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Water in the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals

Discussion paper

UNESCO International Hydrological Programme, 2014.

This paper was prepared based on the UNESCO-IHP proposal for a water goal in the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals framework. It includes contributions of IHP associated programmes under the overall coordination of **Blanca Jimenez-Cisneros**, Director of Division of Water Sciences of UNESCO. The objective of this discussion paper is to provide background for discussions of the UNESCO-IHP Side-Event on "Water in the Post-2015 Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals" during the 21th session of the Intergovernmental Council of the International Hydrological Programme of UNESCO (18-20 June 2014, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France).

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1. Background: Defining the post-2015 development agenda

As the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopted at the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000, will reach the target date at the end of 2015, the global community is engaging in a renewed political commitment for sustainable development after 2015. At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (Rio+20), the 192 Member States declared their commitment for a global sustainable development agenda beyond 2015 in the Rio+20 Outcome Document "*The Future We Want*".

One of the concrete outcomes of Rio+20 was the agreement to start a process of defining Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will be built on the Millennium Development Goals and will address in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development. It was also emphasized that SDGs should be coherent with and integrated into the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015. Following these developments, different processes on defining the global development agenda have been initiated both within and outside the United Nations system.

The United Nations General Assembly established a 30-member **Open Working Group** (OWG) in January 2012 with a view to developing a proposal for global sustainable development goals to be agreed by the United Nations General Assembly. As highlighted in the Rio+20 outcome document, the OWG intends to serve as an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process on sustainable development goals that should ensure the full involvement of relevant stakeholders, civil society, the scientific community and the United Nations system in its work, in order to provide a diversity of perspectives and experience. Other parallel work streams have been initiated in order to support the OWG in the preparation of its proposal for the SDGs. A United Nations inter-agency **Technical Support Team** (TST) has been established to support the OWG, with an aim to provide technical advice, analytical inputs. In July 2012, the United Nations Secretary-General appointed 27 government leaders, civil society and private sector worldwide to a **High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons** (HLP) to give their recommendations on the post-2015 development agenda.

At the Rio+20, the Member States recognized the importance of water in sustainable development and the post-2015 development agenda, by clearly emphasizing in its outcome document that "*water is at the core of sustainable development as it is closely linked to a number of key global challenges*".[1]

2. Water: A key for sustainable development

Water in the Millennium Development Goals

The role of water in human development and environmental sustainability has been clearly defined in the MDGs by dedicating a specific target (Target 7C) on water and sanitation as part of the overall goal of realizing environmental sustainability (Goal 7). The target aimed to "*halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation*". This target is monitored by two indicators: "Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source" and "Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility".

According to the latest report[2] of the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP), more than 2 billion people have gained access to improved sources of drinking water since 1990, and 116 countries have met the MDG target on drinking water. More

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1 Rio+20 Outcome Document "*The Future We Want*", United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, 2012

2 WHO/UNICEF, 2014. Progress on sanitation and drinking-water – 2014 update.

than half the world's population, almost 4 billion people, now has a piped water connection at their homes. With regard to sanitation, from 1990 to 2012, almost 2 billion people gained access to improved sanitation and 77 countries have met the MDG target on basic sanitation.

Notwithstanding the great achievements in meeting the MDG target on drinking water, 748 million people, mostly in rural and poor areas, still lack access to an improved drinking water source. Almost a quarter of them rely on untreated surface water. The MDG target on sanitation is unlikely to be met by 2015. If current trends continue, there will still be 2.4 billion people without access to an improved sanitation facility in 2015, a large majority of them living in rural areas.[3]

Sustainable management of water has a crucial part to play in achieving all MDGs. Water is implicitly central in reaching all of the eight goals. Access to safe drinking water and sanitation is a pre-requisite for poverty eradication, education, gender equality, the reduction of child mortality, improved maternal health, the combat against major water-borne diseases and achieving environmental sustainability. These issues are inherently intertwined with water, as this crucial resource is a vehicle for diseases, and its lack of access brings additional burden on socio-economic inequalities.

