

International Hydrological Programme

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

UNESCO'S WATER FAMILY

Items 8.1, 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4 of the provisional agenda

Summary

The UNESCO Water Family pursues the implementation of IHP-VIII and of the strategic goals of UNESCO through its Category 2 Centres (C2Cs) and water-related Chairs, as well as the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP).

In an effort to improve the Category 2 Centres network, a UNESCO Intersectoral Working Group, chaired by IHP, was created to discuss and formulate concrete recommendations to the UNESCO's Senior Management Team (SMT) on how to make the network of C2Cs contribute more efficiently to UNESCO's mandate. To the same end, at the request of the 55th Session of the IHP Bureau, the IHP Secretariat has carried out a mapping of the governance status and activities of water-related Category 2 Centres. In the meantime, three Category 2 Centres/Institutes were established: the African Regional Centre for Ecohydrology (ARCE) in Ethiopia, the Regional Centre on Water Security (CERSHI), Mexico, and former Category 1 Institute, UNESCO-IHE, which became the IHE Delft Institute for Water Education. Two Centres were renewed and their Agreements signed: the International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre (IGRAC) and the Regional Centre on Urban Water Management (RCUWM) in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Asia-Pacific Centre for Ecohydrology (APCE) was approved for renewal. A proposal for the establishment of CIRAT as water-related Category 2 Centre in Brazil is pending the feasibility study. This document also informs of the expressed wish by the Government of the Republic of Colombia to renounce on the establishment of the Regional Centre on Urban Water Management for Latin America and the Caribbean (RCUWM-LAC), in Cali, Republic of Colombia. Finally, a proposal for the establishment of a Regional Experimental Centre for Sanitation Technologies (CERTS) in Uruguay has been approved by the IHP Bureau and is submitted to the present Council session. The number of water-related Chairs and Category 2 Centres increased during the reporting period.

This document provides a brief account of the International Hydrological Programme's (IHP) cooperation with the UNESCO Water Family. It specifically provides a progress report on the following points:

- 8.1 Status and operation of the UNESCO Water Family
- 8.2 Specific actions for the management of Category 2 Centres
- 8.3 World Water Assessment Programme
- 8.4 Proposed centre under the auspices of UNESCO

Status and operation of UNESCO's Water Family (agenda item 8.1)

1. UNESCO works to build the scientific knowledge base to help countries in the sustainable management of their water resources. This is done through its UNESCO Water Family comprising the International Hydrological Programme (IHP), the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP), Category 2 Centres under the auspices of UNESCO and water-related Chairs and UNITWIN Networks, and the IHP National Committees or focal points. UNESCO's Water Family operates as a global network that works together to implement the organization's strategic goals.

2. A current network of 37 established water-related Centres under the auspices of UNESCO (Category 2 Institutes and Centres) has been set up to contribute to the implementation of IHP-VIII at the international and regional level. Since the last Council session, three Category 2 Centres/Institutes were established: the African Regional Centre for Ecohydrology (ARCE) in Ethiopia, signed on 28 October 2017, the former Category 1 Institute, UNESCO-IHE, which became the IHE Delft Institute for Water Education (IHE Delft) on 15 December 2017 and the Regional Centre on Water Security (CERSHI), Mexico, signed on 17 April 2018. Two Centres were approved for renewal and their Agreements signed: the International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre (IGRAC) on 6 December 2016, and the Regional Centre on Urban Water Management (RCUWM) in the Islamic Republic of Iran on 7 May 2018, while the Asia-Pacific Centre for Ecohydrology (APCE) was approved for renewal by the 204th Executive Board Session in April 2018.

3. The International Centre on Water and Transdisciplinary (CIRAT), in the Federative Republic of Brazil, approved by the IHP Council in a special consultation by correspondence on 15 February 2017, is still at the stage of the feasibility study, which is expected to be carried out during the year 2018.

