

## Spain's Contribution to UN Water Conference Interactive Dialogue Concept Papers

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## Preface

The Kingdom of Spain envisions a water secure world with global access to water and sanitation. A world in which water resilience becomes an integral part of decision-making in economic sectors.

A water secure world, with the UN, is defined, as "the capacity of people to safeguard sustainable access to adequate amounts of water of acceptable quality to sustain livelihood, human well-being and socioeconomic development; to guarantee protection against water-borne pollution and water-related disasters, and for the conservation of ecosystems in a climate of peace and political stability as a key to achieving these objectives".

To achieve this vision in the long run, sufficient financial resources are to be mobilized to build, maintain and operate the necessary infrastructures to be able to ensure an adequate provision of water and sanitation services as well as financing, water management at river basin scale, drought and flood management, combining grey infrastructures and nature based solutions.

Information and knowledge are essential to achieve SDG6. We need to build upon the opportunities provided for all countries by the digitalization of water resources management and the adoption of new technologies. This applies to all the components of the hydrological cycle and ecosystem management, the control of water use and pollution as well as water storage and regulation and provision of water and sanitation services.

Spain considers that information will not be able to render educated policies and regulations if there is no knowledge sharing and transfer at all levels through capacity development or building where necessary, in order to establish and improve water planning at all levels, Integrated Water Resource Management, improving water resilience and financial sustainability of investments and Disaster Risk Reduction approaches.

Technology is essential. There are technologies and approaches to prevent and treat water pollution from urban and agricultural activities. There are technologies to integrate unconventional resources into the water supply mix. There are grey and nature based solutions technologies and approaches to improve the management of extreme events.

Water governance will need to be adapted to deal with the challenges of climate change, promoting circular economy and efficiency in the use of resources and making a fair and equitable recovery of environmental and resource costs for all society, respecting the human rights to water and sanitation, and being in line with the OCDE principles for water governance.

The implementation of the principles of the Integrated Water Resources Management according to the indicator 6.5.1 of the SDG6 is the main framework for achieving SDG6 and fostering transboundary cooperation. Likewise, a sound framework based on planning, prevention and preparedness is essential for facing risks of floods and droughts. These frameworks should adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Governments are the main responsible for achieving SDG6 and water-related targets of the SDGs. They should ensure the implementation of regulation, institutions, financing mechanisms and participatory processes of authorities, users and stakeholders involved, including rural communities. Governments should have instruments at National level for implementing sustainable access to water and sanitation for all according to the SGD6 and water-related targets of the SDGs. Spain believes that an intergovernmental process in the UN system where Governments exchange their achievements and barriers at National level could accelerate SDG6.



Our vision shares the long-term vision of the main international organizations and institutions dedicated to water. In all of them, water security and global access to water and sanitation as humans rights are essential elements to be able to deal with the impacts of climate change, the loss of biodiversity, the protection of human health and that of ecosystems, offering food security, boosting gender equality, improving livelihoods and ensuring sustainable economic growth.



# Water for Health: Access to WASH, including the Human Rights to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation (SDG 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 17)

The rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, as essential human rights for the full enjoyment of life, recognized by the United Nations in its Resolution 64/292 will only become effective when States establish as a priority. When implementing IWRM, safe drinking water and sanitation should be prioritized above water provided for other economic uses (agricultural, industry, mineral extraction or energy). The specific water and sanitation basic needs of the population must be universally covered, regardless of group, gender, purchasing power, race, territory or any other consideration.

There is a clear need to increase the efforts of the international community in providing basic water and sanitation services to households, health facilities and schools. Additionally, such investment and their operation must ensure its sustainability throughout its life cycle.

The availability of safe and sufficient water is inextricably linked to the good status of surface and groundwater water bodies. Good status are jeopardized by rising untreated urban and industrial wastewater discharges, combined with agricultural runoff, which degrade water quality and pollute water resources.

The fulfilment of the human rights is only possible if there is an appropriate water resources management that ensures water availability and proper wastewater treatment services. Rising untreated wastewater flows, combined with agricultural runoff and industrial discharges, have degraded water quality and polluted drinking water resources around the world.

Integrating the nationwide planning of investments in WASH and IWRM at all levels not only increases water availability but also ensures the good status of aquatic ecosystems, and the protection of water catchments and areas with high environmental value. Control of diffuse pollution originated from agriculture, as well as the implementation of environmental flows, are measures that clearly favour the good status of water bodies. The Protocol of Water and Health of the UNECE Convention of Transboundary waters help countries to this integration process.

