

COMMENTS of TURKEY

on the 2nd order draft of the Strategic Plan of the 9th Phase of IHP (IHP-IX 2022-2029)

The 2nd order draft of the Strategic Plan of the 9th Phase of IHP (IHP-IX 2022-2029) has been examined carefully by the relevant Turkish authorities. Turkey's comments are shared hereunder.

General Comments:

- As IHP is an intergovernmental program and the preparation of the Strategic Plan of the 9th Phase a Member States driven process, the final consultation on the draft of the Strategic Plan should be made by MS, after the inputs of other UN organizations.
- The draft text is not clear in terms of topics, objectives and expected results. Additionally, the writing language is not easy to understand. This all makes it difficult to extract the main messages of the draft.
- Priorities in the draft are not adequately linked to Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). For instance, the contribution of IHP to developing countries in solving their key water problems and achieving SDG 6 remains unclear.
- The draft aims at expanding the mandate of IHP such as in relation to transboundary waters, as can be seen in the part concerning the priority area “Water Governance based on science for mitigation, adaptation and resilience” among others. In accordance with its existing mandate, IHP should continue to focus on the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) at the national level, in particular strengthening the capacities of Member States. In relation to transboundary water resources, IHP is the expert UN Agency on “transboundary aquifers”. Within its current mandate, it is not possible for IHP to address water governance as a whole, by also covering transboundary surface waters.
- UNESCO, as an UN Organization, should use the terminology in the field of water in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions. In this context, references regarding the “access to drinking water” (pages 5 and 32) do not correspond to relevant UN terminology, thus, these parts should be revised.
- The concept of “citizen science” in the draft text is obviously not a scientific method for data collection. For UNESCO with a mandate in the field of science, utilization of credible data is a must. It is not clear how UNESCO can verify the data provided by citizens. Thus, before any implementation of this concept, advantages and disadvantages should be discussed thoroughly.

Detailed Comments and Proposals:

- On page 8 paragraph 1, it is stated that “catalyzing international agreements for natural resource issues is difficult to achieve but can benefit from the input of the IHP experience” especially in negotiating water conflicts. UNESCO does not have the mandate to resolve

conflicts in transboundary waters. Therefore, the following part of the related sentence should be deleted from the draft text:

“... especially in transboundary water bodies, comprehensive water management planning, and water conflict negotiations.”

- On page 8 paragraph 3, there is a clear ambition to intervene in the area of conflict mediation. IHP has not a mediator role in water diplomacy, this is far beyond its scientific mandate. In this context, the result numbered 5.6, which is under the "Expected Outputs" on page 36 should be deleted.

- On page 17 paragraph 1.5, there is a reference to *"nature-based solutions"*. A globally agreed definition of this concept does not exist. The nature-based solutions are often regarded as costly and not easy to implement, thus not preferred as an option in different policy areas by decision-makers. Against this background, it is not appropriate to include the said concept into the draft text without having a clear definition of it.

- The expression "unsolved problems in hydrology", i.e. on pages 3, 17 and 18 can not be clearly understood and therefore needs clarification.

- On page 21 paragraph 3, it is stated that ICT innovations and the use of AI-related technologies help conflict resolution and trust building. In this context, more information on current practices and experiences in this area should be provided in order to have more clarity.

- On pages 26, 27, 28 and 29, there are references to “open access database”, “free access to data, especially in transboundary resources” and “global access to data”. Without any doubt, data is the most important tool for sustainable water resources management. However, the collection and sharing of water-related data is a sovereign right of a MS, as it is the case for data concerning other natural resources such as oil and natural gas. It seems not to be possible to establish an international platform for global water data. Additionally, there are different UN agencies collecting water-related data. The work of IHP should complement the work of these other UN agencies, rather than duplicating it.

Considering the institutional and capacity building challenges of developing countries, and accordingly the data gap between developing and developed countries, the comparative advantage of IHP in this field is to support those Member States that need to build their capacities for data collection and assessment.

Against this background, deletion of the following parts from the draft text is requested:

Page 28, last paragraph: *“..., especially in transboundary water resources,...”*

Page 29, paragraph 2: *“Global access to data is fundamentally important for comparative research and decisions in transboundary water resources.”*

- On page 41 paragraph 2, the following part is based on an assumption, thus should be deleted:

"For example, there is a growing recognition that the scope and complexity of water-related challenges extend beyond national and regional boundaries and therefore, cannot be adequately addressed solely by national or even regional policies. This is especially true, as widespread water scarcity and lack of access to water supply and sanitation threaten socio-economic development and national security for countries throughout the world."

- On page 41, under the title of "Water cooperation and diplomacy", the text is formulated as if IHP has a mandate in the field of diplomacy in transboundary waters. This not the case. Therefore it is requested to delete the following parts:

“It is important to strengthen the cooperation and the leadership IHP, as an Intergovernmental Programme provides, with an emphasis on transboundary and groundwater resources based on principles of water cooperation and diplomacy, not only in terms of negotiation and cooperation, but via the concrete mechanisms identified in IHP-IX. In that regards, ...”