

International Hydrological Programme

23rd session of the Intergovernmental Council
(Paris, 11-15 June 2018)

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS AT UNESCO

Sub-items 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.7 of the provisional agenda

Summary

This document summarizes several institutional and programmatic issues of relevance to IHP since the 22nd session of the IHP Council, in particular:

1. IHP and the International Water Agenda
2. The consultation on the update of Statutes and Rules of Procedure of IHP's IGC
3. The report on IHP Special Account
4. The work of the Communication and Outreach Committee on its Terms of Reference

Actions expected by the Council:

On **sub-item 4.2.**, the Council may wish to request the Secretariat to:

- Include a political session at Ministerial level during Council sessions;
- Develop an information note on UNESCO's contributions to water issues and share this note with their Members States' permanent delegations in New York;
- Request to UNESCO Members States to keep their UN mission regularly informed on the activities and achievements of the UNESCO Water Family at the global, regional and local levels;
- Raise IHP's profile in New York by organizing sessions during high level events with the support of PDs and the participation of UNESCO Category 2 Centres and Chairs;
- Analyse how to reflect the current demands expressed by Member States during the discussion of the new global water architecture in the Statutes and Rules of Procedure of IHP.

On **sub-item 4.3**, the Council may wish to

- debate on the documents prepared by the Working Group on the Statutes and Rules of Procedure working group (WG) and decide to adopt them requesting the Secretariat to take the necessary actions for their approval by the 206th Executive Board and 40th General Conference. Alternatively, the Council may wish to provide guidance for the documents' improvement and request the Secretariat to continue facilitating the discussions.

On **sub-item 4.4**, the Council may wish to

- take note of the establishment of the IHP special account by the secretariat and encourage Member States to contribute to it.

On **sub-item 4.7**, the Council may wish to

- consider and decide upon the adoption of the updated Terms of Reference of the IHP Communication and Outreach Committee and encourage Member States to contribute actively to the Committee's work.

IHP AND THE INTERNATIONAL WATER AGENDA (Agenda sub-item 4.2)

1. The final report of the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation (UNSGAB) of November 2015 proposes, inter alia, the establishment of a **UN Intergovernmental Committee on Water and Sanitation and of a UN Scientific and Practice Panel on Water and Sanitation**; it further proposes the strengthening of UN-Water to play its role as a Secretariat to the aforementioned new bodies.

2. Based on UNSGAB's proposal, several countries, among them Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, The Netherlands and Switzerland, have promoted "An initiative for a UN Intergovernmental Body on Water" and are advocating the creation of such a body to: a) motivate follow-up and review of the implementation of all water related SDGs and targets; and to b) provide key thematic inputs to the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) for Sustainable Development. The envisaged new UN institution on water should be supported by a secretariat and be linked to ECOSOC¹. It should have, as well, minimal implications for the UN budget.

3. These efforts resulted in the inclusion of article 12 in the UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution 71/222 ([A/RES/71/222](#)) of December 2016 on the "International Decade for Action, Water for Sustainable Development 2018-2028". This article called for a working-level dialogue to improve the integration and coordination of the UN's actions towards the water-related goals and targets supported by the sustainable development pillars, with particular emphasis on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Co-Moderators appointed for this dialogue by the President of UNGA were H.E. Ms Katalin Bogay, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Hungary and Mr Lukmon Isomatov, Head of Department of External Economic Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan.

4. The main reason advanced for the suggestion to create a new water institution and the establishment of the working-level dialogue, was that the global water governance structure was seen as highly fragmented and missing an intergovernmental body dedicated to water. The working-level dialogues took place to facilitate Member States' discussions and help them to decide on the future setting of the institutional water architecture at a global level.

5. Two dialogues took place in New York (22 March and 30 May 2017). During the discussions, concerns of duplication and not considering existing mechanisms and agreements, of financial and administrative costs, creation of a water silo, dangers in resorting to one-size-fits-all approaches were voiced. At the end of the second dialogue, there was no follow-up request for any new structure nor any mandate for the continuation of the discussions. However, there was a consensus on the need for further improving the coordination of the UN System in water affairs. Member States considered that this could be done either by strengthening what already exists or by creating something new (a mechanism including the possible establishment of a new UN agency). Although there has not been a continuation on the dialogues, the establishment of a new body or at least of a platform is still being pursued through different international fora. However, there is no clarity on what such a mechanism would include.