4. The Secretariat received on 6 August 2017 a letter from the Colombian authorities through the Permanent Delegation of Colombia to UNESCO concerning the Regional Centre on Urban Water Management for Latin America and the Caribbean (RCUWM-LAC), informing that the said Centre was "never opened, never in operation" and that the Government renounces its establishment. A related informative document ([204 EX/13 Part II Rev.](#)) was submitted to the 204th session of the UNESCO Executive Board in April 2018.

5. As of the date of the writing of this document, the status of pending signature, renewals and entry into force of existing agreements for Category 2 Centres is presented in detail in the mapping carried out by the IHP Secretariat. This mapping work, presented in document [IHP/IC-XXIII/Ref.6](#), gives details on the following situation:

Out of the 37 Centres:

15 are fully in compliance with UNESCO rules and regulations (41%).

As for the rest:

- Seven are pending signature of their agreement;
- Six are signed but did not yet enter into force;
- Six are under renewal;
- Two are expired;
- One is under closure process.

6. UNESCO's Water Network currently includes also 56 water-related UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN networks managed and reporting directly to the Education sector. Eight new Chairs proposals were approved during this reporting period; UNESCO Chair on

Groundwater arsenic within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, University of Southern Queensland (Australia); UNESCO Chair on South Asia Sustainable Water Resources Management, University of Moratuwa (Sri Lanka); UNESCO Chair on Water, Energy and Disaster Management for Sustainable Development, Kyoto University (Japan); UNESCO Chair on Capacity Building of Meteorology and Hydrology Department, National University of Laos, (Laos); UNESCO Chair on Water and Peace, Universidad Rey Juan Carlos and UNED (Spain); UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Water Security, Florida International University (USA); UNESCO Chair on Sustainability, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (Spain); and, UNESCO Chair on Geoenvironmental Disaster Reduction, Shimane University, (Japan).

7. The first UNESCO Water Chairs Meeting was organized by the UNESCO Chair on Water Resources Management and Culture at the University for Foreigners in Perugia and the IHP Secretariat from 24 to 26 October 2016, and was attended by 13 water chairs amongst the 44 established at the time. The aim of the meeting was to discuss and identify contributions of the Chairs to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, through independent and joint projects, and how the Chairs could increase their contribution to the implementation of IHP VIII for the biennium (2016-2017), as well as the entire phase (2014-2021). The meeting facilitated the definition of mechanisms to increase the cooperation between regional/similarly-themed Chairs, e.g. the possible establishment of an information sharing system among all Water Chairs. Additionally, the meeting enabled dialogue on the concept of the “New Humanism for the XXI Century” in Education, Culture and Science, using interdisciplinarity as a holistic approach to address many of the current issues, including the achievement of water security and peace. At the meeting a web platform provided by the UNESCO Chair on Water Resources Management and Culture (Perugia, Italy) was launched (<https://waterchairrelated.herokuapp.com>) and a Perugia Action Plan was drafted and endorsed.

8. The Secretariat attended the inaugural meeting for the UNESCO Chair on the prevention and sustainable management of geo-hydrological hazards in Firenze, Italy, 27 October 2016, and the launching of the UNESCO Chair in Ecohydrology: water for ecosystems and societies, at the University of Algarve in Faro, Portugal on 24 November 2017.

9. The Sector for Natural Sciences (SC) of UNESCO organized the “First meeting of the UNESCO Chairs in Natural Sciences: for Policy Action towards the 2030 Agenda” from 4 to 7 July 2017 in Geneva, Switzerland. The purpose of the meeting was, among others, to encourage the SC chairs to better align their activities with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The meeting was organized as a part of the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the UNITWIN/UNESCO chairs Programme. 95 chairs attended the conference and 21, out of 48 water-related chairs at the time, attended the meeting. Two parallel sessions were organized on water related issues by the Division of Water Sciences: i) Water resources, climate change and hydrological hazards; and, ii) Transboundary cooperation and water diplomacy. Chairs were as well informed on ways to be better coordinated with IHP Secretariat. However, this remains optional as criteria for chairs to renew are based on the Educations sector vision only.

