

# A SUSTAINABLE WORLD IS A WATER-SECURE WORLD

## THE BUDAPEST WATER SUMMIT STATEMENT

8-11 October 2013, Budapest, Hungary

The Budapest Water Summit was initiated at the United Nations Conference for Sustainable Development by the Hungarian Government with the principal objective to take stock of the various developments in preparing the water-related goal for the post-2015 development agenda. The Budapest Water Summit Statement reflects the outcomes of the thematic sessions and the deliberations of the civil society, science, youth and business fora that took place during the Summit.

1. **Water is fundamental.** Water has brought civilizations livelihood, sustenance and well-being. Water has been a central factor shaping both earth system history and human history. Therefore, water carries the collective memory of humanity. Water has been instrumental in our past development. It is equally *the* key to our future development, and safeguarding our life support on Earth, which is increasingly under pressure from global changes.
2. **Water unites.** It unites people among and across generations, nations and cultures and is a source of cooperation. However, its uneven temporal and spatial distribution worldwide, in addition to numerous challenges such as demographic and climatic changes, renders water management essential and critical as our entry point for sustainable development and poverty eradication. All basic planetary and ecosystem functions will be endangered if water is not governed properly, jeopardizing the human right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation.
3. **Water connects.** Tapping the power of water for our era to meet the water challenge requires new, innovative policy approaches, both within the water sector and in concert with other social and economic sectors, especially, health, food and energy. Human-centered development, based on human rights approaches, and environmental stewardship, including preserving the function of ecosystems and protecting biodiversity must reinforce any modern paradigm of water management.
4. **Water and ecosystems.** Safeguarding and rehabilitating ecosystems in 21<sup>st</sup> Century water resources development approaches will be an important shift towards sustainability. Unintended impacts to ecosystems in the name of water uses are contrary to the aspirations of a sustainable water future.
5. **A dedicated water goal.** To achieve the agreed upon Millennium Development Goal targets related to water and sanitation and to move towards the new set of Sustainable Development Goals, as well as to create new approaches to water management, the Budapest Water Summit, in consideration of the many ideas and discussions preceding to and over the course of the Summit preparation process, recommends the development of a dedicated and comprehensive Sustainable Development Goal on Water, a “Water-Secure World” while clearly addressing the inter-linkages to other Sustainable Development Goals.



This proposal is supported by additional outcome policy recommendations presented in the *Annex I* of this document. This Goal would be accompanied by SMART(ER)<sup>1</sup> targets addressing the following main water-related issues:

- a) Achieve universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation: Achieve universal access to sustainable and safe drinking water as well as gender-responsive sanitation and hygiene services as part of human rights in all households, schools, health facilities, workplaces and emergency contexts including refugee camps;
  - b) Improve integrated and cross-sectoral approaches to water resources management: Manage freshwater resources in an integrated way at the basin level, including in transboundary river basins and aquifers, so to maximise benefits across sectors in an equitable, efficient and sustainable way, foster food and energy security, protect ecosystems and enhance the services they provide, and increase water productivity;
  - c) Reduce pollution and increase collection, treatment and re-use of water: Protect human health and the environment from municipal, agricultural and industrial water pollution, by reducing pollution, collecting and treating wastewaters and maximising their re-use; and
  - d) Increase resilience against the water-related impacts of global changes: Improve resilience to water-related disasters by enhancing preparedness against, and adaptation capabilities to, the impacts of on-going and future global changes such as growing water insecurity, climate change, population growth, land use change and the frequency of natural extreme hydrological events, through wise use and development of resilient water infrastructure and appropriate non-structural measures and timely exchange of information. Reduce impact on access to water and sanitation of man-made or natural disasters through risk reduction programs.
6. **Capacity development for water.** Lessons of the water and sanitation related Millennium Development Goals show the critical need for a sound scientific underpinning, socio-economic, institutional, technical, financial and engineering capacity. To support the development of broader and more inclusive Sustainable Development Goals provides an even greater challenge to sciences. In this context, the lack of trained professionals and delivery capacities is a recognized limitation toward attaining meaningful goals.
7. **A robust intergovernmental institutional mechanism.** The critical nature of water for human populations and the planet, conditioning any future sustainable development agenda, requires a robust intergovernmental process to regularly monitor, review and assess progress of the implementation of the future water goal. It is recommended that appropriate institutional mechanisms are soon put in place to regularly review and assess progress in an integrated manner.

