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À : Hydrology Programme <ihp@unesco.org>

Cc : Nair-bedouelle, Shamila; Amani, Abou; Makarigakis, Alexandros K.; Otte, Alexander; Hartwig Kremer [Addresses deleted by the IHP Secretariat for reasons of data protection]

Objet : RE: EN/FR Consultation on the Strategic Plan for the Ninth Phase of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (2022-2029)

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Dear UNESCO IHP Secretariat,

As UNEP's representatives to UN-Water we thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2nd order draft of the Strategic Plan of UNESCO IHP-IX .

While we acknowledge that organisations like UNESCO and its IHP programme need to cover a broad spectrum of SDG 6 related themes, the draft strategic plan would greatly benefit from a more stringent and focused approach, which would make more explicit links to the role and mandate of UNESCO IHP.

To be frank, the current document portrays UNESCO IHP IX as advancing SDG 6 in and by itself, broadening its scope of work into areas beyond science and education including implementation, water governance, advancing IWRM, advocacy, policy development etc. In doing so UNESCO-IHP IX would move into the areas of operation than many other UN and non-UN organisations are mandated to work on.

UNESCO-IHP has a clear mandate and role to play as a “multi-disciplinary programme, aimed at advancing hydrological knowledge through supporting scientific research and education programmes.” The strategy needs to better focus on supporting scientific research and education programmes. Content wise the current draft come across as an endless listing of somewhat superficial concepts to address water issues far beyond hydrology, education and science and it lacks concrete steps and actions for UNESCO-IHP to undertake. Strikingly, the strategy does not make any mention or reference to the wealth of country reporting on SDG 6 indicators to date, which would have provided excellent guidance on in-country needs for science and education in the field of hydrology.

The strategic plan is remarkably silent about other ongoing and related initiatives – including custodian roles of UN-Water members for SDG 6 indicators, initiatives such as the WWQA and other assessments, locally active organizations etc. We advise that the strategic plan elaborates on partnerships and co benefits. As it is currently written the value chain is perceived as one directional – to implement IHP not IHP serving partners and beneficiaries towards generating collective value.

More detailed comments are found in the “sticky notes” at specific locations in the attached document.

With kind regards

Joakim Harlin and Hartwig Kremer
UNEP