

**ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION****Seventy-seventh session
Sustainable development****Preparatory process 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****Note by the Secretary-General***Summary*

The United Nations Water Conference takes place at a crucial point in time. From the food crises and devastating droughts to loss of lives because of floods and heavy storms, from energy insecurity to climate crisis, migration and conflicts: water is at the core of all major challenges today. Challenges faced by every single country in the world. The present note was prepared in response to paragraph 9 (b) of General Assembly resolution 75/212, in which the Secretary-General was requested to prepare a background note for a one-day preparatory meeting to be convened at United Nations Headquarters in New York by November 2022. The resolution also requests the President of the General Assembly to hold a one-day preparatory meeting, by November 2022, at United Nations Headquarters in New York, to finalize the themes of the interactive dialogues and other outstanding organizational matters, ensuring the participation of all relevant stakeholders. This note outlines a proposal for themes of the five interactive dialogues based on consultation with Member States, stakeholders, as well as members and partners of UN-Water. The themes will be finalized at the one-day preparatory meeting to be convened by the President of the General Assembly at its 77th session on 25 October 2022 upon consideration of the Background Note. In addition, the co-hosts of the Conference in their letter dated 27 July 2022 to Member States presented their suggestions for the themes of the interactive dialogues for their further consideration.

I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 73/226, decided to convene, in New York, from 22 to 24 March 2023, 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, subsequently referred to as the United Nations 2023 Water Conference. The General Assembly reaffirmed its decision to convene the Conference, in accordance with its resolution 75/212.

2. The present note was prepared in response to paragraph 9 (b) of resolution 75/212, in which the Secretary-General of the Conference was requested to prepare a background note, including proposals for themes of the five interactive dialogues for the Conference, in consultation with Member States, with the support of UN-Water and relevant United Nations entities. The resolution also requests the President of the General Assembly to hold a one-day preparatory meeting, by November 2022, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, to finalize the themes of the interactive dialogues and other outstanding organizational matters, ensuring the participation of all relevant stakeholders, with interpretation services on an as-available basis. This note should be read together with the contributions received from Member States, stakeholders¹, and Members and Partners of UN-Water², as well as the outcomes of regional preparatory meetings organized by the United Nations Regional Commissions.

Matter of urgency

3. Despite the past steady progress in SDG 6, the world is far from on track to achieve SDG 6 and all water related goals and targets by 2030. Considering the role of water in our food and energy security, our equity and equality needs, for health and urban development, for our economy, our stability and the inclusion of all, understanding this complexity, valuing water comprehensively and managing it inclusively is critical to the world’s security and a major foundation for a better future. The COVID-19 pandemic has further increased the challenge, and the world must *quadruple* the rate of progress to achieve the sustainable development goals.

4. Water is connected to all the SDGs and other internationally agreed goals, including the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, among others. Water can play a crucial role to achieve the SDGs as well as the sustainable development in every economy in its three dimensions. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the critical importance of sanitation, hygiene and adequate access to clean water for preventing and containing diseases. Considering the cross-cutting nature of water, there is a need for relevant decision and policy making to move away from a siloed

¹ “United Nations 2023 Water Conference Global Online Stakeholder Consultation: Themes for Interactive Dialogues Summary Report”

² “Proposals on the themes for the interactive dialogues: Contribution from UN-Water”.

approach and taking this into consideration, the three principles of the conference are: inclusive, cross-sectoral and action-orientated.

5. The United Nations 2023 Water Conference will help accelerate this progress by reviewing the objectives of the Water Action Decade that aims to advance sustainable development, energize implementation of existing programmes and projects, and mobilize action to achieve the 2030 Agenda. In the proposed themes, the five interactive dialogues of the Conference will identify challenges and obstacles to implement the Decade and propose actions and initiatives needed to overcome them.

II. Outcomes of the consultations on possible themes for the interactive dialogues

6. Between September 2021 and March 2022, three sets of consultations took place on possible themes for the five interactive dialogues: A. Consultations with Member States, B. Global online consultations with stakeholders and C. Consultations among members and partners of UN-Water and other entities within the United Nations system. Through these consultations, the Secretariat and co-hosts of the Conference received proposals on possible themes for the five interactive dialogues of the Conference.