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<sup>1</sup> Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound (Evaluated and Re-evaluated)



## Annex I

### **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BUDAPEST WATER SUMMIT TO REINFORCE A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL ON WATER**

1. The Budapest Water Summit was driven by five important issues for robust water policy approaches:
  - a. Well defined, globally, regionally and nationally meaningful SMART(ER) targets to ensure universal and sustainable access to safe water and sanitation and hygiene;
  - b. Improved methods of integrating technical, environmental, social and political aspects into water, including waste water, management;
  - c. Good and effective water governance, that applies the principles of transparency, accountability, access to information, participation and cooperation, relevant for any political system, with due consideration of stakeholder engagement, integrity and local circumstances when developing and implementing policies;
  - d. Effective incentives for using water to create and support green economies, ensuring prioritization of water resource management in national plans;
  - e. New micro and macro, private, public and innovative funding mechanisms to finance the implementation of (a) through (d) and for the management of water within a sustainable development framework.

#### **CREATING SMART(ER) TARGETS TO ENSURE UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO SAFE, GENDER-RESPONSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE WATER AND SANITATION AND HYGIENE**

2. Access to sustainable, gender-responsive safe drinking water and sanitation are fundamental to health, well-being and poverty eradication. Commitments are required at global, regional and national levels to accelerate the achievement of universal access and the progressive realization of the human right to safe drinking water and basic sanitation that are essential for dignified human life. Narrowing the water and sanitation deficiency gap will protect and improve human health, advance gender equality and human dignity, create education and development opportunities, especially for vulnerable groups, and facilitate economic development and poverty reduction.
3. It is imperative to achieve universal sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation services in all homes, schools, health centres, workplaces and in places of humanitarian assistance such as emergency contexts, post-conflict situations and refugee camps. The sustainability and quality of drinking water and sanitation services must be improved for all while giving priority to the most vulnerable, pursuing non-discrimination, affordability, addressing inequalities and increasing equity. This involves on-site training of the local population during the initial planning, construction and operation phases as well as using locally sourced materials and knowledge for lasting water and sanitation solutions.
4. Drinking water supply and sanitation should be fully integrated into water resources management policies with the recognition that water use and sanitation not only consume the resource, but also pollute water and, therefore, negatively influence the water cycle as a whole, if countermeasures are not applied.
5. Hygiene is often overlooked in the water and sanitation discourse. It is therefore important to identify realistic, monitorable and enforceable approaches that improve hygiene especially for women and adolescent girls.
6. The protection of human and ecosystem health from inadequate sanitation as well as municipal, agricultural and industrial pollution requires precaution, prevention, implementation and rehabilitation. The collection and treatment of wastewater and solid waste as well as closing material cycles to maximize their re-use in order to reduce environmental pollution is a prerequisite for prevention of water system deterioration that is and will continue to be a more cost-effective approach than post-damage remediation.
7. To achieve these objectives new partnerships, non-conventional approaches to old and new technologies and behavioural dimensions of drinking water and sanitation must be promoted and developed. Successful approaches to ensure access to poor and disadvantaged populations should be identified. This should include appropriate financing mechanisms and funding that are accessible for local actors for operation and maintenance, minimisation of hurdle costs related to accessing new or improved facilities



and services, improved accountability and transparency among sector actors, encouragement of utilities to extend coverage and improve quality of services, while addressing rural backlog and urban population growth.