Water, sanitation and hygiene are essential for health, welfare and livelihoods. Increased access to water and sanitation and better services lead to disease prevention, improved education outcomes and improved economic productivity. Hence, the efforts on reaching this basic human right to clean water and sanitation should be continued after 2015, building on the efforts done to reach the MDG target on water and sanitation.

Need for a post-2015 vision to address present and future water challenges

In uncertain times where effects of climate change on water resources are alarming, and the world facing an exponential population growth, water challenges cannot be neglected. Human use and pollution of freshwater resources have reached a level where the sustainability of water resources is threatened and the resulting water scarcity and water quality degradation will potentially limit food production, reduce ecosystem functions, and hinder economic growth. Pressures on water resources have increased dramatically over the past decades due to rapid demographic growth, urbanization, higher consumption levels and climate change. Water withdrawals have tripled over the last 50 years and the demand for water has increased in almost every country around the world.[4] Agriculture, industry and households are the main sectors which consume water, with agriculture being the biggest consumer with 70% of the total global freshwater withdrawal from rivers, lakes and aquifers[5]. Increase in water demand is expected in all three sectors. In 2030, half of the world population will be living in high water stressed areas.[6] This increasing stress on water resources puts hundreds of millions of people under the risk of hunger, diseases, energy shortage and poverty.[7] Climate change and the uncertainties of its effects on water supplies also put pressure on different users and stakeholders.[8]

Furthermore water issues are also intrinsically linked to other sustainable development issues such as poverty, hunger, health, education, gender inequality, ecosystems integrity, climate change and disasters.

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3 WHO/UNICEF, 2014. Progress on sanitation and drinking-water – 2014 update.

4 World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP), 2012. The United Nations World Water Development Report 4: Managing Water under Uncertainty and Risk. Paris, UNESCO

5 UNEP, 2007. State-and-Trends of the Environment: 1987–2007.

6 UNEP, 2007. State-and-Trends of the Environment: 1987–2007.

7 WHO/UNICEF, 2014. Progress on sanitation and drinking-water - 2014 update.

8 Baker, C., 2013, Water and international security, Talk for CSCAP 2nd Meeting for Study Group on Water. Siem Reap, Cambodia.

A global vision and worldwide commitment is consequently needed in order to tackle the world's current and emerging water problems. In addition to fulfilling the human needs of clean water and sanitation, issues of overexploitation of freshwater resources, the growing water pollution problems worldwide and water-related risks should be taken into account in a post-2015 vision in order to reach global sustainable development.

3. Water in the post-2015 development agenda: UNESCO-IHP proposal for a global goal on water in the SDGs framework

Recognizing the key role of water in sustainable development, UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme (IHP) recommends that the SDGs should provide a framework to tackle water problems beyond the MDG focus on access to water and sanitation. Focus needs to be broadened to other crucial water issues such as water-use efficiency, water quality and wastewater management, water-related disasters, and the IWRM-based approach to water resources management.

A global water goal: Ensure Water Security for Sustainable Development

UNESCO-IHP proposes a stand-alone sustainable development goal dedicated to water to "Ensure Water Security for Sustainable Development".

Water has a crucial role in all dimensions of sustainable development and is linked to various key global problems, and all human and economic activities. A stand-alone goal on water in the SDGs is essential in order to have a holistic approach in tackling global water problems. Furthermore, because of its close interlinkages with other global problems, a global goal dedicated to water is fundamental to mobilize concrete commitments and concerted action on all water-related issues through a coherent framework to meet all other development goals.

Water problems are becoming increasingly severe and complex. Interlinkages between water resources management and other environmental, social and economic issues are ever more evident due to the population growth, rapid urbanization, land-use changes, degradation of water quality and growing impact of climate change. The concept of water security captures these problems at the intersection of hydrology, ecology and society.

Based on this perspective, the UNESCO proposal for a global goal on water in the post-2015 development agenda is based on the overall thematic focus on water security, reflecting the theme of the strategic plan of the 8th phase of IHP (IHP-VIII for 2014-2021: "Water Security: Responses to Local, Regional and Global Challenges".

