

## **International Hydrological Programme**

24<sup>th</sup> Session of the Intergovernmental Council  
(Paris, 28-30 June 2021)

### **IHP AND THE INTERNATIONAL WATER AGENDA INCLUDING ACTIONS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER RELATED INTERNATIONAL AGENDAS**

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

#### Summary

This document provides information of UNESCO's actions through its Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme to support the "International Decade (2018–2028) for Action – Water for Sustainable Development".

**IHP actions in support of the “International Decade (2018–2028) for Action – Water for Sustainable Development” (Agenda sub item 6.1)**

1. In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) unanimously adopted the resolution A/70/L.1, “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, which for the first time included a Goal dedicated to “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”, SDG 6.
2. In December 2016, in an effort to help put a greater focus on water during ten years and in particular on the sustainable development and integrated management of water resources for the achievement of social, economic and environmental objectives and on the implementation and promotion of related programmes and projects, as well as on the furtherance of cooperation and partnership at all levels, UNGA unanimously adopted the resolution “International Decade (2018-2028) for Action – Water for Sustainable Development” (A/RES/71/222). The new Decade commenced on World Water Day 22 March 2018, and will terminate on World Water Day, 22 March 2028.
3. Subsequently to resolution A/RES/73/226 (December 2018), the UNGA decided to organize a Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action to be convened in New York from 22 to 24 March 2023. The Conference shall be preceded by regional and global preparatory meetings, as appropriate, and informed by existing water-related meetings at the regional and global level.
4. On 21 December 2020, the UNGA adopted the resolution A/RES/75/212 “United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028”, to provide guidance and information on the modalities of the Conference. Furthermore, the resolution provides details related to the preparatory process for the Conference, mentioning a high-level symposium on water during the United Nations Ocean Conference hosted by the Government of Portugal; a high-level conference on water supported by Regional Consultations and hosted by the Government of Germany; the organization of the Asia-Pacific Water Summit in April 2022 supported by the Government of Japan and the Ninth World Water Forum (WWF) in March 2022 hosted by the Government of Senegal. Also, Tajikistan will convene a high-level international conference in 2022 in Dushanbe to support an effective preparation for the midterm comprehensive review.
5. The resolution calls upon other Member States to organize meetings intended to feed into the midterm comprehensive review and relevant United Nations bodies, the specialized agencies, the regional commissions and other organizations of the United Nations system, to continue to contribute to the review and implementation of the Decade, including through capacity-building, in order to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
6. UNESCO’s has been contributing to the aforementioned efforts by: co-organizing with Germany and Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Water Dialogue and the Science Forum as part of the preparatory process towards the Bonn International Water Conference 2021; working with the Government of Senegal and African Ministers’ Council on Water (AMCOW), within the framework of Memoranda of Understanding (MoU), to organize pre-conference meetings and other technical sessions leading to the 9<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum and to co-coordinate one of its Themes as well as being part of the International Steering Committee of the Forum; being part of the Advisory Committee and provide programmatic content to the International High-level Conference on the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028, co-organized by the Government of Tajikistan and the United Nations in June 2018 and continue being involved in the preparation of International High-Level Conference in 2022 in Dushanbe to support an effective

preparation for the midterm comprehensive review; supporting the organization of the Asia-Pacific Water Summit.

7. According to the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020, 2.2 and 4.2 billion people around the world still lack safely managed drinking water and sanitation respectively, including 785 million without basic drinking water and 2 billion who were without basic sanitation.

8. In 2018, SDG 6 on water and sanitation was one of the goals to be reviewed at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). UNESCO's World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) coordinated on behalf of UN-Water, the SDG 6 Synthesis Report 2018 on Water and Sanitation. This report represented a joint position from the UN family on the global status on SDG 6 and other water-related targets. The report also explores the linkages within SDG 6 targets and the interlinkages between SDG 6 and the other targets and indicators. The report concluded that the world is not on track to achieve the global SDG 6 targets by 2030 at the current rate of progress.

9. To remediate the situation, UN-Water launched in July 2020, the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework to better support countries over the next ten years to accelerate and assist them meet the targets for SDG 6. Coordinated by UN-Water, the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework is a contribution to the Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs by 2030.

10. UNESCO has been designated by UN-Water to co-coordinate, along with UN Department of Social and Economic Affairs (UN DESA) the Framework's accelerator on Capacity Development.

11. UNESCO's IHP Member States at the 56<sup>th</sup> Session of the IHP Bureau have noted that in many countries the critical mass of adequately trained human resources able to study, sustainably manage, and develop freshwater systems is lacking, and considered that in order to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda and successfully conduct the International Decade for Action - Water for Sustainable Development (2018-2028), more funding sources and programmes on Water Education are needed.

12. They further noted that the only indicator (indicator 6.a.1) to monitor progress of SDG Target 6.a that calls to by 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, is based on monitoring the Official Development Assistance (ODA) spending plan. IHP's Member States expressed their concern that SDG Target 6.a would not be fully monitored without the addition of a specific indicator on Water Education, which could contribute to better assess countries capacity to evaluate and manage water resources at the national level.

13. At the 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the Intergovernmental Council of IHP, UNESCO's Member States requested from the IHP Secretariat, via resolution XXIII-8, to start developing a methodology, in cooperation with OECD, WHO, and UNEP, for an effective indicator on water education, in coordination with the UNESCO Water Family, in view of potential submission to the IAEG-SDGs as a new SDG indicator, or as a substantial contribution to the 2030 Agenda

14. UNESCO's IHP is the only UN Programme leading a systematic scientific research on groundwater and four groundwater related flagship initiatives such as GRAPHIC - Groundwater Resources Assessment under the Pressures of Humanity and Climate Change, ISARM - International Shared Aquifer Resources Management, MAR - Managed Aquifer Recharge and WHYMAP - World-wide Hydrogeological Mapping and Assessment Programme. The Programme, further to knowledge development and exchange, has been implementing scientific research on the ground in cooperation with UNDP-GEF, UNEP-GEF, FAO and the World Bank and the financing of donors such as the Global Environment Facility and the Swiss Development Cooperation.

15. UNESCO has been designated as the co-custodian, along with UNECE, to monitor SDG indicator 6.5.2 that tracks the percentage of transboundary basin area within a country that has an operational arrangement for water cooperation.

16. UN-Water has decided that the World Water Development Report (WWDR) in 2022, will be dedicated to groundwater and has requested UNESCO to lead the World Water Day celebrations and the development of the report. Furthermore, UN-Water has requested UNESCO to organize in December 2022 at its Headquarters in Paris a “Groundwater Summit”.

17. Within this framework, UNESCO leads six chapters in WWDR 2022 and contributes to seven, is organizing the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Shared Aquifer Resources Management, ISARM 2021, in December 2021 and planning the Groundwater Summit.

18. There is an opportunity to contribute to strengthening the international recognition of the importance of groundwater and of water science in general, as well as of the critical need to fill the gap of available and required capacities, particularly in developing countries, in view of attaining SDG 6 and other SDGs, inter alia by producing relevant publications and messages to be presented during the UN Water Conference 2023.