

Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme

25th session of the Intergovernmental Council
(Paris, 26-29 April 2022)

IHP INVOLVEMENT IN THE 9TH WORLD WATER FORUM AND OTHER RELEVANT HIGH-LEVEL EVENTS TOWARDS THE 2023 UN CONFERENCE ON WATER

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

Summary

The document presents a summary of IHP's participation in and contribution to important international events and campaigns, including:

- The 9th World Water Forum (Agenda sub-item 5.1)
- Groundwater campaign/year 2022 including the UN Water Summit on Groundwater 2022 (Agenda sub-item 5.2)
- Stockholm World Water Week (Agenda sub-item 5.3)
- Dushanbe Water Process. 2nd High-Level International Conference on International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018-2028 (Agenda sub-item 5.4)

Action expected of the Council:

- The Council may wish to express its views and appreciation on the implementation of each of the Resolutions adopted at the previous session of the IHP Intergovernmental Council.

5. IHP involvement in the 9th World Water Forum and other relevant high-level events towards 2023 UN Conference on Water

The 9th World Water Forum (Agenda sub-item 5.1)

1. The Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP) co-coordinated the 9th World Water Forum (WWForum 9) Action Group 4.E. “Increase water efficiency and sustainable management through science, technology, innovation and education” (with the National Research Agency of France/BRGM) and contributed to Action Group 3B. “Implement transboundary cooperation to foster peace and prevent conflicts” (coordinated by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe UNECE). Additionally, special focus was placed on women’s role and overall gender issues in the water domain through UNESCO WWAP’s Special Session ‘Accelerating Gender Equality in the Water Domain – The Way Forward’, presenting the dedicated Call for Action and action of the associated Multi-Stakeholder Coalition in the field. Overall, UNESCO coordinated and/or participated in 33 events, of which the special celebration of the World Water Day (WWD) and the high-level panel on Groundwater on 22 March (cf. Agenda sub-item 5.2., below), 12 ordinary thematic sessions and special sessions, and 19 sessions at the UNESCO Water Family Pavilion. The sessions attracted an estimated cumulated in-situ audience of over 2500 persons, approximately 40% women and 60% men.

2. The Director-General of UNESCO officially launched the World Water Development Report 2022 (WWDR 2022) during the opening ceremony of WWForum 9, in the presence of five Heads of States and Governments. Published by UNESCO on behalf of the UN agencies and partners and coordinated by the UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP), the theme of WWDR2022 is *Groundwater: making visible the invisible*. Approximately 5000 persons attended the opening ceremony that was live broadcasted on national TV in Senegal and on the video platform YouTube. WWAP and IHP joined forces on the extensive coverage of the WWDR2022 launch, the WWD celebration, media and social media coverage of the UNESCO’s presence at WWForum9 (more details in IHP-IC/XXV/Ref. 3).

3. The large UNESCO Water Family Pavilion at the Forum hosted an exhibition on the Organization’s work on water, including on the WWDR 2022, on this year’s groundwater campaign for World Water Day (with UN-Water) and beyond. The Pavilion also hosted the aforementioned 19 side events with the members of the Water Family, most of which in hybrid modality; educational and capacity development actions targeting children (six primary school classes) and youth, supported by the UNESCO Field Office Dakar, the University Cheikh Anta Diop of Dakar, Senegal, and the Global Water Museums Network. At the Pavilion, UNESCO and its partners disseminated several hundred printed and digital publications and communication materials to at least 2000 visitors.

Groundwater campaign/year 2022 including the UN-Water Summit on Groundwater 2022 (Agenda sub-item 5.2)

4. In 2019, UN-Water chose ‘Groundwater’ as the theme for the 2022 World Water Day (WWD) campaign and UNESCO and IGRAC were designated as responsible of the coordination of a UN-Water Task Force dedicated to this celebration. In 2021, with the aim to amplify the depth of the knowledge and actions on groundwater, it was decided that World Toilet Day 2022 would also be celebrated around this theme. The campaign, which will remain active during all the year 2022 under the theme “Groundwater: making the invisible visible”, will raise awareness on this hidden resource.

5. The 9th World Water Forum held 21-26 March 2022 in Dakar, Senegal was the occasion to highlight the topic with a diversified programme. UNESCO's Director-General launched the UN WWDR 2022, production of which is coordinated by UNESCO WWAP, by offering a copy of the Report to the President of the Republic of Senegal on behalf of UN-WATER at the opening plenary of the Forum. The celebration of WWD organized by UNESCO and the International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre (IGRAC), on behalf of UN-Water, included three events. A Plenary session as the occasion to present key findings of WWDR 2022 in further detail and to hold a "Pass the groundwater baton ceremony", from the World Water Day Task Force to the World Water Council, aimed at sustaining attention to groundwater in future editions of the World Water Forum. It was also the occasion for UNESCO to launch the Groundwater Youth Network. A High-Level Panel on Groundwater that examined how groundwater offers a potential pathway to sustain human activities and ecosystems health, with a particular focus on Africa and SIDS. Finally, a special session introduced the Groundwater Catalogue, a tool compiling management and governance tools, measures and instruments that will assist policy makers in exploring and finding suitable solutions for complex groundwater issues. As a first outcome, the Dakar Declaration of the WWForum9 includes a reference to the management of transboundary aquifers.

