

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

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1. How can knowledge, science, technology and innovation help in managing water resources better?

- Water, a global common, has become an ever more pressing issue at the core of sustainable development connecting various agendas including agenda 2030, Paris agreement, Sendai framework and Kunming-Montreal global framework on biodiversity. It also connects various sectors with competing and ever increasing demands. We will not be able to sustainably address such complex interconnected water challenges at local, national, regional, basins and global levels if our decisions are not anchored in science. We need more than ever comprehensive knowledge base on water to support policy, regulation and decision making around the world for sustainable water management.
- We need a mechanism, like IPCC, for water, a game-changer for a **Science-based Global Water Assessment in line with open science and harnessing new technologies**, supported by an intergovernmental science-policy platform. You are all invited to the side event on 24th March presenting and discussing this very important transformative initiative.
- Building on its scientific programmes including the Intergovernmental Hydrological programme (the current ninth phase is on science for a water secure world in a changing environment), the Intergovernmental Oceanographic commission dealing with oceans, the world water assessment programme, UNESCO will continue to promote evidence based decision making through transdisciplinary, cross-sectoral, source to sea, nature base solutions and inclusive approaches. Particular attention is also given to the local and indigenous knowledge.

- UNESCO will continue supporting and developing the Megacities Alliance for water and global change and will leverage its networks of creative cities, learning cities and coastal cities in promoting smart and climate-resilient water management.

2. How to fill the related institutional and Human capacity gaps particularly in developing countries?

We need:

- first a new water culture, a paradigm shift where everyone is relatively knowledgeable about water issues as water is everybody business. No one should no longer consider water for granted. Water education should be widely considered at schools, for communities, policy and decision makers and media with a continuous worldwide awareness raising for the public at large.
- Second, a new generation of water professionals capable of addressing in a holistic manner the complex interrelated water challenges. The training must be aligned with the market needs and careers on water should be attractive compared to other jobs.
- Third, at country level, filling the institutional and human capacity gaps is a long process and must be based on a comprehensive gap analysis and the establishment and implementation of a sustain national capacity development programme with sufficient financial resources and well equipped water related training institutions. Within the framework of the SDG 6 global acceleration framework, UNESCO and UNDESA are coordinating the UN-Water Capacity Development Initiative, with the participation of more than 35 UN agencies and partners. This is a demand driven initiative requiring high level governmental commitment and ownership.
- There is a need in strengthening capacity of water training institutions particularly in developing countries by bridging the digital divide for e-learning courses and Open Learning platforms like the one we launched in November 2020 which has already reached out to more than 30,000 learners. A special attention must be giving in empowering women and girls.