The definition on Water Security:[9]

The capacity of a population to safeguard access to adequate quantities of water of acceptable quality for sustaining human and ecosystem health on a watershed basis, and to ensure efficient protection of life and property against water related hazards – floods, landslides, land subsidence, and droughts.

[9] UNESCO-IHP, 2012. Strategic plan of the eighth phase of the International Hydrological Programme of UNESCO (IHP-VIII, 2014-2021): "Water security: Responses to local, regional, and global challenges".

The UNESCO proposal for the global sustainable development goal on water includes the following targets.

Target 1:
Achieve, by 2030, universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation for all.

This target is the continuation of the current MDG target on water and sanitation. There has been significant progress in reaching this MDG target. The MDG target to reach drinking water coverage of 88% was met in 2010. Whereas 76% of the global population had access to an improved drinking water source in 1990, 89% of the global population had access in 2012, resulting in an increase of about 2.3 billion people having access to improved water sources. Although the world met the MDG drinking water target, 748 million people still lack access to an improved drinking water source.[10] Coverage of improved sanitation increased from 49% in 1990 to 64% in 2012. If current trends continue, the world is unlikely to reach the MDG target to reach sanitation coverage of 75% by 2015.

Consequently, efforts in improving access to sanitation and safe drinking water should continue after 2015 in order to obtain a universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation by 2030. It is recommended to expand the target to hygiene because good hygiene is essential to improve health and nutrition, especially of women and girls, by preventing the spread of water-borne diseases.

Target 2:
By 2030, reduce the water use in agricultural irrigation by 20%, industrial water use by 20%, and domestic water use by 15% and increase water productivity by 50% in all sectors, by adopting the water demand management approach, less water demanding crops, water saving technologies and increasing safe reuse of wastewater.

This target aims at improving water use efficiency to respond to the water scarcity challenge and reduce water withdrawals to ensure water resources sustainability. Agriculture accounts for 70% of all water withdrawn, whereas water use in households and industrial sectors is 12% and 18%, respectively. In all three sectors increase in water demand is expected.[11] Excessive water withdrawal from surface waters and underground aquifers causes water stress for humans and ecosystems, resulting in high environmental costs, including loss of biodiversity, and affects natural water systems such as rivers and aquifers.

The growing availability of scientific knowledge and technological applications in the water sector has a lot of potential for water saving measurements. Water supplies are being enhanced in many countries through innovative wastewater treatment and reuse techniques. Industries can reduce water use by investing in new technologies and processes. Domestic water use in households can be significantly reduced by water reducing technologies such as low-flush toilets, low-flow showers and faucet aerators that are readily available. In the agricultural sector, water saving innovations like less-water demanding crops and drip irrigation are adopted in many countries. Hence, improving the water-use efficiency through the approach of water demand management and increasing water productivity in all sectors should be an important aspect of the water-related SDGs.

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10 WHO/UNICEF, 2014. Progress on sanitation and drinking-water – 2014 update.

11 World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP), 2012. The United Nations World Water Development Report 4: Managing Water under Uncertainty and Risk. Paris, UNESCO

Target 3:
By 2030, increase by 50% the number of countries that have adopted and implemented policies and programmes for the public registration of water rights based on the IWRM approach.

This target focuses on the importance of integrating Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in water management plans. IWRM aims to manage water resources in order to maximize the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems. It is a cross-sectorial policy approach, opposed to the traditional, fragmented sectorial approach to water resources. Because of the complexity and cross-cutting nature of the IWRM concept, the target proposes to use the public registration of water rights as a measurable indicator to measure the integration of the IWRM concept in water policies.

Water right refers to the right of a user to use water from a certain water source, and thereby it can provide an insight to the degree of sustainability in which water resources are managed in urban and rural areas. Hence, the public registration of water rights can be a useful tool in order to address the problem of unregulated and unsustainable use of scarce water resources and to emphasize the interdependency of different uses of finite water resources. The concept of the public registration of water rights is already adopted and implemented in several countries. The Water Act in the Republic of Zambia stipulates the ownership of water and the procedures of authorization and validation of water use through a process of public consultations and the publication of granted water rights. Mexico adopted the registration of water rights in their National Water Law (*El Registro Público de Derechos de Agua*). The Chilean Government created a database of water rights registered in the General Directorate of Water, in order to promote transparency of information and the needs to meet the needs of all users (*Derechos de aprovechamiento de aguas registrados en DGA*).