1.8 billion people use a contaminated drinking water source, which puts them at risk of contracting diseases such as cholera, dysentery, typhoid fever, or polio. On such grounds, the promotion of wastewater treatment becomes an essential component of water and heath.

Thus, there is a need to:

- Increase investments
- Apply a HR's based approach including participatory processes.
- Intensify institutional capacity to improve good water governance
- Invest in knowledge and capacity development
- Integrate WASH in IWRM
- Innovation fit for purpose



## **Recommendations and Voluntary Commitments**

#### Recommendations

Overall, the Kingdom of Spain would like to propose the following Recommendations to the Conference Chairs

- To scale up investments in water and sanitation infrastructure to contribute to the fight against poverty and human development, grant inclusive sustainable development, the promotion of social stability and to increase in the capacity of populations to adapt to and be more resilient climate change.
- Highlight the need for a Human Rights based approach to water and sanitation and the promotion of an enabling environment by strengthening the institutions and administrations involved in water management, both from an organizational perspective as well as in policy development and capacity building, at local, regional and national levels.
- Support capacity building at the national, regional and local levels for public servants, citizens and professionals on various areas of water resource management, administration and planning, management of supply and sanitation systems with citizen participation, focusing mainly on rural areas in line with the UN-Water Capacity Development initiative (CDI)
- Governance and community strengthening must hold accountability and transparency as guiding principles of water policies, their implementation and operation, as well as any of its regulating bodies, while promoting water as a social, cultural, political, environmental and economic value and society's shared responsibility (inclusive and sustainable governance) in its upkeep.
- Although WASH projects have intrinsically a local scope, WASH investments planning should be integrated into Integrated Water Resources Management. To achieving this, we need to ensure multidisciplinary knowledge teams and coordinate overall water resources management with water supply and sanitation systems' operation.
- Water supply and sanitation systems rely on sound operation and maintenance. On such grounds, capacity development should also focus on developing the expertise of the staff in charge of such systems. The investment projects in WASH should provide the adequate training to ensure the correct management, operation and maintenance of the WASH infrastructure throughout its life cycle and beyond.
- Innovation needs to have an eminently participatory character and produce sustainable changes, resilient environments. It needs to be implemented by avoiding extrapolating solutions; focused on people and oriented to the reduction of inequalities among the beneficiaries. Promoting incentives and mitigating risks (detecting barriers and providing tools).



#### Voluntary Commitments

On such grounds, the Kingdom of Spain states the following commitments to be implemented through its national and international action regarding this topic:

- Spain's funding allocation to its Cooperation Fund for Water and Sanitation (Fondo de Cooperación para Agua y Saneamiento, FCAS) with its 15 year standing commitment to promote investment in basic water and sanitation infrastructure, has had an overall investment of 1,276 M€ during such period. In 2023, additionally funded with 10 M€.
- Develop annual WASH citizens' awareness campaigns by the Technical Cooperation Offices of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AECID) in accordance to its MASAR Water Program in the Mediterranean and the Cooperation Fund for Water and Sanitation in Latin America, as well as contributing to the CDI with several capacity development campaigns for local authorities to ensure WASH services sustainability.
- Enhance AECID's "Intercoonecta" network sound partnership with Latin American regional networks such as the Conference of Iberoamerican Water Directors (CODIA), and others such as the Iberoamerican Network of Climate Change Offices (RIOCC) or the Conference of Directors of Hydrometeorological Services (CIMHET), in order to integrate AECID initiatives into the UN-Water Capacity Development Initiative.
- Provide regionally adapted guidelines regarding WASH and its integration with IWRM, taking into account the implementation of nature based solutions for the Latin American region in coordination with ECLAC and CODIA's regional network.
- Review the guidelines of the Spanish Cooperation Fund for Water and Sanitation for funding eligibility in order to incorporate citizen awareness campaigns as well as participatory and institutional strengthening projects become eligible for funding and advocate such review in other donor's mechanisms. Encourage countries to develop national assessments and target settings for WASH in the sense of the UNECE Protocol for Water and Health.
- Foster Spain's commitment for the effective implementation of the Human Rights to Drinking Water and Sanitation through AECID's action.
- Continue supporting the work of the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights of Water and Sanitation and the Human Rights based approach in water and sanitation projects.