A. Member States consultation

7. In his letter dated 21 January 2022, the Conference Secretary-General sent a letter to all United Nations Member States to invite proposals on themes of five interactive dialogues at the United Nations 2023 Water Conference along with a brief description of the rationale and any background material. The initial deadline of 22 February 2022 was extended to 10 March, to align with the submission date of the global online stakeholder consultation. As of 31 July 2022, a total of 21 Member States (UAE, Angola, Denmark, Kyrgyzstan, Israel, Algeria, Colombia, Uruguay, Egypt, Australia, Japan, Singapore, Switzerland, Sweden, Argentina, Peru, Turkey, Kenya, Burundi, Senegal and Ethiopia, in the order of submissions) as well as the African Union, and the European Union submitted a total of 73 themes. The full text of the proposals was posted on the website³ of the Conference.

8. In terms of regional distribution of the submissions, Sub-Saharan Africa (6 proposals) submitted the most proposals, followed by Northern Africa and Western Asia (5), Latin America and the Caribbean (4), Europe⁴ and North America (4), Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (2), Central and Southern Asia (1) and Australia and New Zealand (1).

9. The most common themes identified by Member States can be broadly classified under the following five clusters:

³ The inputs received can be accessed at <https://sdgs.un.org/conferences/water2023/documentation>

⁴ 27 Member States of the EU were consulted for submissions.

1. **Water, climate change and disaster risk reduction**
2. **Water and peace and security**
3. **Nature and water quality**
4. **Universal access to water and sanitation**
5. **Water for agriculture and food security**

10. Other themes highlighted by Member States were: Health, Innovation and technology, Governance, Integrated Water Resources Management, Gender, and Financing.

B. Stakeholder consultation

11. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) organized a global online consultation to receive proposals from all stakeholders with regards to the potential themes for the Conference interactive dialogues. The online consultation was open between 10 February and 10 March 2022.

12. A total of 146 inputs were received from interested stakeholders in 46 countries. Contributions originated from all regions of the world, with the following distribution: Europe (42%), North America (14%), Asia (14%), Africa (10%), Latin America and the Caribbean (9%), Oceania (2%) and Other (9%). The majority of stakeholders self-identified as representing Non-Governmental Organizations (41%), followed by Education & Academic Entities (12%); Business & Industry (10%); Science & Technological Community (8%); and Others (29%)⁵. The main themes emerging from these consultations were:

1. **Water, sanitation and hygiene**
2. **Water and gender**
3. **Finance, investment and infrastructure**
4. **Interlinkages between water and climate change**
5. **Data collection and sharing**

C. UN-Water consultation

13. UN DESA and UN-Water developed “Proposals on the themes for the interactive dialogues: Contribution from UN-Water”. The UN-Water Members and Partners had multiple consultations and discussions between September and December 2021 including at the 35th UN-Water Meeting and handed the Proposals to the co-hosts in December 2021. The following main options emerged from these consultations as the themes for the five interactive dialogues:

1. **Four workstreams of the Water Action Decade, plus the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework**

2. **Five accelerators of the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework**
3. **Water-related SDG targets and global agreements**
4. **Major water challenges across sectors and the SDGs**

III. Possible themes for the interactive dialogues

14. The co-hosts of the United Nations 2023 Water Conference, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, in consultation with the Secretariat presented the following suggestions for the themes of the interactive dialogues on 13 July 2022 at the SDG 6 Special Event held during the 2022 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and sent a letter to all Member States on 27 July 2022.

15. The proposal takes into account the consultations that have taken place over the last months, yielding input from Member States, United Nations entities and relevant stakeholders. The results of these consultations are published on the United Nations 2023 Water Conference website. The United Nations Regional Commissions also organized regional consultations and identified thematic priorities for respective regions⁶. In addition to the consultations, the outcomes of the preparatory process, including the Water Dialogues for Result in Bonn, the Ninth World Water Forum in Dakar, the Fourth Asia Pacific Water Summit in Kumamoto, the 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference and the High-Level Symposium on Water in Lisbon, and the Second International High-Level Conference on the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028 were also incorporated.