Target 4:
By 2030, reduce water pollution from main sources by 30% at the country level, by increasing wastewater collection and treatment in cities to at least 80%, increasing industrial wastewater treatment to at least 95%, reducing pollution from diffuse sources by 30% and taking measures to reduce pollutants at the source.

This target aims to reduce freshwater pollution by human activities by reducing the emissions at the source of the discharge. Despite recognition of the importance of wastewater treatment, every day 2 million tons of human waste are disposed of in water bodies globally. More than 80% of sewage and 70% of industrial waste in developing countries is discharged untreated, polluting rivers, lakes and coastal areas. Non-point pollution from agriculture and urban areas often constitutes an even greater total pollutant load than industrial pollution.[12]

Water pollution is a global concern as risks of water quality degradation translate directly into environmental, social and economic problems. Water pollution has also an impact on biological diversity of aquatic ecosystems, on which a wide range of sectors, from urban development to food production and industry, rely on. Improving water quality and wastewater management is a pre-requisite for access to clean water and sanitation, as well as for addressing health, poverty, food security and environmental challenges, and is therefore vital for sustainable development.

Focus should be primarily on improving wastewater management in developing countries, where wastewater collection and treatment is still very low. Water pollution should be reduced by

[12] World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP). 2014. The United Nations World Water Development Report 2014: Water and Energy. Paris, UNESCO.

increasing wastewater collection and treatment. Furthermore, the safe re-use of wastewater for productive purposes should be promoted in order to prevent public health and environmental pollution risks, while providing alternative water resources for productive uses such as agricultural irrigation. Emphasis should be put also in preventing water pollution by nutrients and chemicals from agricultural diffuse sources.

Target 5:
By 2030, reduce by half the loss of human life and property from water-related disasters, by improving the resilience of nations.

Water-related hazards account for 90% of all natural hazards, and are expected to rise in frequency and intensity due to climate change.[13] Especially in developing countries, natural disasters can cause damage representing considerable percentages of the annual GDP.[14] During the period 2000 to 2006, a total of 2,163 water-related disasters were reported globally in the Emergency Disasters Database (EM-DAT), killing more than 290,000 people, affecting more than 1.5 billion, and inflicting more than US $422 billion of damage[15]. In 2010, natural disasters killed over 296,800 people worldwide, affecting nearly 208 million others and costing nearly US $110 billion.[16]

Mortality and economic loss due to water-related disasters can be reduced by improving the resilience of communities. This can be reached by better understanding the drivers for water related disasters and the associated uncertainties. Furthermore, uncertainties have to be integrated in the planning of coordinated responses and preparedness towards hazards.

Cross cutting issues:

UNESCO-IHP places strong emphasis on cross-cutting issues that are critical instruments to achieve the SDGs, in particular: water education and capacity building; scientific research; innovative scientific and technological approaches; and the sharing of information and knowledge, including indigenous and traditional knowledge. These cross-cutting issues need to be considered in the SDGs to create a supportive framework for means of reaching their targets. As many of the decisions affecting water resources take place outside of the water sector, water education and capacity building at all levels is required to ensure adequate capacities among all stakeholders. In addition, an increase in the number of adequately trained water professionals will be needed to efficiently expand water supply and sanitation, increase water efficiency, adopt water rights and improve resilience to water-related disasters. Along with the strengthening of human capacities, particular focus is also provided to institutional capacities and to other forms of acquisition of the information and knowledge needed for informed and efficient decision-making.

Water issues are also strongly linked with other development issues such as poverty, hunger, health, education, gender inequality, ecosystems integrity such as forests and mountains, climate change and disasters among others. Therefore, UNESCO-IHP recommends the clear recognition of the linkages of water to other sectors in the SDGs such as goals related to sustainable

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13 World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP), 2012. The United Nations World Water Development Report 4: Managing Water under Uncertainty and Risk. Paris, UNESCO.