### **INTEGRATED CONSIDERATION OF WATER WITHIN ITS MANAGEMENT CONTEXT AND IN ALL BASIC SERVICES SECTORS**

8. The connective power of water, whether surface waters or groundwater, should be reflected in its management at the basin level. Reconciling water uses among competing needs is a political as well as technical process. Different stakeholders often claim the same water. Water, however, is the vehicle that connects social demands and can encourage new and productive political, technical and social solutions to meet them. Due to population growth and economic development, such as for growing energy needs, food production and changes in diet, water demand is growing fast. What have been perceived as regional or local scarcity and resource allocation problems are already accumulating to the global scale. Hence, water resources management should avoid spatial and thematic fragmentation and instead promote consolidation and integration. Beyond the water domain, full integration must involve other sectors relying on water. A cross-sectoral or "Nexus" perspective integrating water, energy, agriculture and other sectors, as well as ecosystems, should be applied. In this case trade-offs will be identified, synergies seized and resources used more efficiently. This could also be achieved by fostering links within universities and educating new generations in interdisciplinary sciences so as to increase the visibility of interdisciplinary solutions and joint benefits in the future.
9. Domestic water supply, sanitation, agricultural and industrial use, navigation, energy generation, recreation and also ecosystem health considerations are as much part of water resources management as addressing urban – rural issues, links to poverty eradication, adaptation to climate change and preventing, through disaster risk reduction, and mitigating the impacts of extreme events that seem to have an ever increasing frequency.
10. Most of the water assessment and management tools are based on the assumption of stationarity. Our design tools are based on the assumption that the statistical characters of the processes involved remain the same. Yet, our world displays strong non-stationarity. The signs are all around us in terms of sudden changes, such as a perceptibly increasing frequency of hydrological disasters that cannot be explained by our earlier concepts and current methodologies. New appropriate tools to adapt to non-stationarity are to be developed with a sense of urgency. Otherwise humans will be subject to growing risks, which can undermine sustainability.
11. The process of developing integrated water resources management and water stewardship principles and practice for a sustainable future that maintains ecosystems should be accepted by all stakeholders with adequate levels of accessible information and data, a shared and open knowledge base, capacity development, partnerships and conducive institutional-legal frameworks. Integration in national development plans, appropriate capacities, ranging from data collection services to scientific research, are pre-requisites to sound integrated water management. Water management, however, should go beyond the focus of the water cycle and competing uses and involve socio-economic, environmental, legal and governance-related elements in a collaborative spirit that ensure effective and meaningful participation. Responsibilities and processes should be clearly outlined in governance schemes at all levels.
12. Most of the impacts of climate change are expressed through the water cycle. These include long term shifts in the amount and frequency of precipitation as well as increased variability, which may lead to increased floods and droughts, challenges to food and energy production, groundwater resources, and difficulties in maintaining ecosystem sustainability, infrastructure development and water dependant manufacturing. Gradual sea level rise poses an additional real threat to coastal communities, cities and mega cities, as well to many vulnerable coastal groundwater and food production. The role of water in climate change adaptation strategies and mitigation needs to be thus specifically and urgently addressed.
13. Risks and uncertainties are unavoidable. However, innovative and alternative approaches should be tested and, when deemed successful, applied broadly as this can help mitigate risks. This includes methods that rely on ecosystems services, adaptation strategies that enhance the resilience of water resources management systems through structural and non-structural measures. Adequate monitoring, data-sharing, improved forecasting capabilities but also risk-sharing mechanisms further contribute to a more sustainable and water-secure world.





14. Providing comprehensive monitoring and early warning of emerging water problems will be critical to the success of the future SDGs. International and multilateral agreements on timely sharing of information and data are crucial; existing international conventions can be instrumental in achieving this. Enormous progress achieved over the past decade goes largely untapped, yet the technical and data resources are growing in their availability and sophistication while ground truthing is diminishing. The free availability of much of these big data streams should be marshalled specifically to the task of monitoring progress on the SDGs. Further synthesis by the science community may be necessary to interpret and track progress, or lack thereof, on the goals.
15. Developing education and capacities at all levels must be encouraged and supported, focusing on ensuring a secure number of water professionals and knowledge passed on to subsequent generations. Educating and training the next generation of water leaders, as well as reinforcing the capacities of stakeholders such as local authorities, NGOs and CSOs (individual and institutional), will be critical to achieving the water and sanitation related SDG. It is recommended to renew and reinforce the dialogue between researchers and practitioners, to speed up the uptake of research results, and to support innovation best practices to bridge the still existing gap between science and policy.
16. Capacity development, as part of both private and public projects, has to be encouraged and its social return on investment should be made aware to decision-makers. It is also critical to identify effective approaches to small communities, including community-based management, demand management, especially at higher levels of service, adapt existing and new systems, particularly water storage, to manage hydrological uncertainties and risks with a view toward ensuring and increasing resilience to the impacts of water scarcity and climate change.