16. The proposal also considers the rapidly changing global context, the interconnected and interdependent nature of social, economic, political and ecological systems, and the challenges that these pose the world. It recognizes that the ongoing water and sanitation crises are a threat to everyone as poor water management increases the risks in all aspects of life. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the systemic, interconnected and cascading nature of risk, shared vulnerabilities and reminded the global community of its common destiny. Populations are growing, agriculture and industry are getting more water-intensive, and climate change is worsening. Without a functioning, resilient and risk-informed water cycle for all people everywhere, human health and environmental integrity will always be threatened and a sustainable, equitable future will remain out of reach. With this in mind, the following suggestions for themes are proposed for further discussion and consideration by Member States:

1. **Water for Health: Access to safe drinking water, hygiene and sanitation**

⁶ The summary can be accessed at <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N22/445/08/PDF/N2244508.pdf?OpenElement>

(SDG 6.1 Drinking water, 6.2 Sanitation and hygiene, 6.3 Water quality, and SDGs 1 No poverty, 3 Good health and wellbeing, 4 Quality education, 5 Gender equality, 17 Partnerships for the goals)

2. Water for Development: Valuing Water, Water-Energy-Food Nexus and Sustainable Economic and Urban Development

(SDG 6.3 Water quality, 6.4 Water-use efficiency, 6.5 Integrated water management, and SDGs 2 Zero hunger, 8 Decent work and economic growth, 9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure, 11 Sustainable cities and communities, 12 Responsible consumption and production)

3. Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment: Source to Sea, Biodiversity, Climate, Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction

(SDG 6.5 Integrated water management, 6.6 Ecosystems, and SDGs 7 Affordable clean energy, 11.5 Disaster risk reduction, 13 Climate action, 14 Life below water, 15 Life on land)

4. Water for Cooperation: Transboundary and International Water Cooperation, Cross Sectoral Cooperation and Water Across the 2030 Agenda

(SDG 6.5 Integrated water management, 6.b Participation, and SDGs 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions, 17 Partnerships for the goals)

5. Water Action Decade: Accelerating the implementation of the objectives of the Decade including through the United Nations Secretary-General's Action Plan

17. These five themes are supported by the five accelerators of the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework (Financing, Data and Information, Capacity Development, Innovation, and Governance) and the three principles of the Conference Vision (Inclusive, Cross-sectoral and Action-oriented).

IV. Rationale for possible themes

1. Water for Health: Access to safe drinking water, hygiene and sanitation

18. The importance of water for meeting basic human needs was globally confirmed at the first United Nations Water Conference in 1977 in Mar del Plata by the adoption of the action plan "Community Water Supply", which recognized that "all peoples have the right to safe access to drinking water in quantities and quality equal to their basic needs."

19. On 28 July 2010, through Resolution 64/292, the United Nations General Assembly explicitly recognized the human right to water and sanitation and acknowledged that clean drinking water and sanitation and hygiene (WASH) are essential to the realisation of all human rights.

20. While significant progress has been made in recent decades to increase access to clean drinking water and sanitation, billions of people - mostly in

rural areas - remain deprived of these basic services. In 2020, around 1 in 4 people lacked safely managed drinking water in their homes, nearly half the world's population lacked safely managed sanitation, and 494 million people practiced open defecation⁷

21. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the critical importance of sanitation, hygiene and adequate access to clean water for preventing and containing diseases.

22. Unsafe drinking-water, inadequate sanitation and hygiene lead to an estimated 829,000 diarrhoeal disease deaths per year. This includes over 800 children under five dying every day from diarrhea as a result of inadequate WASH services⁸. Moreover, the annual economic losses of some countries are estimated at up to 7% of GDP⁹.