14 World Bank, 2004. *Natural Disasters: Counting the Costs.* Washington DC, The World Bank.

15 Adikari, Y., & Yoshitani, J., 2009. Global trends in water-related disasters: an insight for policymakers. World Water Assessment Programme Side Publication Series, Insights. The United Nations, UNESCO. International Centre for Water Hazard and Risk Management (ICHARM).

16 UN, 2011. United Nations Secretary–General's Report to the 66th General Assembly on the Implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

agriculture, food security and nutrition, gender equality and women's empowerment, infrastructure, sustainable cities and human settlements, and climate.

4. Water in the global discussions on SDGs

UNESCO's efforts in raising awareness about the importance of water in the development agenda beyond 2015 reach much further than the initiatives within UNESCO itself. Given IHP's extensive experience in the field of water sciences, UNESCO is also providing technical advice and input to other processes that contribute to the development of the post-2015 agenda and SDGs related to water, both within and outside the United Nations system. In particular, UNESCO contributed to four main platforms: (i) UN-Water; (ii) United Nations Secretary General's High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda; (iii) United Nations General Assembly's Open Working Group on SDGs; and (iv) global stakeholder thematic consultations.

UN-Water

As the United Nations inter-agency mechanism dedicated to all freshwater water-related issues, UN-Water is strongly involved in the post-2015 processes on water. UN-Water established a Working Group including its members and partners, to coordinate the preparation of a paper presenting their joint findings and recommendations on a post-2015 global goal for water. After several rounds of reviews, consultations and comments, including the Budapest Water Summit and a side-event at the 6th session of the UNGA's Open Working Group on SDGs, a consensus on the UN-Water proposal for a post-2015 goal on water was reached. The UN-Water Technical Advice report *"A Post-2015 Global Goal for Water"* was presented at the UN-Water meeting in New York in January 2014.

As a member of UN-Water, UNESCO-IHP was actively involved in this consultation process and contributed to discussions led by UN-Water on the role of water in SDGs and the preparation of this report. As a result, the UN-Water proposal for a dedicated water-related goal on ***"Securing sustainable water for all"*** is closely in line with IHP's proposal. Similar to the UNESCO-IHP proposal, the UN-Water proposal emphasizes the importance of water security for sustainable development, focusing on universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation, water use efficiency, wastewater treatment and water-related disasters. In addition, the UN-Water included the concept of water governance in one of the proposed targets.

High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda

UNESCO-IHP also plays a prominent role in providing technical advice and input to the development of the post-2015 agenda and SDGs through other key processes, including the work of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel (HLP) of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 development agenda.

The panel's final report "*A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development*" calls for a dedicated water-related goal to "**Achieve Universal Access to Water and Sanitation**". UNESCO-IHP's contributions are clearly reflected in the HLP's proposal, with particular reference to its target on water use efficiency. The targets on universal access to drinking water and sanitation, and wastewater treatment are also in line with the UNESCO proposal for a global goal on water. However, the HLP-proposed goal puts less emphasis on water security and water-related disasters.

UN General Assembly's Open Working Group on SDGs

UNESCO-IHP's most important contribution to the formulation of water-related SDGs is provided to the work of the United Nations General Assembly Open Working Group (OWG) on SDGs, channelled through both UN-Water and the United Nations Technical Support Team.