10. During the Natural Sciences chairs meeting, IHP also organized a brown bag lunch gathering on Water and Gender on 7 July 2017. The outcomes of the first UNESCO Meeting of Water-Related Chairs including the Perugia Action Plan (as the result of the 1st Water Chair meeting in 2016) were presented during the side event. In addition, H.E. Euphrasie Yao, Chair holder, UNESCO Chair in Water, Women and Decision-making (Ivory Coast), shared best practices and lessons learnt from working on water and gender

issues in Ivory Coast. Mr Helmut Habersack, IHP Vice-Chairperson (Group I - Western Europe and North America) and Chair holder of the UNESCO Chair for integrated River Research and Management (Austria), also presented the main outcomes of the 55th Session of the IHP Bureau held in June 2017. This presentation allowed the chairs to get a better understanding of the governance of IHP, be better integrated to the UNESCO water Family and the latest information about the outcomes of the 55th IHP Bureau. The event allowed the chairs to discuss the challenges that they face, propose solutions to address them and explore possibilities of creating partnerships. The participants of the meeting committed to continue using the web platform put in place by the UNESCO Chair on Water Resources Management and Culture (Perugia, Italy).

11. The Geneva Lake Workshop, held in Lausanne, Switzerland, from 7 to 9 March 2018, developed the discussions held in Geneva during the Conference 'Mobilizing UNESCO Chairs in the Natural Sciences for Policy Action towards the 2030 Agenda' (5-7 July 2017) and on the 'Geneva Milestone' outcome document endorsed on that occasion. The Workshop was the occasion to build the UNESCO Chairs' capacities on how to communicate science and all activities linked to the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda to the general public / international organizations / Members States, via the development of a communication and knowledge-sharing platform or other communication tools.

12. In agreement with the Education sector, the IHP Secretariat modified the current reporting template to include information on SDGs and IHP thematic areas in alignment to the template used for the C2Cs and sent to the water-related Chairs for their reporting.

Specific actions for the management of Category 2 Centres (agenda item 8.2)

13. At the request of the Director-General, the Internal Oversight Service (IOS) undertook in April 2017 an audit of the management framework for UNESCO's category 2 institutes and centres ([IOS/AUD/2017/04](#)). The audit objective was to establish a current profile of the operational status of category 2 institutes/centres, and assess the design and implementation of the management framework for these partnerships since the last 2011 IOS' Review. An Intersectoral Working Group (ISWG) on Category 2 Centres at UNESCO, chaired by IHP, was established in June 2017. It was decided that the mission of this working group is to discuss and formulate concrete recommendations to the UNESCO's Senior Management Team (SMT) on how to make the network of Category 2 Centres work more efficiently, possibly by limiting their number.

14. The ISWG reiterated difficulties already highlighted in the IOS report 2017, concerning the status of existing Centres, but also expressed concern on the treatment of future proposals. The document [204 EX/12](#) was prepared and submitted to the 204th Session of the UNESCO Executive Board. This document is proposing a clear action plan, with a view of improving the management of the Centres, on the basis of the recommendations formulated by IOS. A complete review of all Category 2 Centres at UNESCO will be carried out by the ISWG, with the proposal of case-by-case solutions, as well as a revision of the integrated comprehensive strategy for Category 2 Centres and Institutes.

15. In the same context, following the 55th session of the IHP Bureau, and at the request of the Bureau, the Secretariat has prepared the mapping presented in document [IHP/IC-XXIII/Ref.6](#). This mapping goes beyond the request made to C2Cs at UNESCO level. In order to carry out this significant mapping work, the IHP Secretariat has launched several rounds of consultations: On 18 September 2017, the Secretariat consulted all concerned Permanent Delegations on the status of their unaligned water-related C2C. Amongst the 15 Permanent Delegations contacted (concerning 18 Centres), 7 have responded. Finally, on 9 March 2018, all Category 2 Centres were contacted in order to

provide the Secretariat with the requested information necessary to the presentation of a full mapping table, disclosing their governance and operational status, including contributions to the Programme: two reminders were made on this request, on 6 April and 4-5 May 2018. This mapping table is revealing a clear contrast between the governance status of many centres, compared to their operability from an IHP perspective.

