UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

Incorporating non-conventional water resources into Integrated Water Resources Management

March 22nd,13:00 EDT, Cervantes Institute - 211 East 49th Street,

Organized by: Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge of Spain and the International Desalination Association. Co-convening partners: Minister of Public Works of Chile, Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation of Egypt, The World Bank Group, OECD, World Water Council.

Background on the event (one paragraph)

According to the results of the indicator 6.4.1 related to water stress of the SDG6, the global water stress level increased by 0.3% between 2015 and 2019. At the regional level, the increase in water stress levels has been significant in Western Asia and Northern Africa, registering an increase of 12.7 percentage points. Additionally, the indicator 6.4.2 related to water use efficiency rose by 12 percent from 2015 to 2019 worldwide, and the share of countries with a water use efficiency equivalent to 20 USD/m3 or less decreased marginally; though global values hide vast regional differences. Despite that country's economic structure may have a direct link to overall water use efficiency levels, increasing water use efficiency, in particular for agricultural use is key, particularly in agriculture-based economies in areas with higher rates of water stress. In such areas, water stress may increase in the future due to the impacts of climate change, facing decreased and highly variable rainfall regime and an increase of anthropogenic pressures on water resources, and therefore, facing decreased water security. On such areas, conventional water provisioning (snowfall, rainfall, river runoff and accessible groundwater) will surely fall short to meet growing freshwater demand. The recording of the event is available in this link. A MoU on water resources management between the governments of Chile and Spain was signed before the starting of the event.

Water Action Agenda (one paragraph, if possible, please include the link to your commitment in the Water Action Agenda database)

Developing resilience of water-stressed communities against climate change will not only require increased efficiency in water use but also the incorporation of non-conventional water resources as available assets for an integrated water resource management strategy, either as an increase of reliability of the system or in cases of chronic water scarcity. Such integration may be applied at the transboundary, national and local levels in order to narrow water demand-supply gaps. The government of Spain has developed a list of voluntary commitments which are streamlined with those presented by the European Union and includes national targets. In relation with this side event, Spain:

- will promote at international level the increase of the rate of desalination and reused waters into IWRM, in cooperation with the International Desalination Association and co-convening countries, following the OECD principles of the Water Governance Initiative and the water strategy of the GWSP of the World Bank,
- will promote and participate in the "Global Observatory of Non-conventional Resources and Associated Renewable Energies" launched at the 9WWF in Dakar by the World Water Council,
- will incorporate at national level the mobilisation of up to 1000 Hm3/yr by 2030 of desalinated and reused waters with safe standards.

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

- Water scarcity is a critical challenge to sustainable development.
- The non-conventional resources are essential for achieving water security.
- The necessity of implementation initiatives for adaptation and mitigation.
- Achieving SDG6 is crucial for attaining other water-related targets in the SDGs.
- Desalination costs have been reduced by energy efficiency. No barriers.
- Water reuse as a viable and technological solution in dry geographies.

Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)

- Include non-conventional water resources for industry and agriculture activities.
- Preserve natural water resources and the planet.
- Work together with governments, private companies, NGOs, multilateral organizations, etc. to achieve water security.
- More social awareness about the value of water in the media and schools.