Throughout its 11 sessions held from March 2013 to May 2014, the OWG addressed water issues as one of the focus key areas for future SDGs, which has resulted in the formulation of Focus Area 6 on "Water and Sanitation" in the OWG document on focus areas to be considered as potential areas for SDGs. At its 10th and 11th session in April and May 2014, the OWG started to cluster and prioritize the focus areas towards structuring the SDGs, reducing the number of focus and target areas, and reaching a consensus towards priorities for a set of SDGs. On 2 June, the OWG presented the Zero Draft document with proposed SDG goals and targets. The overwhelming support of Member States for the consideration of water in the SDGs has been maintained in discussions of the OWG and has resulted in Proposed Goal 6 "Secure water and sanitation for all for a sustainable world" in the OWG zero draft of the proposed sustainable development goals and targets for consideration at the next two sessions of the OWG.[17]

UNESCO contributed extensively to the work of the OWG. In particular, UNESCO provided technical and analytical comments on the proposed focus and target areas and suggested the formulation of target areas under Focus Area 6 on "Water and Sanitation" into specific measurable targets, along with possible indicators. UNESCO contributions are clearly reflected in the OWG Proposed Goal 6 "Secure water and sanitation for all for a sustainable world", especially in relation to the target areas on water and sanitation, wastewater management, IWRM, and water quality. In addition, the OWG Proposed Goal 6 include also aspects of transboundary cooperation, sustainable extraction and supply of freshwater resources, the protection of ecosystems that provide water-related services and providing adequate facilities and infrastructure for water and sanitation systems, which are less emphasized in the UNESCO-IHP proposal.

The 12th and last 13th sessions of the OWG will be held from 16 to 20 June, and from 14 to 18 July 2014, respectively, to decide on the OWG proposal on a set of SDGs to be submitted to the United Nations General Assembly to negotiations and adoption by Member States in September 2015.

Stakeholder consultations: Global Thematic Consultation on Water

To facilitate an inclusive global conversation involving all stakeholders in the post-2015 processes, the United Nations Development Group conducted a series of global thematic and national consultations. A set of 11 multi-stakeholder thematic consultations were conducted, among which the consultations on water and energy were added at a later stage. The global Thematic Consultation on Water was carried out from December 2012 to March 2013 and was led and coordinated by the UN-Water Task Force. It concluded in a high-level round-table meeting during the World Water Day 2013 in The Hague, as part of the IYWC 2013. Taking into consideration the key water issues highlighted in the Rio+20 outcome document, the Thematic Consultation on Water was conducted on three sub-consultations:

1. Water, sanitation and hygiene,
2. Water resources management, and
3. Wastewater management and water quality.

Highlighting the areas in which IHP has strong expertise and a leading role in the international water community, UNESCO contributed to the Thematic Consultation on Water by providing technical inputs to the three sub-consultations and undertaking a coordination role of the discussions. During the consultation, UNESCO contributed to the framing papers of the consultations, took active participation in online discussions and co-led with the United Nations

[17] This information refers to the work of the OWG as of 02 June 2014.

Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) the discussions on "water for peace" of the sub-consultation on water resources management. During these processes, special emphasis was given to water security, which is in line with the main thematic areas defined in the Strategic Plan of the IHP-VIII for 2014-2021 "*Water Security: Responses to Local, Regional and Global Challenges*".

By mobilizing the IHP National Committees, water-related centres and Chairs to participate actively in the global Thematic Consultation on Water and national consultation processes of the post-2015 development agenda, IHP engaged the whole UNESCO water family to raise awareness of the role of water in sustainable development. Furthermore, IHP has also contributed to other Thematic Consultations in areas with close links to water such as environmental sustainability, education, health, inequalities and hunger and food.

In addition, national consultations on water were conducted by the Global Water Partnership (GWP) in two rounds. The first round in 2013 concluded that water is a "pivotal ingredient" for national development, especially related to food, energy and livelihoods. A second series of consultations in 2014, which were based on the UN-Water Technical Advice at the country level, showed a broad consensus that a stand-alone water goal is fundamental to future sustainable development, as well as a general support for the proposed goal of *"Securing sustainable water for all", as proposed in the* UN-Water Technical Advice paper.

5. The way forward

While the target date of the MDGs comes closer every day, efforts are being carried out both within and outside the United Nations system towards formulating the post-2015 development agenda and SDGs. In this context, water received much attention as one of the main focus areas for sustainable development. In particular, different platforms including UNESCO-IHP, advocate for a stand-alone sustainable development goal dedicated to water.