World Water Assessment Programme (agenda item 8.3)

16. The 2015 external evaluation on WWAP registered the flagship status of the WWDR and concluded that the Report is one of the most visible publications of UNESCO and an authoritative source of information on freshwater.

17. The 2018 edition of the World Water Development Report (WWDR2018) was launched on 19 March during a special session that was held on the first day of the 8th World Water Forum, in Brasilia, Brazil. The Report, titled 'Nature-based solutions for water', expands on how nature-based solutions can help addressing many of the world's water challenges (and move beyond business-as-usual) while simultaneously delivering additional benefits vital to all aspects of sustainable development. Ms Audrey Azoulay, the Director-General of UNESCO, launched the WWDR2018 accompanied by Mr Joakim Harlin, Vice Chair of UN-Water and Mr Erik Solheim, Executive Director of UN Environment. The technical presentation focused on the main findings and recommendations of the 2018 Report and drew attention to how adopting nature-based solutions can contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Existing grey infrastructure can be best complemented by "green" infrastructure but there is currently a lack of guidance as to how grey and green infrastructure approaches can be integrated. The special session also included a panel discussion on "Learning from and working with nature: achieving water security through ecosystem-based solutions". In parallel to the main launch event, WWAP collaborated with many UNESCO Field Offices and international partners and institutes for organization of approximately 20 complementary events to present the WWDR2018 in different regions of the world.

18. There is a considerable gap in terms of sex-disaggregated data in the water domain. WWAP developed a toolkit including the methodology for sex-disaggregated data collection and gender-sensitive indicators. The Toolkit is tested with success in Latin America, Africa and Central Asia as one of the pillars of the Groundwater Resources Governance in Transboundary Aquifers (GGRETA) project implemented by IHP. Furthermore, the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) included the WWAP Toolkit in the Guidelines for Gender and Climate Change of the UNFCCC.

19. The overall policy impact of the specific target/indicator oriented reports is likely to be limited and WWAP introduced the idea to produce a UN-Water SDG 6 Synthesis Report that will add value by evaluating and synthesizing the detailed target/indicator reports, examining the interlinkages between SDG 6 in light of the whole 2030 Agenda, and generating main policy recommendations to accelerate achieving SDG 6.

20. UN-Water adopted this recommendation and gave the responsibility to WWAP to coordinate the UN-Water Task Force that will produce the SDG 6 Synthesis Report 2018 (SR). The members of the Task Force are CEO Water Mandate, Food and Agriculture Organization, International Labour Organization, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, United Nations Environment Programme, UNESCO, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, United Nations University, UN-Water Technical Advisory Unit (TAU), World Health Organization, World

Meteorological Organization and the World Bank Group. This Report is scheduled for June 2018, in time to be UN-Water's main input for the meeting of High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development in July 2018 during which the HLPF will be conducting its first in-depth review of SDG 6. The Report will enable the United Nations to speak with one voice on SDG 6.

21. WWAP, in cooperation with the UN-Water TAU, raised the funds for the production of the Report. The donors are the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment of The Netherlands and Sweden (SIDA). Furthermore, core funds from the Government of Italy (WWAP) are utilized.

Proposed centre under the auspices of UNESCO (agenda item 8.4)

22. On 12 April 2018, the Government of Uruguay through its Permanent Delegation to UNESCO submitted a proposal to the Director-General and the Secretary of IHP for the establishment of a "Regional Experimental Center for Sanitation Technologies" (CERTS) as a category 2 centre under the auspices of UNESCO.

23. The Centre will work on the development of projects in three strategic areas related to water and sanitation: i) research and knowledge; ii) technology transfer, training capacities and human resources and iii) coordination of inter-institutional capacities.

24. The Secretariat organized a special electronic consultation of the Bureau to decide whether the proposal could be presented at the 23rd IHP Council. The majority of the members of the IHP Bureau agreed to present it to the consideration of the Council.

25. The proposal of the establishment of this centre is further explained in documents IHP/IC-XXIII/9 and [IHP/IC-XXIII/Ref. 8](#).