23. Equitable access to safe drinking water, hygiene is critical for global public health, a healthy environment and for social and economic development. Universal access to sustainable and climate resilient services for water, sanitation and hygiene contributes to poverty eradication, gender equality, and universal education access. As water scarcity increases with climate change, providing affordable safe water poses a challenge to developing and developed nations alike and will threaten gains and future progress in poverty reduction. Thus, access to sustainable and climate resilient services for water, sanitation and hygiene constitutes the bedrock for the SDG's to build on and to achieve the SDG agenda by 2030. Yet 2 billion people lack access to safely managed drinking water (SDG 6.1). And an estimated 3.6¹⁰ billion people lack safely managed sanitation services (SDG 6.2). To achieve universal access to safely managed water and sanitation by 2030 we need to quadruple our current efforts.

24. The lack of access to services for water, sanitation and hygiene, including facilities and products for menstrual hygiene management, disproportionately affects vulnerable communities and women's and girls' lives. Without access to those services, they are often unable to go to school or work, limiting their education and economic opportunities. Ensuring access to services for drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, and wastewater management and services is also critical, especially in pandemic and humanitarian situations, necessitating coordinated decision-making at all levels for protection, prevention and preparedness.

25. Safe water and viable ecosystems are often predicated on good water quality. As such, further pollution reduction and control is imperative, whether through unified water quality standards and their enforcement, pollution controlling common measures, or other mechanisms. Given the multiple dimensions and interlinkages tied to water and health, solutions will require partnerships and collaborations within the global community.

⁷ <https://data.unicef.org/resources/progress-on-household-drinking-water-sanitation-and-hygiene-2000-2020/>

⁸ <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijheh.2019.05.004>

⁹ <https://www.oecd.org/water/Policy-Paper-Financing-Water-Investing-in-Sustainable-Growth.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://data.unicef.org/resources/progress-on-household-drinking-water-sanitation-and-hygiene-2000-2020/>

26. In order to achieve the critically important universal access to sustainable and climate smart WASH services the global community, including receiving and donor governments, the private sector, civil society and local communities need to take their respective responsibilities and implement the UN-Water SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework and invest in the key accelerators. This means we need to enhance good governance and increase political leadership, work on effective coordination and regulation. We need to invest public finance to unlock household and private investment for sustainable and climate resilient services for water, sanitation and hygiene and to develop capacity at all levels to drive progress and sustain services. Reliable data support decision making and better accountability. And we need to work on innovation, which leads to better approaches and meets emerging challenges.

27. Only with concerted efforts will we be able to reach SDG 6 by 2030.

28. A transformative and inclusive approach is needed to ensure the safety, equity, availability, accessibility and affordability of water and sanitation services for all, leaving no one behind.

2. Water for Development: Valuing Water, Water-Energy-Food Nexus and Sustainable Economic and Urban Development

29. Water plays an integral role in sustainable socio-economic and urban development. All societies have to re-calibrate their water use and governance in order to respect the hydrological cycle and the requirements of nature. In a context of rising demand, complex interdependencies and feedback mechanisms, and of climate change that manifests in greater variability in the water cycle, difficult choices will need to be made across sectors and scales. Good decision making will have to be informed by society's values, objectives, understanding of interdependencies (consequences of choices), and means. An agenda that prioritizes the common good is needed. Guiding principles, such as those for valuing water as proposed by the High Level Panel on Water, will need to be operationalized. This will be an all of society effort. Water is everyone's "business", it is a key driver of sustainable growth and crucial for poverty alleviation as an input to almost all production, in agriculture, industry, energy, transport, by healthy people in healthy ecosystems. To combat water scarcity and ensure supply, Integrated Water Resources Management provides a holistic lens relying on efficient water use and reuse to ensure equitable allocations.

30. Lack of water security is still considered one of the major global risks in terms of crises and development impact. Neglecting water can have potentially catastrophic impacts on economies and livelihoods, and could reverse hard-won gains in poverty reduction, job creation and development. The World Water Development Report 2021 shows that waste and careless use stems from the fact we all too often think of water exclusively in terms of its cost price, without realizing its tremendous value, which is impossible to price.