#### **Guiding Questions**

- How WASH projects can be integrated in IWRM processes at all levels?
- How WASH investments can combine water supply affordability for all with services' cost recovery, in particular in rural and dispersed areas?
- Are there any relevant replicable experiences to share for the promotion of involvement of rural communities on WASH projects?
- How can WASH infrastructure projects foster capacity building and community strengthening initiatives for operation and use?
- How can costly WASH projects in disperse rural and areas combine affordability with cost recovery of water and sanitation services?



## Water for Sustainable Development: Valuing Water, Water-Energy-Food Nexus and Sustainable Economic and Urban Development (SDG 6.3, 6.4, 6.5 and SDGs 2, 8, 9, 11, 12)

Water security is essential for sustainable development. The spatial and temporal distribution of rainfall and evapotranspiration together with surface and groundwater runoff define the volume of renewable water resources in a territory. Contributions from runoff are in turn determined by land uses and the geographic and geological characteristics of the basin. Economic activities, such as agriculture, energy, industry or mineral extraction, impact on land uses and originate demands for water with a spatial and temporal distribution that are allocated under a set of reliability criteria of water supply. It is important for water management to have water balances at the appropriate scale that allow simulating the operation of the system under different scenarios based on reliable and accurate information, in order to efficiently and equitably allocate available resources to different uses and reduce water stress in the basins.

Regarding circular economy, governments should promote projects that foster water circularity and efficiency as well as nature based solutions and green infrastructures as well as green energy for the supply production and storage of water, without hampering rivers' flow regimes. Additionally, emergent pollutants and plastic pollution must be addressed to prevent such materials from reaching water bodies and the sea.

Governments are responsible for achieving SDG6, being the IWRM according to target 6.5 the framework for this. The implementation of IWRM thus should follow its four components: 1) enabling environment with an ambitious policy and legal framework, 2) institutional framework which guarantees wide participation; 3) management instruments at basin and national scales which allow for water quality and quantity control, protection of water ecosystems and water allocation, 4) funding for water infrastructure and for water management.

Water linked interdependencies between the sectors of agriculture, energy and urban development should rely on sound Integrated Water Resource Management through a collaborative response and participatory response. Valuing adequately water by taking into account the economic and environmental dimensions allow understanding and addressing trade-offs. Protecting water catchments and achieving good status of surface and groundwater is key for the long-term availability of freshwater resources.

Resource efficiency and sustainability are guiding principles of Integrated Water Resources Management IWRM. Water management must promote the efficiency of water use, so that resources are allocated according to quantifiable criteria on the reduction of consumption and efficient use of water in a circular economy environment.

River Basin Management Planning should encourage sustainable use of water and provide a resilient water balance and water allocation and reserve systems, in order to avoid shortage situations in the long term and higher water stress overall.

Although significant progress has been made in the digitalization of water management in recent years in developed countries, there is still significant room for improvement globally. We need to advance in the basic digitalization of water infrastructure and public administrations, and in the digitalization of management of different water users (urban water cycle competent entities and administrations, industry and energy, and irrigators' and groundwater users' communities). The main objective of digitalization should focus in promoting environment protection and enhance water resource management in a climate change context.



Coordinated efforts are key to maximize synergies and minimize trade-offs across and within sectors in water management. On such grounds, it is necessary for countries to build a transparent, equitable and participatory water governance model, which promotes the open discussion and collaborative decision making and integrates all stakeholders (users, companies, administration and civil society organizations) and coordinates the different government levels and socioeconomic agents for the proper functioning of the water cycle.

## **Recommendations and Voluntary Commitments**

#### Recommendations

Overall, the Kingdom of Spain would like to propose the following Recommendations to the Conference Chairs

