecture Theatre 01.08

The political economy of water security: sharing the benefits of water management by farmers via virtual water 'trade'

Prof. Tony Allan – King’s College London and School of Oriental and African Studies

The purpose of this seminar will be to highlight the spectacular impact of farmers in improving returns to water. Farmers manage the big water – that is the water used in food production. Big water accounts for about 80 per cent of the water used in the global economy. Global water security depends mainly on our capacity to increase water and crop productivity in ways that reduce impacts on environmental services. The improved water productivity achieved in the 35 or so industrialised economies and in the five BRICs economies is not yet evident in the 165 or so developing economies. A number of unheralded farm productivity miracles that have more than quadrupled the returns to water will be discussed. The seminar will conclude with some thoughts on sustainable water management.

Tony Allan (BA Durham 1958, PhD London 1971) heads the Water Research Group at King's College London and SOAS. He specialises in the analysis of water resources in semi-arid regions and the role of global systems in ameliorating local and regional water deficits. He established the concept of virtual water. His most recent book is entitled 'The Middle East water question: hydropolitics and the global economy'. In 2008, he was awarded the Stockholm Water Prize in recognition of his contribution to water science and water policy.

Wednesday 14 October 2009
5-7pm – Elizabeth Fry Lecture Theatre 01.08

Cooperation at different scales: challenges for local and international water resource governance in South Africa

Naho Mirumachi – King’s College London

Theory on environmental and water governance emphasises decentralised, devolved forms of interaction between stakeholders. As previously excluded actors are empowered to take part in governance, new forms of cooperation are created. This seminar examines how the cooperative principle has influenced stakeholder interaction at the local and international scale of water governance in South Africa, asking whether there have been new forms of cooperation between a wider array of actors, as the theory proposes. Using the case studies of the Sabie catchment and the Lesotho Highlands Water Project to examine local and international level governance, challenges are found related to power disparity and interdependence of actors, and risk perceptions of inclusive decision making. It is found that at both local and international levels, the state, which is a ‘traditional’ actor, still plays an influential role in decision making. ‘New’ actors such as businesses, civil society, and regional institutions are more visible but have limited decision making power. Non-linear, time-consuming forms of cooperation occur in water governance. Implications of these findings on water security will be discussed.

Naho Mirumachi (BA in Political Science and MA in International Studies) is a PhD student at King's College London, focussing on conflict and cooperation in trans-boundary waters. Her main research interests are politics and governance of natural resources management, in particular trans-boundary waters. She has fieldwork experience in the Orange, Mekong and Ganges river basins.

Wednesday 28 October 2009
5-7pm – Zicer Seminar Room 2.03

So long and thanks for all the fish: a hitch-hiker's guide to the global water security crisis (and what WWF is doing about it)

Dr. David Tickner – WWF-UK

David Tickner has been Head of Freshwater Programmes at WWF-UK since 2005. He leads a team that provides funding and technical support to water management projects in China, South Asia, Latin America, Eastern Africa and the UK. Dave’s team also engages key stakeholders in the public and private sectors to shape policy and practice on water security and water stewardship. Previously, Dave led WWF’s programme for the Danube River, based in Vienna. As well as heading a team undertaking wetland conservation projects across Eastern Europe, he also worked closely with the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River to encourage better
transboundary co-operation for water management. Before joining WWF, Dave worked for the UK government on land-use planning and rural development policy. He is currently a non-executive director of Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor (WSUP), a not-for-profit company that supports local service providers around the world to deliver affordable and sustainable water and sanitation services to poor people in urban communities.

Wednesday 4 November 2009
5-7pm – Elizabeth Fry Lecture Theatre 01.08
Water and development in Bangladesh and India’s northeast
Prof. Graham Chapman
Lancaster Environment Centre
The River Brahmaputra has the world’s fourth largest discharge, and the world’s second heaviest silt yield. It has an upstream basin under Chinese sovereignty in Tibet (which struggles for autonomy), and where it is the world’s highest navigable water-way; a lower basin in Assam and adjacent states (India), an area of ethnic and linguistic diversity that has harboured India’s longest running armed conflict; and Bangladesh, a global poverty hotspot, where the river contributes to the building of the world’s greatest delta, often by flooding it. Its tributaries in Bhutan and Northeast India have enormous potential for hydroelectricity, while the waters themselves are eyed by India as their greatest ‘surplus’ resource, but are the ‘wrong side’ of Bangladesh. Development of the area can only occur with a sensitive geopolitical understanding of these complexities by all the parties involved. This seminar tries to sketch out the nature of that geopolitical understanding, and in doing so, starts with the basic physical geography of the region. This is the huge backcloth that guides the major human dynamics of the area. Though I will touch on theoretical problems of collective action, the weight will probably be on the empirical side.

Graham Chapman is a Geographer by degrees (BA and PhD Cambridge), has been Lecturer in South Asian Geography (Cambridge 1969-1988), Professor of Geography (SOAS 1988-1994, Lancaster 1994-2007), Chairman of the British Association of South Asian Studies, and Fellow of the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies (1994) and the Oslo Centre for Advanced Studies (2008-2009). His main research interests are geopolitics, water and environment, quantitative systems theory, as well as media studies and gaming simulation (Green Revolution Game and Exaction).

Wednesday 9 December 2009
5-7pm – Zicer Seminar Room 2.03
Climate change: a scapegoat for the world’s water woes?
Roger Calow – Overseas Development Institute
Climate change is currently dominating international debates on water. Climate change and adaptation was a central topic of the 5th World Water Forum in Istanbul, and at the Water Week in Stockholm. There is talk of a climate-induced water crisis, of the potential for conflict over water, and of new forms of environmental migration. At a recent meeting of Commonwealth parliamentarians in London, climate change was held responsible for a huge range of water problems, including the degradation of urban and rural water supplies.

Are such claims justified, and is the overwhelming emphasis on water and climate change justified? Certainly water is predicted to be the primary medium through which early climate change impacts will be felt by people, ecosystems and economies. Both observational records and climate projections provide strong evidence that freshwater resources are vulnerable, and have the potential to be strongly impacted. But nagging questions remain. How do we separate out the impacts of climate change on water resources from those related to socio-economic and demographic shifts? Should we be dealing with adaptation as a separate climate issue, or is it just ‘good development’? And is water scarcity a ‘natural’ condition determined, above all, by climate-determined water availability?

In this seminar, Roger Calow, head of the Water Policy Programme at ODI, will take a critical look at current debates on water scarcity and water security. He will argue that the water challenges facing countries such as Ethiopia and China are primarily ones of access and governance, not availability. Related to this, he will argue that climate change is one of a number of pressures on demand and supply, and that a re-balancing of current debates on water may be necessary.

Roger Calow has over 15 years’ experience in international development, focusing on service delivery and financing, water resources management, water rights, irrigation reform and community based management of natural resources and water supply infrastructure. He recently returned from China where he was working with the Ministry of Water Resources on water resource management projects funded by AusAid and the World Bank.

All staff, students and members of the public welcome!
To find the Zicer (S7) and Elizabeth Fry (F4) buildings see www.uea.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.915341/campusmap_April09_V9.pdf
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www.uea.ac.uk/watersecurity/seminarseries