¹ ECOSOC, one of the six main organs of the United Nations established by the UN Charter in 1946, is the principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations and serves as the central mechanism for the activities of the United Nations system and its specialized agencies. ECOSOC supervises the subsidiary and expert bodies in the economic, social and environmental fields, as well as for implementation of the internationally agreed development goals.

6. At both dialogue sessions, UNESCO was able to convey messages informing the participants, that an Intergovernmental platform exists in the form of IHP, the International Hydrological Programme of UNESCO, and that IHP is an active member of UN-Water (see document IHP/IC-XXIII Inf. 7 on relations with UN agencies, IGOs and NGOs)

7. At the beginning of 2018, UN-Water requested an external evaluation in an effort to optimize its operations and to be placed in a position to provide the proposed new platform. However, UN-Water is an internal UN coordinating mechanism with no intergovernmental structure nor own legal personality within the UN system and has limited staff. Thus, such an effort would require substantial resources and changing of mandates, which could duplicate mandates of other UN Agencies and Organizations, while the demand for better coordination would still remain.

8. In particular, UN-Water is the United Nations inter-agency coordination mechanism for all freshwater related matters, including sanitation. It is composed of thirty-one members² and thirty-four partners³ and it was set up by the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination in 2003. After being in New York, the UN-Water Secretariat was recently moved to Switzerland and hosted at WMO premises. It is not a legal entity within the UN system and its Secretariat comprises less than 3/4 UN staff members under UNDESA. UN Water is supported financially by voluntary contributions of external agencies that wish to support the implementation of UN-Water's work, mainly international development agencies and ministries from Region I countries. Donor countries are not equivalent to Country Membership, nor to UN-Water partners, according to the current definition of Members at UN-Water (<http://www.unwater.org/about-unwater>).

9. In the aforementioned context, it is important to recall and analyse IHP's positioning in the wider international context. The International Hydrological Programme (IHP) was created forty-three years ago, considering the outcomes of the 1st International Hydrological Decade. UNESCO Member States decided to create it as the first Intergovernmental Programme on Water, to address worldwide water challenges. Currently, IHP remains still the only intergovernmental programme of the UN system on water devoted to water research, water resources management, education and capacity development. It has a membership of 168 countries, 70% of which are represented by Ministries and 30% by academics/researchers.

10. Furthermore, UNESCO's World Water Assessment Programme, has demonstrated clearly the application at a global level, of a "UN delivering as one" activity. Indeed, it has shown, since its inception at UNESCO, the Organization's ability to coordinate 31 members of UN-Water and 38 other partners, to produce the United Nations World Water Development Report (WWDR) publication. The report promotes collaborative work of all agencies and many other water stakeholders, while delivering a single product under the umbrella of UN-Water. Furthermore, WWAP is currently chairing the UN-Water task force whose role is to develop the "Synthesis Report", a comprehensive report on the state of the implementation of SDG 6 for UN-Water's input to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in July 2018.

² UN agencies, programmes and other UN entities dealing with water-related issues, including sanitation and natural disasters are Members of UN-Water.

³ International organizations, professional unions, associations or other civil-society groups that are actively involved in water, international in structure and membership are Partners of UN-Water. Other UN connected entities such as Special Rapporteurs, panels and advisory boards are Partners with Special Status.

11. UNESCO hosts the secretariat of the SDG EDUCATION Steering Committee (<https://en.unesco.org/education2030-sdg4/SDG-Education2030-Steering-Committee>) that reports the progress of SDG 4 on education to the HLPF.

12. UNESCO thus has an existing Intergovernmental body in the domain of water and a long experience in running a secretariat for such a mechanism. Furthermore, it possesses proven skills in coordinating all UN agencies and partners involved in water and sanitation.

