

International Hydrological Programme

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IHP ACTIONS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 6 RELATING TO WATER AND SANITATION

Item 7 of the provisional agenda

Summary

This document provides a brief account of UNESCO's actions through IHP to support Member States' efforts to implement and monitor activities related to water and sanitation 2030 Agenda targets.

WATER IN THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

1. In September 2015, the General Assembly of the United Nations (UNGA) adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, an ambitious “plan of action for people, planet and prosperity”, with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs; <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>) and 169 targets.

2. The SDGs include a dedicated goal on water and sanitation (SDG 6; <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg6>) that sets out to “ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”. SDG 6 expands the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) focus on drinking water and basic sanitation to now cover the entire water cycle, including the management of water, wastewater and ecosystem resources. With water at the very core of sustainable development, SDG 6 does not only have strong linkages to all of the other SDGs, but also the ability to underpin them: achieving SDG 6 would in fact pave the way towards achieving much of the 2030 Agenda.

3. SDG 6 contains six targets on outcomes across the entire water cycle, and two targets on the means of implementing the outcome targets:

- Targets 6.1 and 6.2 build on the MDG targets on drinking water and basic sanitation (known as WASH), providing continuity while expanding their scope and refining definitions.
- Targets 6.3 to 6.6 address the broader water context that was not explicitly included in the MDG framework, but whose importance was acknowledged at the Rio+20 Conference, such as water quality and wastewater management, water scarcity and water use efficiency, integrated water resources management, and the protection and restoration of water-related ecosystems.

4. UN-Water established in 2014 an Inter-Agency Initiative “Integrated Monitoring of Water and Sanitation Related SDG Targets” (GEMI) to respond to the monitoring needs of SDG 6 and in particular targets 6.3 to 6.6, 6.a. and 6.b. UNESCO-IHP is an active leader in the implementation of the initiative and a co-custodian agency for indicator 6.5.2 (see below), and in line with the implementation of IHP Council Resolution XXII-7 that calls the IHP Secretariat to provide support to Member States in relation with SDG 6 and related goals

5. Targets 6.a and 6.b acknowledge the importance of an enabling environment, addressing the means of implementation and aiming for international cooperation, capacity-building and the participation of local communities in water and sanitation management. Custodian agencies of 6.a are the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nation Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

6. Among other SDG targets of direct relevance to the IHP are: 11.5 on reduce deaths and losses due to disasters, 13.1 on strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries and 13.2 on improving education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning. Furthermore, IHP also provides contribution to achieve 17.16, by enhancing global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries.

7. The Member State-led “Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal” Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) is responsible for approving an indicator. UNESCO, under the umbrella of the UN-Water Task Force on Agenda 2030, has been highly involved throughout the SDG process, and supports the IAEG-SDGs with regard to SDG 6 by contributing to the identification of the indicators and the development of methodologies and data flows for the calculation of the indicators. In 2017, the global indicator framework has been adopted by the UN General Assembly.

IHP actions towards monitoring of the SDG indicator 6.5.2

8. SDG Target 6.5 calls for countries to implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation, as appropriate. To measure progress on transboundary cooperation in accordance to target 6.5, indicator 6.5.2 was adopted. The indicator is defined as the “percentage of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for transboundary cooperation”.

9. As co-custodian agency, UNESCO-IHP has led the development of the step-by-step methodology to calculate indicator 6.5.2. (<http://ihp-wins.unesco.org/documents/332>), together with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). During the first quarter 2017, UNESCO-IHP and UNECE invited all countries having transboundary basins in their territory to track the progress on transboundary cooperation and to report on their national value of SDG indicator 6.5.2 providing additional information on the status of their transboundary cooperation.

10. Out of 153 countries that share transboundary water systems, 107 countries responded to the invitation sent by UNESCO and UNECE. As custodian agencies, UNESCO and UNECE are reviewing and analyzing the data contained in the national reports and are undertaking continued exchanges with Member States in order to support them in the calculation of the indicator.

11. During the reporting process, countries highlighted the challenges in developing transboundary cooperative arrangements as follows: power asymmetries between countries; fragmentation in national legal, institutional and administrative framework; lack of financial, human and technical capacity; and poor data availability, especially in relation to transboundary aquifers and their delineation.

12. An overview of work-in-progress in the analysis of reports submitted by Member States together with first lessons learnt on the reporting process on SDG 6.5.2 were presented to the Member States participating to ‘The Global workshop for integrated monitoring of SDG 6 on water and sanitation’ (The Hague, Netherlands, 21-23 November 2017), organized in the framework of the GEMI initiative, under the umbrella of UN-Water. These aspects were also discussed in a technical meeting on the template for reporting on SDG indicator 6.5.2 and under the Water Convention (Budapest, Hungary, 16-17 January 2018) co-organized by UNESCO and UNECE.

13. The United Nations Secretary-General will report every 3 years until 2030 on the monitoring of the SDG 6. The results of the first monitoring process will be presented to the United Nations High-Level Political Forum “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies” that will be held in July 2018.

14. UNESCO and UNECE have been requested to report to the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) by 23 February 2018 the country values for the indicator 6.5.2. These data will be recorded in the database of the UNSD.

15. UNESCO and UNECE are also preparing an in-depth report dedicated to indicator 6.5.2, which will provide general information and trends, both on the reporting process and results. The report will reflect the challenges encountered during the first year of monitoring of the indicator and will provide recommendations for possible improvement.

16. It has to be noted that due to the lack of financial resources, it was not possible to organize, in 2017, the meeting with UNESCO's Member States to discuss the methodology of the SDG 6 indicator 6.5.2, as requested by the IHP Bureau at its 55th Session.