Summary of Stakeholder Dialogue of the Preparatory Meeting for the UN 2023 Water Conference

On 24 October 2022, 1,200 stakeholders participated in an open consultation, both at UN HQ in New York and online. The discussions were focused in 5 roundtables organized along the catalysers of the SDG6 Global Acceleration Framework. More than 300 stakeholders asked to make interventions, and 100 were able to do so in the 5 roundtables. Written comments are received to ensure all stakeholder contributions are reflected. The sum of the spoken and written interventions will be the basis for a comprehensive document that will be published as soon as all comments are received and evaluated. A first summary of the discussion in the roundtables is given below. This summary is not exhaustive or prescriptive. It focusses on potentially game changing ideas that stakeholders have identified on 24 October. These ideas can be developed into game changers for the Water Action Agenda and will support the discussions in the proposed 5 interactive dialogues of the 2023 UN Water Conference.

Roundtable on Capacity Development

Potential game changing ideas for the interactive dialogues:

- Open Science based validation mechanism for resilience and sustainability in water. A global science-based assessment (IPCC model) contributes to ensuring availability and accessibility of up-to-date assessments addressing the inter-sectoral, systemic, integrative and transdisciplinary nature of the complex and interconnected water challenges.
- 2) Inclusive education and capacity development through a **global system of water** training centers and networks.

Benefit:

- Creating national capacity
- Inclusion of women, children, youth, indigenous people
- Leveraging benefits of knowledge in different communities
- Enough skilled workforce

Catalysing ideas:

 A funding mechanism is needed for capacity development for ensuring sustainability and reaching out to all and leaving no one behind, building on the demand-driven UN-Water Capacity Development Initiative

- A global campaign for a new water culture at all levels for scaling up our level of consciousness about the earth system interdependencies and the complexity and interconnectedness of water challenges across sectors with changing behavior starting at school.
- Match youth skills
- Open science and citizen science
- AI, virtual reality, digital learning
- Traditional and indigenous knowledge

Governance

Potential game changing ideas for the interactive dialogues:

- 3) **Systemic and whole-of-society approach** to deal with challenges in relation to cross sectoral benefits, taking into account externalities and co-benefits
- 4) Support for water, climate, food and related policy integration at national and regional level

Benefits:

- Trust
- Leveraging benefits
- Creating ownership
- Increasing effectiveness of national administration and regional coordination partnerships

Catalysing ideas:

- Accountability and institutions need to be capacitated
- Supporting political and societal will through science and information in a holistic manner
- Participation, Inclusion of youth + others, human rights-based approach
- New institutional arrangements, coordination across sectors and transboundary cooperation, regional economic commissions
- Valuing water and sanitation as a human right and global public good in relevant bodies and partnerships

Data and information

Potential game changing ideas for the interactive dialogues:

- An open global water information system and platform that integrates physical and societal data relevant for SDG6 to ensure that actionable information is freely accessible, consistent, comparable and interoperable at scale and supports preparedness and resilience.
- 2) Freely accessible Early Warnings for All based on consistent water information.

Benefits:

- Financing and development can be directed to most vulnerable
- Financing is more effective when based on data and information
- Long term change in infrastructure and management can be supported with evidence.
- People are protected against floods, droughts, water scarcity and effects of water pollution
- Creating trust

Catalysing ideas:

- Data and info to save live and mitigate slow and fast onset disasters as public good
- Warnings and reports should be understandable by the civil society and usable by policy makers for decision making.
- Setting up a global fund/finance mechanism at global scale for improving monitoring and forecasting capacities.
- Reformation of the UN architecture (stop fragmentation of data and initiatives) agree on one set of data and information sharing standards
- Legal provisions
- Map vulnerability and impact of potential hazards in terms of social-economic losses at a local scale, to build awareness, accountability, and trust

Financing

Potential game changing ideas for the interactive dialogues:

- 1) **Reframe economic cost of water crisis** and cost of inaction to invest in water yield dividends
- 2) Reference set of **links of finance across sectors** climate/carbon, food security, biodiversity "all hands in"

Benefits:

- Access to credit
- Avoid liabilities through finances and investment
- Refocus discussion from asking for more funding to making sure funds are invested in a smart way

Catalysing ideas:

- Rules and regulations for SDG6 aligned financing
- Roles and models for public and private activities and partnerships
- Making investment in nature-based solutions priority
- Financial innovation and institutional reform for water, leverage private finance
- Investment in enabling environment
- Redefine roles of MDBs

Innovation

Potential game changing ideas for the interactive dialogues:

- 1) Create a **policy and regulatory environment** that sparks innovation.
- 2) Empower relevant stakeholders to participate in innovations.

Benefits:

- Making financing accessible for all
- Targeting investments
- Creating a business case for sustainable development

Catalysing ideas:

- Creating a market for innovation
- Licenses and Technology access
- Including women, youth, grassroots organizations, marginalized in innovation