- Promote the implementation of IWRM to foster the nexus between water, agriculture, and energy by:
  - Experience sharing on resource allocation processes is key to identify opportunities to act both on the demand side, through technical improvements and and improved stakeholder participation, as well as the supply side, through improvements in the storage capacity or regulation in the basin and the promotion of unconventional resources, such as reuse and desalination.
  - Promote Water balance assessment to ensure a more efficient resource management and allocation. Such assessments should rely on sound knowledge of the components of the hydrological cycle, its influencing factors and the real demands from different water users.
- The River Basin is the most appropriate scale for Integrated Water Resources Management. We need to foster the establishment of River Basin management authorities and the preparation of River Basin Management plans to protect water resources and ensure investments.
- Governments should ensure coordination among administrations and stakeholders in River Basin Authorities. They should create the enabling environment for River Basin Management Plans to commit the investments needed for water security.
- Efficient and sustainable water use must become a cornerstone for the development of hydrological planning, circular economy plans and any other planning processes related to environmental policy and sustainable development.
- Water authorities should incorporate circularity actions into the water supply mix by incorporating reclaimed wastewater as resource rather than as waste, especially for its use in urban areas and agriculture as appropriate.
- National regulatory and governance frameworks need to be reviewed to enhance crosssector and cross border cooperation through sound implementation of IWRM at the national level.
- Although funding is mainly funnelled to new infrastructure, funding is required to provide maintenance and safe operation to the current assets. Innovative financing including creating the enabling conditions for blended finance is essential for sustainable water infrastructure investments.



- Cost recovery of water services and the implementation of the polluter pays principle are essential for effective and sustainable water resources management. A Just transition towards protections of water resources in the long run requires combining affordability to the most vulnerable groups —especially poor households, traditional farmers and small scale farmers in rural areas- and a fair distribution of costs and benefits.
- Water management requires supporting improved water accounting, including updated hydrological balances to enable sound decision making in the uncertain context of climate change.
- Sound national monitoring on SDG indicators needs to be strengthened by investing in the capacity development of national governance bodies. Such initiatives must be addressed regionally for a more efficient approach, while aligned with the corresponding indicators' custodian agencies.
- Nature based solutions facilitate infiltration of run off, water depollution and the storage of excess water. Promoting nature based solutions at national level to address water management will foster water circularity and will not hinder natural rivers' flow regimes.

#### Voluntary Commitments

On such grounds, the Kingdom of Spain states the following commitments to be implemented through its national and international action regarding this topic:

- Reinforce the sharing of the expertise of national water authorities in Iberoamerica and the Mediterranean basin under the aegis of a regional approach to river basin management plans, the development of governance tools and capacity development in coordination with concurrent UN action.
- Foster the implementation of IWRM in Iberoamerica, in cooperation with AECID, UNEP and the GWP, according to the identified priorities of the report of the in-depth analysis of the indicator 6.5.1<sup>1</sup>. In the same line of action, develop recommendations for ensuring good water quality of waterbodies in Iberoamerica through the in-depth analysis of the indicators related to target 6.3 and for ensuring sustainability of economic uses of water in Iberoamerica through the in-depth analysis of the indicators related to target 6.4.
- Foster the delivery of coordinated multilevel regulation and governance through the development of harmonized principles or common regional objectives for water quality, water ecosystems protection and water productivity through the international action of Spain in the Conference of Iberoamerican Water Directors (CODIA), the Iberoamerican General Secretary (SEGIB) and in the Mediterranean through the Mediterranean Network of Basin Organizations (MENBO), the Mediterranean Institute for Water (IME), the MASAR-Water Programme and the Water Strategy 5+5 (Western Mediterranean).
- Reinforce the assessment of opportunities for public policy development for achieving SDG6 and enhance the reliability of national monitoring on SDG indicators' data through experience sharing and regional data assessment within the scope of activity of the Conference of Iberoamerican Water Directors – CODIA in coordination with the corresponding SDG custodian agencies, ECLAC and UN Country Teams.
- Support OECD and World Bank initiatives' to highlight the cross-sectoral and economic benefits of efficient water management through appropriate water governance, accounting and transparency as an element to foster both water and economic resilience.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> https://codia.info/images/productos\_codia/Informe\_Indicador6.5.1\_SegundoCiclo.pdf



- Contribute to global partnerships such as OECD's Water Financing Round Table, the OECD's Water Governance Initiative, and the World Banks' Global Water Security & Sanitation Partnership for the development of appropriate knowledge and tools to implement IWRM and establish innovative water financing mechanisms allowing to mobilize funding and ensure operation and maintenance through cost recovery mechanisms.
- Prioritize cooperation fund allocation to Nature based solutions to any project funding requests, especially to projects located in currently fragile ecosystems.
- On a national level, the Spanish Government will:
  - Promote a National Water Partnership as an instrument of cooperation between public and private institutions to strengthen Spanish external action on water.
  - Develop the Strategic Project for Digitalization of the Water Cycle, which will mobilize more than 3.000 M€ and create more than 3.000 qualified jobs.
  - Fulfill the investments and the objectives of the River Basin Management Plans

## **Guiding Questions**

- How should water allocation mechanisms be designed and implemented to enhance IWRM at basin and national scales?
- How can we improve stakeholder involvement in river basin management for making investments effective, efficient and sustainable?
- What types of indicators are needed to monitor the necessary cross-sectoral cooperation in water management?
- How regulatory and financing strategies in IWRM can foster the integration of nonconventional resources?
- How Cost-Benefit analysis can support decision making processes in the implementation of nature based solutions?



# Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment: Source to Sea, Biodiversity, Climate, Resilience and DRR (SDGs 6.5, 6.6, 7, 11.5, 13, 14, 15)

The water cycle will be affected by climate change in very different ways throughout the planet. But certain areas are already especially vulnerable due to the water stress that currently face from the decreased and highly variable rainfall regime and the increasing pressures on water resources. These areas will be suffering the consequences of climate change to a greater extent.

As the climate models predict, large regions will be especially vulnerable to climate change, not only regarding the reduction of water resources, already compromised by increasing anthropogenic pressures, but also regarding its variability, which is going to be increased. The scenario would be one with less available freshwater resources, and more impacts of floods or droughts.

Highlighting the close link among adaptation to climate change, disaster risk reduction (DRR) and sustainable water resources management through this Interactive Dialogue, provides an opportunity to envision water as a connecting theme and potential driver to simultaneously address three global challenges – climate change, pollution and biodiversity. A sound framework based on planning, prevention and preparedness is essential for facing risks of floods and droughts. All these frameworks need to help us adapt to the impacts of climate change.

There is a funding gap for climate change adaptation, but it is also clear that there are opportunities for coordination among donors and initiatives, to allow better targeting and better use of existing resources. Prioritizing investment in favour to natural retention actions, nature-based solutions and green infrastructure may enhance the mobilization of additional domestic and international funding for the water sector.

Timely provision of data is key for the management of risks related to droughts. This requires the maintenance of near-real time information systems and the development of indicators that are descriptive of the situation of drought. This can be linked to response and management measures and plans including restrictions of water use and the mobilization of non-conventional resources. Developing forecasting models for these indicators in the short and medium term is essential to help predict ad manage better emergency situations in many countries. It is essential that data acquisition and treatment systems are based on open and interoperable technologies.

The improvement of early warning and meteorological and hydrological forecasting systems and its liaison with civil protection authorities is necessary, in particular, regarding floods, meteorological alerts and hydrological alerts, allowing to inform essential public services and citizens of any emergency alerts. This information from the meteorological observation network and the hydrological information network allows Civil Protection authorities, responsible for establishing appropriate measures, to respond to the different alert levels in accordance with the thresholds and the previously established protocols. Interconnecting data and information is necessary to guarantee effective responses to emergency situations and coordinate the corresponding protocols.

It is essential data acquisition and treatment systems for managing risks are established so that the digitalization of the water systems is based on safe, secure, open and interoperable technologies.



## **Recommendations and Voluntary Commitments**

#### Recommendations

Overall, the Kingdom of Spain would like to propose the following Recommendations to the Conference Chairs

- Incorporate adaptation measures to climate change in IWRM, such as: addressing demand management, recovery of degraded water ecosystems; foster and increase ambition of wastewater treatment, target setting for the long-term protection of surface and groundwater bodies, improving water use efficiency by means of better knowledge and digitalization, and improving water governance.
- Promote non-conventional resources (in particular, water reuse and desalination) as part of the mix of resources which can be supplied jointly with freshwater resources. Reuse and desalination are essential for facing and preventing the risks of water scarcity at local or more larger scales. Desalination is technologically developed for operating with renewable energies and for minimising impacts on the coastal environment. Technologies and approaches also exist for managing the mix of resources in a sound manner.
- Improved water governance for adapting to climate change can include: the review and strengthening of legal and regulatory frameworks, coordination and institutional mainstreaming of water policy, participation of relevant social actors, access to information, transparency and accountability as preliminary stages for participation, and very importantly, the review of financial mechanisms.
- Improve the coordination of the international initiatives related to water and climate for making better use of the funding mechanisms, so that Governments could benefit from a more efficient and effective investments for adapting to the impacts of climate change on water resources.
- Increase funding to address drought and flood prevention, preparedness and response though planning globally and regionally, ensuring cooperation between meteorological, water, climate change and civil protection authorities. Adopted measures, such as reallocation of people and goods in flood risk areas or restrictions in water supply to users during drought periods should rely on participatory and transparent mechanisms to be defined in the corresponding flood and drought response plans.