31. More than 1.4 billion jobs worldwide (42% of the world's total active workforce) are heavily water-dependent, including work in agriculture, mining and industries ranging from paper to pharmaceuticals. Moreover, another 1.2 billion jobs are moderately water-dependent; though they do not use large quantities, industries such as construction, recreation and transportation do need access to some. In total, 78 percent of global jobs need water¹¹.

32. Sufficient water quantity and quality are especially important at the water-energy-food nexus. Vulnerabilities within food and energy systems are often driven, or exacerbated by water scarcity, quality and temperature. The direct link between water and food security calls for the discussion of sustainable agriculture, including hydrologically chosen crops, water efficient irrigation, and pricing reflecting water costs. This requires the improved governance mechanisms to allow adaptive water management.

33. At another nexus point, water finance, investment, and infrastructure are both essential to sustainable development and call for a paradigm shift to unlock new economic opportunities. The idea of a blue circular economy relies on strategic and impactful water investment to promote equity, peace and sustainable water access. Such a circular economy could be driven by water resource recovery and help the reduction of waste and cessation of the tide of pollution affecting waterways and the ocean.

34. All shifts in water management, agriculture, and economy also rely on the advancement of technological and regulatory innovations, combined with experience, such as indigenous knowledge. Future generations will need water to live. Digitalization could prove imperative to better manage and conserve water resources and to address water scarcity and climate resilience. As innovations emerge, sustainable development progress will be further enhanced by cooperation for the availability of knowledge and technologies.

35. Prioritizing this theme as one of the themes of the interactive dialogues of the Conference aims to show the importance of the availability of water resources for every economy. It aims to discuss the existing problems in water use and distribution and protection of water resources by various sectors and develop concrete solutions to address them and encourage these sectors to take urgent actions.

3. Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment: Source to Sea, Biodiversity, Climate, Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction

36. It is well known that water and climate are inextricably inter-twinned with each other. Undoubtedly, climate change is adjusting our daily life, primarily through the impact on water resources. Within the 2030 Agenda, water serves as essential connecting factor for attaining the different Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As such, failure to adapt to climate change not only puts the realization of SDG 6 at risk, it also jeopardizes the achievement of most other SDGs. As water resources continue to be pressured and impacted by multiple risk factors, including

¹¹ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000243938>

climate change, resiliency and coordinated adaptation strategies will become increasingly necessary.

37. Climate change will affect the availability, quality and quantity of water for basic human needs, threatening the effective enjoyment of the human rights to water and sanitation for potentially billions of people. The strategic planning and operation of water infrastructure is essential to ensure clean, adequate and affordable supply of water for all. To enhance the resilience of critical water infrastructure, there is a need to promote multi-purpose and nature-based solutions, strengthen institutional collaboration and regulations. Placing water at the heart of these strategies is an essential way forward and would help the water community deliver its message to the climate community and a broader audience.

38. Water has a critical role to play in climate change adaptation. Climate resilience through effective water management can be achieved through sustainable implementation of integrated water resources management and water can play a major role in achieving effective climate change adaptation.

39. Water-related ecosystems such as lakes, rivers and vegetated wetlands are among the world's most biologically diverse environments and provide multiple benefits and services to society, making them essential for reaching several. Although they account for only 0.01% of the world's water and cover approximately 0.8% of the Earth's surface, they provide a habitat for almost 10% of the world's known species¹².

40. Additionally, water-related ecosystems have significant economic, cultural, aesthetic, recreational and educational value. They support water security, provide natural freshwater, regulate flows and extreme conditions, purify water, and replenish aquifers. Other services also depend on these ecosystems, which provide water for drinking, agriculture, employment, energy generation, navigation, recreation and tourism.

41. Many ecosystems, particularly forests and wetlands, are also at risk. The degradation of ecosystems will not only lead to biodiversity loss, but also affect the provision of water-related ecosystem services, such as water purification, carbon capture and storage, and natural flood protection, as well as the provision of water for agriculture, fisheries and recreation. Wetlands accommodate the largest carbon stocks among terrestrial ecosystems, storing twice as much carbon as forests. Taking into account that wetlands offer multiple co-benefits – including flood and drought mitigation, water purification, and biodiversity – their restoration and conservation is of critical importance.