13. The Secretariat organized an Information Session on 20 September 2017 to inform Member States on the discussions and request their support in strengthening IHP's visibility with their Delegations in New York. As a result of the information session, Member States were updated on the matter and pledged their support in enhancing IHP's visibility in New York.

14. The 56th session of the IHP Bureau (February 2018) requested the Secretariat to organize a political session at Ministerial level and an open session (open house) for Permanent Delegations during the 23rd Council session and an information meeting for UNESCO Member States to get more acquainted with the contribution of IHP to policy making. The Secretariat, responding to the request is organizing the 1st Science Policy Interface Colloquium on Water, SPIC Water, that will take place on 14 June 2018;

Actions expected by the Council:

The Council may wish to request the Secretariat to:

- a. Include a political session at Ministerial level during Council sessions;**
- b. Develop on a regular basis an information note on UNESCO's contributions to water issues and share this note with their Members States' permanent delegations in New York;**
- c. Request to UNESCO Member States to keep their UN mission regularly informed on the activities and achievements of the UNESCO Water Family at the global, regional and local levels;**
- d. Raise IHP's profile in New York by organizing sessions during high-level events with the support of PDs and the participation of UNESCO Category 2 Centres and Chairs;**
- e. Analyse how to reflect the current demands expressed by member states during the discussion of the new Global Water Architecture in the Statutes and Rules of Procedure of IHP.**

CONSULTATION ON THE UPDATE OF STATUTES AND RULES OF PROCEDURE OF IHP-IGC (Agenda item 4.3)

15. The Statutes of the IHP have been approved by the General Conference of UNESCO at its 18th session and amended at its 20th, 21st, 23rd, 27th and 28th sessions. Subsequently, the Rules of Procedures (RoP) were approved by its Intergovernmental Council at its first session and modified in accordance with the amendment of the Council's Statutes by the General Conference of UNESCO at its 21st, 23rd and 28th sessions. The IHP Council amended article 26 on 'secret ballot' at its 14th session.

16. At its 52nd session (1-2 June 2015), the Bureau stressed the need to update the Statutes and RoP, especially with regards to: 1) the term of office of Bureau members; and 2) mechanisms to ensure that all electoral groups remain represented in the IHP Bureau in

case a Vice-Chairperson ceases to represent a State Member of the Council or is so incapacitated that he/she can no longer hold office. The Bureau proposed its revisions on these matters, proposing an extension of the term of office to four years. The Secretariat was asked to carry out a consistent and in depth consultation process on the proposal for extension of the terms of office of the Bureau members, as well as on introducing the new elements proposed by the Bureau, namely the option to hold IHP statutory meetings outside of UNESCO's Headquarters in Paris.

17. Accordingly to Bureau's request at its 52nd session, the Secretariat conducted in autumn 2015 a survey, in which the vast majority of the Member States recommended: 1) that IHP Bureau members should serve for a two-year noncumulative mandate; 2) that IHP Council and IHP Bureau members do not serve in their personal capacity but that they are assigned the role of the representative of their country and as such, the Member State is responsible to ensure continuity in its representation in the two governing bodies (Legal Affairs of UNESCO confirmed this view); and 3) that IHP Council meetings shall not be held outside UNESCO headquarters in Paris. The outcomes of this first consultation are consultable in the reference document IHP/Bur-LV/Ref1.

18. Following up on the consultation process, the Bureau requested at its 53rd session (19-20 April 2016) that the Secretariat circulate scenarios for improving the RoP of the IHP Intergovernmental Council, and prepare a draft of the revised IHP Statutes and of the RoP. The Bureau's proposal to update the Statutes and RoP was endorsed by IHP's Intergovernmental Council at its 22nd session (13-17 June 2016), by its Resolution XII-1. A consultation process inviting Member States to send their consolidated comments and suggestions on how to update and improve the Statutes and Rules of Procedure of the IHP Council took place from 1 August 2016 to 31 December 2016. At the closing of the consultations, three regional responses were received from Regions I, Va and Vb. Additional to the group response of Region I, that represents 27 countries, five individual responses from Member States were received. Similarly, in Region Va (47 countries) and Vb (19 countries), one individual response per region was received. Five (5) responses were received from Group II, three (3) from Group III and four (4) from Group IV. A summary of the responses is consultable in the reference document [IHP/Bur-LV/Ref. 2](#).