#### Voluntary Commitments

On such grounds, the Kingdom of Spain states the following commitments to be implemented through its national and international actions and organizations: regarding this topic:

- Generate political momentum to make water scarcity management and drought resilience a priority to be mainstreamed in national development and cooperation policies through the International Drought Resilience Alliance (IDRA) launched jointly with Senegal at UNFCCC COP 27 in order to reduce country and community vulnerability to drought's impacts by mainstreaming preparedness and adaptation measures.
- Enhance drought and flood preparedness and response planning (Management) by supporting capacity development on disaster risk management under the aegis of UN-Water Capacity Development Initiative, in coordination with UNDRR, the Conference of Iberoamerican Water Directors (CODIA) and the Western Mediterranean Capacity Development Framework under de 5+5 Dialogue.



- Support donor coordination in the Latin American and Mediterranean regions, and advocate among donors that disaster risk management projects needs to be funded.
- Support the role of water management authorities in water hazard preparedness and response within UN's Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems Initiative.
- Support the development of a joint regional alliance in Latin America to develop regional discussion, knowledge sharing and capacity building regarding water hazard disaster risk reduction comprising ECLAC, OAS, the Conference of Directors of the Iberoamerican Meteorological and Hydrological Services (CIMHET), the Iberoamerican Network of Climate Change Offices (RIOCC) and the Conference of Iberoamerican Water Directors (CODIA)
- Foster the cooperation with the World Bank and the International Desalination Association (IDA) for the promotion of non-conventional resources (reuse and desalination) within the framework of integrated water resources management and implement a capacity building initiative on such topics in both Latin America and the Mediterranean Region.
- Develop a National Observatory as contribution to the "Global Observatory of Nonconventional Resources and Associated Renewable Energies", promoted jointly by the World Water Council and the Mediterranean Water Institute and launched in the 9WWF.
- Support the World Bank' GWSP in the mainstreaming of climate resilience in WB's water and sanitation projects and infrastructure investments
- Support knowledge and understanding of the importance of water resilience for economic resilience by supporting the WR4ER initiative and the work of OECD and that of the WB on this through the GWSP.
- Foster ambition in the development of the outputs related to the Priority Area 4 "Integrated water resources management under conditions of global change" of the Operational Implementation Plan of the IX Phase of UNESCO-IHP.
- Develop with UNESCO-IHP, and within the UN Water's Capacity Development Initiative, regional cooperation initiatives in partnership with regional organizations and banks to enhance knowledge transfer regarding adaptation to climate change through integrated water resources management with the collaboration of relevant intergovernmental stakeholders in: the Latin-American and Mediterranean regions with the collaboration of the Conference of Iberoamerican Water Directors (CODIA) and the 5+5 Strategy in the Western Mediterranean, Mediterranean Basin Agency Network (MENBO), respectively.
- Update and report regularly on the Climate adaptation commitments related to water in the context of the UNCCD.
- Implement the actions and measures included in the National Strategy for Hydrological Transition as a response to the Law for Climate Change.



## **Guiding Questions**

- Which governance and regulatory frameworks principles need to be reviewed in order to improve water resilience against climate change?
- How can we highlight the link between water resilience and economic resilience?
- How economic instruments and increased finance can improve water adaptation to climate change?
- Are there any options to improve local water adaptation to climate change while creating synergies with WASH investment?
- How can non-conventional resources (reuse, desalination) be integrated to reduce vulnerability to climate change?
- What indicators may help in assessing the level of exposure to climate change hazards and what strategies may be addressed to reduce such level of exposure?
- What is the role of regional and sub national authorities and stakeholders to foster Climate Change resilience?



## Water for Cooperation: Transboundary and International Water Cooperation, Cross-sectoral Cooperation, including Scientific Cooperation, and Water Across the 2030 Agenda (SDG 6.5, 6.b and SDGs 16, 17)

Sectoral cooperation on water issues provides the opportunity for increasing synergies and identifying related co-benefits and trade-offs between water and other areas, including: climate action; ecosystems, their biodiversity and the services they provide; ocean and seas in the context of addressing land-based sources of pollution and considering a source-to-sea perspective; and food and nutrition security.