6. During the year 2022, UNESCO IHP will organize or contribute to other groundwater-related events. This is the case of the "Groundwater, Key to Sustainable Development Goals" International Conference, to be held in Paris in May 2022, and the special event on "Transboundary Aquifers: Making visible the progress" foreseen to take place ahead of the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly, considering that the Legal Committee will include in its agenda the item of "The law of transboundary Aquifers".

7. Consideration of groundwater will also be included in water global events such as the Dushanbe High Level Conference to be held in June 2022.

8. The campaign "Groundwater: making the invisible visible" will culminate with the UN-Water Summit on Groundwater 2022, that will take place from 7 to 8 December 2022 at UNESCO HQs in Paris, with a Pre-summit on the 6 December dedicated to side-events. The Summit is tentatively planned as a hybrid meeting with the most possible on-site presence.

9. All events of the year, organized by UNESCO IHP and IGRAC on behalf of UN-Water Task Force are aimed at raising awareness of groundwater and placing it high on the international agendas during 2022 and beyond, in particular to support a specific focus on groundwater during the 2023 United Nations Water Conference.

10. The UNESCO website <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/groundwater-making-invisible-visible-2022-and-beyond> is available and will present information on the 2022 campaign.

11. WWDR 2022 (<https://www.unesco.org/reports/wwdr/2022/en>) received extensive coverage in Tier 1 newspapers and news outlets including The Guardian, Agence France Press, Le Monde, Reuters, Le Figaro, France Info, Libération, EFE and La Repubblica. During the WWForum 9, close to 1000 copies of WWDR, its executive summary and compilation of facts&figures distributed through UNESCO stand. Similarly, WWAP sent the Report to WWD activities organized by partners (i.e. UN-Water Members and Partners, UNESCO Field Offices, national institutions etc.) around the world. UNESCO WWAP will continue promoting the Report throughout the year on various platforms (for example at the EU parliament).

12. French and Italian translations of the WWDR 2022 are available. Later this this year, Spanish and early next year, Chinese editions of the Report will be released thanks to collaboration with donors.

Stockholm World Water Week (Agenda sub-item 5.3)

13. UNESCO is a Key Collaborating Partner of the Stockholm World Water Week (WWW) 2022. This implies that UNESCO is a member of the Scientific Programme Committee (SPC), that sets up of the scientific programme of the Seminars of the current year week and provides advise on the topic and structure of the WWW 2023

14. The theme of the WWW 2022 is “Seeing the unseen: the value of water” and includes therefore the consideration of groundwater in its 8 seminars, resonating with the UN World Water Day 2022 campaign “Groundwater: making the invisible visible”.

15. As member of the SPC, UNESCO is contributing to the setting up of the programme of the Seminar “Water as a driver for cooperation and peace”. In addition, UNESCO-IHP is the co-convenor of the Seminar “Using science to inform water governance”. Seminars will be organized in two parts: an on-line session and two on-site (in person) sessions to be held in Stockholm.

16. WWAP will organize two sessions one focusing on policy messages and findings of UN WWDR2022 “Groundwater: Making the invisible visible”. The second session will focus on gender focused activities, notably the ‘*Call for Action to Accelerate Gender Equality in the Water Domain*’ initiative (<https://en.unesco.org/news/call-action-accelerate-gender-equality-water-domain>) which was globally launched by WWAP last year

17. Proposals for ordinary sessions from all sections of IHP and also by WWAP were submitted to the WWW organizers before the deadline and the list of accepted sessions will be known later this year.

Dushanbe Water Process. 2nd High-Level International Conference on International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028 (Agenda sub-item 5.4)

18. The Second Dushanbe Water Action Decade Conference is meant to be a platform for soliciting and consolidating inputs in preparation of the 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 in 2023 in New York and will feed the upcoming UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

19. UNESCO will have a key role in the development of the Dushanbe Conference, it will participate as the co-convenor for two panels: “Transboundary water cooperation for Economic Growth” and “Sustainability and Promoting Science-Based Water Solutions, Tools and Technology”. UNESCO will also be the co-convenor for the Water and Mountains Towards Sustainable Development Forum.

20. A total of 11 panels during the Dushanbe Conference will have the contribution of UNESCO: Increasing water-health nexus for responding to the challenges of the post-COVID world; Accelerating access to safe WASH conditions, leaving no one behind; Promoting IWRM, Water Efficiency and Valuing Water; Accelerating the water-energy-food nexus in post-Covid recovery; Promoting Nature-Based Water Solutions, Water Quality and Ecosystems; Resilient Infrastructure and Disaster Risk Reduction; Water Resources and Climate: Reinforcing the Interlinkages; Improving Knowledge, Education and Communication; Moving out of the Water Box and Promoting Integration at All Levels.

21. The event will take place between 6 and 9 June 2022. All Forums and Panels convened and to which UNESCO contributed are meant to also address the SDG6 Global Acceleration Framework and Water Action Decade. Further specifications for the panels will be defined by the Terms of Reference prepared by the Dushanbe Conference Secretariat.