19. The Secretariat synthesized, for ease of comparison, these responses in documents [IHP/Bur-LVI/Ref. 1](#) and [IHP/Bur-LVI/Ref. 2](#), as well as and Member States were asked, in October 2017, to ensure that the Secretariat's rephrasing of the articles mirrored accurately the expressed preferences.

20. The IHP Bureau at its 56th Session (20-22 February 2018) requested the Secretariat to support the work of an informal Working Group consisting of the Permanent Delegations of the Bureau's Member States, aiming to synthesize the input received from the Member States along with results of the work of an open-ended working group on governance. This group worked on the analysis of the procedures and working methods of the governing bodies of UNESCO (established by the General Conference at its 18th session as per [38 C/Resolution 101](#); <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0025/002590/259083e.pdf>). This Working Group met regularly between the 56th session of the Bureau and the 23rd session of the Council, and the outcome is presented in reference document [IHP/IC-XXIII/Ref. 1](#). The Permanent Delegations consulted with their Regional Groups prior to providing the document for the Council's decision.

21. It needs to be noted that one of the Co-Chairs (Hungary) of the open-ended working group on governance, procedures and working methods of the governing bodies of UNESCO is part of the WG of the Permanent Delegations who worked on the amendment of the documents, ensuring thus the uptake of relevant and appropriate recommendation in the proposal.

22. The Bureau further requested that the Secretariat prepare a discussion paper on the modification of IHP's name for the Council's decision, presented in document IHP/IC-XXIII/Ref. 7.

Actions expected by the Council:

The Council may wish to debate on the documents prepared by the Working Group on the Statutes and Rules of Procedure working group (WG) and decide to adopt them and request the Secretariat to take the necessary action for their approval by the 206th Executive Board and 40th General Conference. Alternatively, the Council may wish to provide guidance for the documents' improvement and request the Secretariat to continue facilitating the discussions.

REPORT ON IHP SPECIAL ACCOUNT (AGENDA ITEM 4.4)

23. Resolution XXII-7: "IHP support to Member States for a sound science based implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal No 6 and of water related goals" of the 22nd session of the IGC, requested the IHP Secretariat to establish the draft financial regulations for the special account and to mobilize the UNESCO's Water Family to voluntarily contribute proactively to the implementation and reporting process on SDG 6 targets and those of other water related goals.

24. In addition, the Executive Board, as per Resolution [200 EX/Dec.30](#), requested that the Director-General take all necessary measures to support the establishment of a Special Account for the IHP.

25. Following up to the request the secretariat in close cooperation with the Bureau of Strategic Planning and the Bureau of Financial Management, presented the documents related to the establishment of the account to the Director-General and received her approval in June 2017.

26. Consequently, the establishment of the special account was approved by the 39th session of the General Conference (November 2017) and will enable IHP to receive the financial assistance it needs to meet the demands of Member States, mainly in the field of capacity development in support of Member States and the major initiatives approved under the strategic plan IHP-VIII. The draft financial regulations for the special account are presented in [IHP/IC-XXIII/Ref. 2](#).

27. The Republic of Korea, the Republic of Slovakia and CODIA Member States will be the first contributors to the Special Account. Member States are invited to contribute to the account.

Actions expected by the Council:

The Council may wish to take note of the establishment of the IHP special account by the Secretariat and encourage Member States to contribute to it.

**REPORT OF THE COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE
(agenda sub-item 4.7)**

28. In response to Resolution XXII-3, the Communication and Outreach Committee (CnOC) reviewed and updated Terms of Reference for the Committee jointly with the Secretariat (see IHP/IC-XXIII/Inf.2). They are presented to the 23rd session of IHP Council in

IHP/IC-XXIII/Ref.10. The report of the Communication and Outreach Committee is part of document [IHP/IC-XXIII/Inf.1](#).

Actions expected by the Council:

The Council may wish to consider and decide upon the adoption of the updated Terms of Reference of the IHP Communication and Outreach Committee and encourage Member States to actively contribute to the Committee's work.