Cooperation in water requires all relevant actors to identify any potential gaps and overlaps of the current fragmented governance framework, clarify and take ownership of each stakeholder's specific roles. Strengthening national and international policies, institutions, legal and regulatory frameworks are important enabling conditions for cooperation.

The implementation of integrated water resources management (IWRM) in transboundary water cooperation (TBWC) is key to sustainably manage water resources to respond to the diverse water-related development needs in a context of global climate change, water scarcity and rising demands, enhancing integration within regional water allocation and governance regimes.

Furthermore, on a regional level, greater regulatory alignment can provide an opportunity to ease data validation and standardization and will enable joint indicator monitoring and sharing. On a national level, countries should encourage and support the involvement at national and international level of local authorities, academia, and civil society organizations

UNECE, under the framework of the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, identifies among the benefits of cooperation those related to peace and security, such as the increased geopolitical stability and consolidation of diplomatic relations, the increased trust and reduced risk of conflict, which may create new opportunities for joint initiatives and investments.

Water is very much fragmented in the UN system. International cooperation is essential for advancing in the different aspects of the water-related targets of the SDG6, under the coordination of UN-Water. It also requires a strong coordination inside MS in order to keep track of the advances of the different water-related issues across UN-Water, which very frequently fails, thus giving place to a more fragmentation at national level. So better coordination mechanisms inside and between MS are required in order for international cooperation to be more effective.

Governments are the main responsible for the implementation of SDG6 and water-related targets of the SDGs. Cooperation between Governments needs be reinforced in the UN system in order to facilitate and promote an intergovernmental exchange of National actions, practices and experiences

Regional cooperation is essential for fostering the implementation of national water agendas, by working in coordination with involved agencies and stakeholders in workprogrammes. Knowledge sharing, capacity development and regional assessments are very valuable components of such programmes..



## **Recommendations and Voluntary Commitments**

#### Recommendations

Overall, the Kingdom of Spain would like to propose the following Recommendations to the Conference Chairs

- Promote Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) as a cornerstone governance framework to achieve water security, being the river basins scale the most appropriate for cross-border cooperation and also for sub-national cooperation on water issues.
- Promote the establishment of transboundary water cooperation agreements and management arrangements through participatory and transparent stakeholder discussions, encouraging ownership and reducing potential sources of conflict.
- Promote sound governance ensuring transparency and stakeholder participation in all decision-making processes in order to avoid potential stakeholder's mistrust.
- Uphold UNECE's work in the context of the Water Convention as the guiding model for the establishment of transboundary water cooperation. Share knowledge on the benefits of TBWC and in particular of adhering to the UNECE Water Convention.
- Promote and reinforce regional cooperation for the implementation of regional water agendas which could better deliver SDG6.
- Promote intergovernmental dialogues for the follow-up of achievements of SDG6 at National level, with the involvement of UN-Water agencies in order to better coordinate and implement their respective water-related commitments.
- Encourage MS to mobilize their Academy in order to actively participate in the Operational Programme of the IX Phase of UNESCO-IHP, as the strategy for the next term 2022-2029 focused on the scientific understanding of water, improving technical capabilities, and enhancing education.
- Advocate donors and encourage MS to actively involve in the UN-Water Capacity Development Initiative, since MS have widely recognised the need for strengthen knowledges for better water management.

#### Voluntary Commitments

On such grounds, the Kingdom of Spain states the following commitments to be implemented through its national and international activities regarding this topic:

- Promote and reinforce the work of the Iberoamerican Conference of Water Directors (CODIA) as the network of reference in water issues of the SEGIB, in cooperation with ECLAC, OAS and other relevant organisms, and raising adequate funding in order to better deliver its workprogramme.
- Work with the Union for the Mediterranean for a better streamlining of its water agenda with the targets of SDG6 and for promoting the water agenda of the Mediterranean region as an example of solutions to address water scarcity, in cooperation with MEMBO and the Water Strategy 5+5. For these latter initiatives, raise funds for fostering their agendas.
- Promote the adherence of Latin American countries to UNECE's Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) and share Spain's experience in the development of water cooperation arrangements under the joint action of the Conference of Iberoamerican Water Directors (CODIA)