Water means life in every meaning of the word; water is connected to our health, our wellbeing, our culture, our economy and our environment. Therefore, water has a crucial role in all three dimensions of sustainable development and is linked to various key global challenges. A stand-alone goal on water in the SDGs framework is essential to tackle global water problems in a holistic and coherent way across all spheres of human and economic activities and to meet all other development goals.

The formal intergovernmental negotiation process on the post-2015 agenda is expected to start in September 2014 at the 69th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York upon submission of the final Working Document of the OWG with its proposal on a set of SDGs. The UNESCO-IHP proposal on water in the post-2015 development agenda and SDGs, together with the Report by the United Nations Secretary-General's HLP on the post-2015 development agenda and other reports, will be summarized in a United Nations Secretary-General's Synthesis Report. This report will also be presented to the Member States in September 2014 in New York to set the stage for negotiations.

When we finally reach the MDGs target date, the global development agenda beyond 2015 will need to be ready to put into action. In particular, the intergovernmental negotiation process on SDGs is expected to culminate in a Summit at the Heads of States and Governments level in September 2015 for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda and SDGs. Thereafter, the world community will transition into the implementation of a new phase of sustainable development. During this process, UNESCO-IHP will continue to be involved in the relevant processes with the aim to place a prominent role of water in the post-2015 development agenda and SDGs and will maintain its active contribution to the discussions through various platforms towards the formulation of a dedicated, stand-alone sustainable development goal on water and a coherent post-2015 development agenda.

Proposed water-related Sustainable Development Goals for the post-2015 framework

	UNESCO-IHP	UN General Assembly's Open Working Group proposal on SDGs (*as proposed in the 'zero draft' document*)	UN-Water	High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda
	Ensure water security for sustainable development	**Proposed goal 6. Secure water and sanitation for all for a sustainable world**	**Securing sustainable water for all**	**Achieve universal access to water and sanitation**
Water and sanitation	By 2030, achieve **universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation** for all	By 2030, provide universal access to safe and affordable drinking water, adequate sanitation and hygiene for all; By 2030 provide universal access to safe and affordable sanitation and hygiene including at home, schools, health centres and refugee camps, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls	Achieve universal access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene	Provide universal access to safe drinking water; End open defecation and ensure universal access to sanitation
Water-use efficiency and sustainable use of water resources	By 2030, **reduce the water use** in agricultural irrigation by 20%, industrial water use by 20% and domestic water use by 15% and **increase water productivity** by 50% in all sectors, by adopting the water demand management approach, less water demanding crops, water saving technologies and increasing the safe reuse of wastewater	By 2030, improve water-use efficiency across all sectors; Ensure sustainable extraction and supply of fresh water, and by 2020 protect and restore ecosystems and aquifers that provide water-related services	Improve the sustainable use and development of water resources in all countries	Bring freshwater withdrawals in line with supply and increase water efficiency in agriculture, industry and urban areas
IWRM and water governance	By 2030, increase by 50% the number of countries that have adopted and implemented policies and programmes for the public registration of water rights based on **the IWRM approach**	Implement integrated water resource management, including appropriate trans-boundary cooperation Provide adequate facilities and infrastructure, both built and natural, for safe drinking water and sanitation systems, for productive uses of water resources and for mitigating the impacts of water-related disasters	All countries strengthen equitable, participatory and accountable water governance	
Water quality and wastewater management	By 2030, **reduce water pollution** from main sources at the country level by 30%, by **increasing wastewater collection and treatment** in cities to at least 80%, increasing industrial wastewater treatment to at least 95% and by taking measures to reduce pollutants at the source	By 2030, improve water quality by significantly reducing pollution, eliminating dumping of toxic materials, and improving wastewater management, recycling and reuse	Reduce untreated wastewater, nutrient pollution and increase wastewater reuse	Recycle or treat all municipal and industrial wastewater prior to discharge
Water-related disasters	By 2030**, reduce the loss of human life and property from water-related disasters** by 50%, by improving the resilience of nations	By 2030 decrease mortality, and decrease economic losses caused by natural and human-induced water-related disasters	Reduce mortality and economic loss from natural and human-induced water-related disasters	

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