42. Water-related disasters have intensified due to climate change. Nine out of ten disasters triggered by natural hazards during the last decade were related to water¹³. Water related disaster deaths have more than doubled in the last 10 years. Over 90 percent of disaster-affected people were affected

¹² <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000372985.locale=en>

¹³ WMO Report 2021: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/07/1096302>

due to water-related disasters that also accounted for nearly 95 percent of infrastructure loss and damage¹⁴. There is a close nexus between the climate emergency and water-related disasters. Floods, droughts and storms have caused most of the human and economic impact of all disasters combined. Further, over 733 million, or 10 percent of the global population, reside in countries with high and critical levels of water stress¹⁵.

43. The United Nations World Water Development Report 2020 estimates that “74% of all-natural disasters between 2001 and 2018 were water-related.” Furthermore, during this period the total number of deaths caused only by floods and droughts exceeded 166,000, affected over three billion people, and caused almost USD 700 billion in economic damage¹⁶.

44. The current impacts and future anticipated risks associated with extreme events demand sustainable solutions for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction (DRR). It’s necessary to improve inter-agency coordination in water resources and disaster risk management is needed, especially in transboundary basins where it remains fragmented throughout most of the world. Drought and flood monitoring systems are also an important component of risk reduction.

45. Climate change adaptation strategies must improve risk management and resilience to extreme weather events leading to floods and droughts. Strengthening multi-hazard early warning systems around water are further tools. Cooperation and partnerships can also contribute to advanced and risk-informed water resilience along coasts and among basins, including the cryosphere. Cooperation for groundwater is vital, as groundwater is an important resource to water security under climate change and drought.

4. Water for Cooperation: Transboundary and International Water Cooperation, Cross Sectoral Cooperation and Water Across the 2030 Agenda

46. Water resources inherently transcend boundaries and sectors, and being fundamental to ecosystems’ health and well-being and thus our life-support systems. This calls for enhanced cooperation to manage and protect these resources for sustainable development. Transboundary waters account for 60 per cent of the world’s freshwater flows¹⁷, and support more than 40% of the world’s population. 153 countries have territory within at least one of the 286 transboundary river and lake basins and 592 transboundary

¹⁴ UNDRR report: Ensuring synergies between the Mid-Term Reviews of Water and Disaster Risk Reduction and All figures from Sendai Framework Monitor, 2010-2019: <https://sendaimonitor.undrr.org/>

¹⁵ https://www.unwater.org/app/uploads/2021/12/SDG-6-Summary-Progress-Update-2021_Version-July-2021a.pdf

¹⁶ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000372985.locale=en>

¹⁷ https://www.unwater.org/app/uploads/2021/12/SDG-6-Summary-Progress-Update-2021_Version-July-2021a.pdf

aquifer systems¹⁸. These systems are coming under increasing pressure from population growth, pollution, mismanagement, and climate change. To ensure conflict prevention and sustain long-lasting flourishing economies, countries will need to work closely together to optimize the benefits and decrease the risks from these shared systems equitably across all stakeholders. These are not easy problems to solve. In many cases, these basins involve complex interactions between surface and groundwater systems which need to be better understood, are strongly coupled to food and energy security, and can touch on regional relations and economic growth.

47. Effective legal and institutional frameworks at global, regional and basin level play a crucial role for cooperative water management.

48. Cooperation over water offers multiple benefits and contributes not only to water and sanitation for all (SDG 6), but many other SDGs, including those related to poverty alleviation (SDG 1), food security (SDG 2), health and well-being (SDG 3), clean energy (SDG 7), climate change (SDG 13), ecosystem protection (SDG 14 and 15), as well as peace and security (SDG 16).

49. For cooperation there must be an increase in political will and heightened public awareness and commitment to promote sustainable and integrated water resources management. Further cooperative decision-making will need to be inclusive in nature, involving local participation in conflict resolution as well as stakeholder engagement from all related sectors and scales.