- Implement and follow-up the recommendations of the report of the in-depth analysis of the indicator 6.5.2 in Iberoamerica, in particular those addressed to MS<sup>2</sup> and referred to governance and diplomacy, funding, efficacy of operational arrangements, institutional and technical capacity, and opportunities for acceleration
- Disseminate Spain's water governance experience and its applicability in the Latin American and Mediterranean region inspired by OECD's Water Governance Principles contributing to OECD's Water Governance Initiative's subsequent action

## .Guiding Questions

- Is the alignment of water regulations at regional level an option to promote cross-border and regional cooperation to enhance adaptation to Climate Change?
- How capacity development can foster water cooperation?
- How cross-border cooperation regarding groundwater bodies can support the adaption to Climate Change?
- Are there any current relevant experiences available regarding the establishment of agreed joint targets in transboundary basins?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>https://codia.info/images/documentos/XXIII\_CODIA/01\_-\_Recomendaciones\_652\_Pases.pdf



## Water Action Decade: Accelerating the implementation of the objectives of the Decade, including through the UN Secretary-General's Action Plan

UN Water Conference should open the way to strengthen the participation of member states in the UN's water issues.

Regular UN conferences on water are required. This could be at the time of the high level intergovernmental regular dialogues on SDG 6 progresses at the annual UN's High Level Political Forum on Sustainable development, an effective tool to follow-up future UN's Water Agenda.

The UN needs to clarify UN-Water's mandate role as an internal coordination mechanism of the UN and ensure it plays an effective coordination role among UN Agencies in water, building their trust and ownership. It is important to review the current structure and operation of UN Water as an overarching coordinating body. In this context its programme of work and activities should be accountable to member states

.The creation of the EU backed proposal of appointing an UN SG's Special Envoy for Water provide a more comprehensive alignment of efforts inside and outside of the UN. Its functioning will require alignment with the role of the UN Water chair and the UN Special Rapporteur HRWS.

On a much wider scope, the Conference should open the scope to coordinate and create clear partnerships with other UN processes (land degradation, biodiversity loss, etc) while enhancing better integration of IWRM and WASH, both within water sector policy (i.e. across water resources, services and reduction of water-related risks). This includes other SDG framework commitments such as the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement and other non UN relevant concurrent processes, such as OECD's efforts on its Water Governance Initiative and the Water Financing Roundtable, as well as regional or country level initiatives.

#### **Recommendations and Voluntary Commitments**

#### Recommendations

Overall, the Kingdom of Spain would like to propose the following Recommendations to the Conference Chairs

- UN SG Special Envoy for Water proposal should clarify the potential overlapping assignments between the Presidency of UN Water and the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to drinking water and sanitation.
- Governments should be more involved in the review of the future Water Action Agenda's commitments and ensure the accountability of the activity of UN Water agencies' coordination mechanism to member states and the General Assembly, including its programme of work and report of activities.
- UN should establish a mechanism of oversight of the UN Water coordinated action in water and annual conferences to review the progress in the Water Action Agenda.
- At national level FAO's proposal for National Water Roadmaps towards the 2030 Agenda, based on the example of the National Pathways to Sustainable Agrifood Systems that were presented at the UN Food System Summit 2021 can be a basis for commitments at the governmental level and the acceleration of the implementation of SDG6.



#### Voluntary Commitments

On such grounds, the Kingdom of Spain states the following commitments to be implemented through its national and international activities regarding this topic:

- Contribute to FAO's discussion for the establishment of National Water Roadmaps and develop its corresponding report.
- Promote the elaboration of National Water Roadmaps in the Latin American and the Mediterranean region providing the relevant capacity development under UN Water Capacity Development Initiative co-ordinately with regional networks such as the Conference of Iberoamerican Water Directors (CODIA) and the 5+5 Strategy in the Western Mediterranean, Mediterranean Basin Agency Network (MENBO), respectively.
- Advocate the creation of UN endorsed annual conferences on Water in the context of UN's General Assembly and the High Level Political Forum activities..

#### **Guiding Questions**

- How the creation of a UN SG Special Envoy can help promote the acceleration of the achievement of SDG6?
- How the Water Action Agenda will foster synergies between voluntary commitments initiatives with the same goal?
- How countries will be available to review UN Water activity and represent the role of governments in the Water Action Agenda follow-up?
- What format should such Water Action Agenda follow-up scheme have?