#### FOSTERING GOOD WATER GOVERNANCE

17. Achieving universal, sustainable access to water and sanitation and managing water in an efficient manner requires good governance. This requires adaptive, agile and resilient institutions at local, national and transboundary levels, based on a basin approach, that can identify and solve today's water problems and cope with those of tomorrow. Good governance relies on building accountability and inter-sectoral complementarities at the right scale.
18. Good water governance is context-dependent and implies addressing nexus issues. A set of overarching principles and place-based policies, aiming to better articulate who does what, should be developed to enable the management of water at the appropriate spatial and time scales and levels. This should include innovative partnerships across sectors, monitoring and evaluation of progress and effectiveness, allocation of human and financial resources in line with responsibilities and enforcement of regulatory frameworks.
19. Greater attention needs to be paid to enhancing governance arrangements for more sustained service delivery based on adequate new infrastructure along with rehabilitation and renewal of ageing infrastructure. This requires improving the investment climate for catalysing funds needed, and strengthening the absorptive capacity at all levels to manage networks, projects and resources as needed.
20. Water governance effectiveness depends on the institutional quality of authorities at all levels, sectoral and territorial integration, the performance of utilities, the level and diversity of stakeholder engagement, social inclusion, transparency, and disclosure quality and consistent data and information, public awareness, the quality and consistency of data disclosed, capacity development and anti-corruption practices. Together, all of these provide good water governance that is required for both a sustainable and a water-secure world.
21. When it comes to transboundary watersheds and aquifers, which contain most of the available freshwater on Earth, water governance must go beyond national boundaries through a basin approach in management of shared resources. Strong and long-term transboundary cooperation can be assured by joint basin governing institutions, work programmes, joint monitoring and wide international stakeholder participation based on sound (international) legal and institutional principles and arrangements.
22. Economic benefits of good water governance should be clearly stated. In the world driven by economic factors it is very important to stress the positive trade-offs of good water governance. An analysis of good water governance practices that contributed to economic growth and increased effectiveness should be widely distributed among stakeholders. Public-public partnerships should be encouraged and collaboration with all categories of users including business and private sector at large is critical for fair



water allocation.

### **USING WATER TO CREATE GROWTH AND “GREEN ECONOMIES”**

23. There are different approaches, visions, models and tools available to each country, in accordance with its national circumstances and priorities, to achieve sustainable development and the green economy is one of the important tools in this regard. Green economies are to feature both new and old technologies and tools, incorporate the socio-economic value of natural systems and ecological flow needs to water management, use new accounting for natural capital in cost-benefits assessments and emphasize water-use efficiencies. Green economies are to employ realistic behaviour change among users of water, integrate indigenous with modern methods of adaptively managing water, create explicit criteria for ecosystems health for design of water investments, treating wastewater and solid waste for use and adopting rehabilitation and asset management of built and natural water infrastructure, respectively.
24. Achieving green economies will identify trade-offs and synergies between different water uses and adequate setting of priorities. The provision of the world population with basic goods and services, while allowing for economic development within planetary boundaries should be a guiding principle. Water priorities will have to balance the three aspects of sustainable development and integrate socio-cultural, economic and environmental dimensions into national accounting systems and development policies. Such priority setting should include legislation, monitoring, financing, subsidies for affordable green technologies, markets, pricing, user pay along with polluter pay principles, paying for ecosystem services, green labelling of projects and products and broadened risk benefit assessments. Water policies are to promote the use of acceptable and affordable technology and needed infrastructure such as water storage that also benefits sustainable development, poverty eradication, growth and green job creation.

### **CREATING NEW MICRO AND MACRO, PRIVATE AND PUBLIC, FINANCING METHODS**

25. There is unfinished business to attain the MDG targets on water and sanitation and this will require innovative, inclusive, equitable, adapted, ear-marked and sustainable financing mechanisms at all levels, especially for the benefit of the poor and most vulnerable populations. Drinking water and sanitation are not alone in this regard and while their needs are different, funding requirements of adaptive water resources management should be addressed as well, especially with the expected impacts of global changes that confront humanity.
26. Often, financial resources are already there, but are difficult to access. An efficient use of existing financial resources, for both small- and large-scale projects, for water would significantly help us achieve the water-related goals as would ease the barriers to access resources that already do exist. Water underpins many of the other future SDGs. Without safe drinking water and sanitation and well-managed water resources, food, health, energy and environmental sustainability will not be sustainably achieved for all, if at all. It is a matter of urgency, therefore, to show the importance of water in budget prioritization and allocation. It is also one of the best social returns on investments since it improves equity, health, education and nutrition and, consequently, enhances economic activities.
27. Financial resources are not the only critical resources. Improvements are needed to deliver on investments and financing the capacity of human resources in cost recovery and revenue spending. Transition from aid to sustainable service delivery is essential. Diversified, affordable, realistic and accessible financial management systems that correspond to locally available resources, both in terms of human capital and material, will ensure long-term success of projects.
28. Sustainable development is about addressing future and intergenerational equity. Infrastructure degradation and asset management are to be addressed in this context by equally taking into account the maintenance and restoration of ecosystem services as well as the deterioration costs of those services. Environmental degradation that destroys ecosystems and their services will, by definition, also destroy water services and are thus against the concept of sustainability.
29. Water is a means to many ends. Investments into water and sanitation will also have multiple benefits outside of water and beyond it, and should integrate sectoral benefits across sectors. One of the most effective ways to improve sustainable development and address poverty eradication, food security, energy security and improved well-being, therefore, is applying and implementing the nexus perspective, where the benefits are multi-sectoral and intergenerational. Ultimately, if one invests into water, one invests into peace.