50. Climate change, population growth, droughts that lead to water scarcity can damage productivity, disrupt supply chains, put water users in competition with each other. These risks impact sectors in many different ways, but cooperation and innovation are absolutely key to achieving resilience and to protecting the economy. Cross sectoral cooperation as well as collaboration between academia, practitioners and policy makers are the key to provide the highest level of water, energy and food security, sustainable development as well as adaptation in the face of climate change and other challenges.

51. In addition to water management, regulation, and governance cooperation, cooperation on data sharing is also relevant to efficient water use and sustainable development. As such, data collection and sharing are critical for SDG 6 reporting, monitoring and decision-making activities. The standardization and openness of data management are also proven instrumental tools that inform decision making by water utilities, commissions and authorities, as well as broader water users.

¹⁸ World Bank Report - Promoting Development in Shared River Basins:
<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/244761521135162532/pdf/124326-WP-P160278-PUBLIC.pdf>

5. Water Action Decade: Accelerating the implementation of the objectives of the Decade including through the United Nations Secretary-General's Action Plan

52. Water is critical for sustaining a healthy planet, with healthy societies and flourishing economies. Investing in water is needed to eradicate poverty and address hunger. Water-related challenges, including limited access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, increasing pressure on water resources and ecosystems, and an exacerbated risk of climate change, population growth, droughts and water related-disasters, have received increasing attention in the global development arena and require urgent action by the international community.

53. To be successful, Member States and the United Nations system will need to respond in a coordinated and effective manner. In December 2016, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution, International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028, to help put a greater focus on water during ten years. On 22 March 2018, the United Nations Secretary-General's Plan for the Water Action Decade was released during a High-Level Launch Event, convened by the President of the 73rd United Nations General Assembly. The plan outlines current activities and capabilities of the United Nations system and international organizations and the operational setup envisaged to support Member States in the implementation of the Water Action Decade.

54. The Water Action Decade provides unique and solid framework to support efforts of the international community to overcome water related challenges. It is an important and timely platform to exchange views, raise awareness, define a common roadmap, take steps and interact on a wide range of water issues to maintain resilient and sustainable society onwards. The Water Action Agenda will be pushed forward in the second half of the Decade through relevant existing processes.

55. The Water Action Decade facilitates on reinforcing partnership in water sector from different perspective based on cross-sectorial comprehensive approach in defining most suitable roadmap for each country and simultaneously uniting efforts by calling for action around the globe.

56. Work centered around the Water Action Decade addresses the sustainable development and integrated management of water resources for the achievement of social, economic and environmental objectives; on the implementation and promotion of related programmes and projects, as well as on the furtherance of cooperation and partnership at all levels in order to help to achieve internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

57. The United Nations 2023 Water Conference is for the midterm comprehensive review of the implementation of the objectives of the Water Action Decade, and therefore, proposing this theme as one of the themes of the interactive dialogues of the Conference, will help to discuss the

achieved progress and existing gaps and obstacles, and accelerate actions towards achieving internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development¹⁹. The dialogue will also help to strengthen cooperation at all levels, facilitate access to knowledge and good practices, as well as involve financial institutions and donor community, as much as possible, in the financing of appropriate programs and projects in the field of water.

V. Conclusion

58. The United Nations Water Conference in March 2023 presents the global community with a unique opportunity to energize all relevant actors across sectors, through improved cooperation, partnership and capacity development. In our journey towards the Conference, there is there is a need to strive for innovative solutions that create impact and set a clear agenda for the second half of the Decade and further until 2030, while promoting a longer-term approach and perspective, going beyond 2030.

¹⁹ In its resolution 73/266 where the General Assembly decided to convene, in New York, from 22 to 24 March 2023, 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, the GA also requested the Secretary-General, with the support of UN-Water, the specialized agencies, the regional commissions and other entities of the United Nations system, to prepare a report for the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly, to assess progress in the implementation of the first half of the Decade. This request was also reiterated in the modalities resolution for the United Nations 2023 Water Conference A/RES/75/212. This report is now ready (A/77/210).