

#### HIGH LEVEL PANEL ON WATER

# Mobilizing Action Towards a Water Secure World for All

The High Level Panel on Water is calling for a fundamental shift in the way the world looks at water. The Panel is co-convened by the UN Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank Group, and is made up of 11 sitting Heads of State and Government and a Special Advisor.



September 21st, 2016

The High Level Panel on Water (HLPW) aims to mobilize support for a new approach to water that will underpin a more sustainable approach to global development – as outlined in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and in particular SDG 6 which focuses on ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

Water is the life-blood of our planet: it is vital for human life and public health; grows the food that we eat; nurtures the environment that sustains our planet; and flows through and connects the economies that we depend on. But today, in many parts of the world, we are struggling to clean the water that we have degraded; share water that is scarce; and live with floods, droughts, and the increasing variability of our climate. Over two billion people, in particular women and girls, face a daily struggle to find safe water to drink,

do not have access to sanitation services that would give them dignity and allow them to keep their communities and cities healthy and clean.

Panel members, as a group of world leaders, have come to believe that whether the world is talking about economic or social development, peace and security, or protecting the planet and adapting to climate change, water needs to be at the heart of the conversation.









We recognize the human right to water; at the same time we must all take responsibility for managing water better. The need for a comprehensive and coordinated approach to water, as well as increased attention and investment in water-related services, are at the heart of this Call to Action that we are launching together today, and the reason why we – as Heads of States and Government – are committing to lead the way. The approach advocated by the Panel is multifaceted, as summarized in the graphic above. For each of these areas the Panel has sought to frame the key challenges and identify some specific actions that can be taken to address them, which are detailed in their Action Plan\*.

The Action Plan is a "living document", which the Panel will modify over the course of their 2 year term.

The Panel recognizes that the elements of its Action Plan are inter-linked and cover areas where many stakeholders are already engaged. As the Panel implements the Action Plan through specific initiatives during the next 20 months, it will call upon all actors to contribute and build on what they are already doing.



#### **CHALLENGE**

Insufficient political awareness and leadership on water hampers advancement of sustainable development globally.

#### **HLPW APPROACH**

Through advocacy, partnerships and its convening power, the Panel aims to raise political awareness to the highest level and mobilize all stakeholders to improve water management and services.

#### **POTENTIAL INITIATIVES**

 Bringing water into the key economic and political conversations globally



# Resilient Economies and Societies, and Disaster Risk Reduction

#### **CHALLENGE**

Floods, droughts, regional conflicts and water scarcity already have large social, environmental and economic costs around the world – and will be exacerbated by climate change. Growing populations and increasing demand for food and energy will exacerbate scarcity problems, as will poor decisions on water allocation and use. Water extremes amplify socio-economic conflict to the point of crisis, and may also encourage migration.

#### **HLPW APPROACH**

The HLPW will draw attention to methods through which countries, communities and regions can plan and invest in more resilient futures for themselves by promoting the sharing of lessons, good practices, science, and technology. These will include approaches to reducing the risks of natural disasters such as floods and droughts, allocating water to social, environmental and economic priorities, and increasing the efficiency of water use across agriculture, industry, and households.

#### **POTENTIAL INITIATIVES**

- ♦ Water extremes & disaster risk reduction
- Water use efficiency for resilient economies and societies
- Water & agriculture nexus



# Universal Access to Safe Water and Sanitation

#### **CHALLENGE**

Access to clean water and sanitation is necessary for human health and welfare, and is also a human right. However, billions of people still lack access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities – mostly in rural areas across Latin America and the Caribbean, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa. In these regions in particular, serious gender imbalances are found in terms of access. Even for those who have access to services, the service is inadequate or unsustainable.

#### **HLPW APPROACH**

The HLPW will promote efforts to reach all people with access to safe water and sanitation focusing on innovative approaches, behavior campaigns, institutions of service delivery, and the role of gender.

#### **POTENTIAL INITIATIVES**

 Water and sanitation services for 10 billion people



# Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements

#### **CHALLENGE**

Cities represent over 70% of the global economy and are growing rapidly, particularly in less developed countries. Despite significant progress, many cities face complex and interrelated challenges including rapid and unplanned urbanization, growing slums, instability and migration, degraded environments, and insufficient or unsustainable access to food, water, sanitation, electricity, jobs, housing, and finance. The concentration of people and economic activity in cities mean that they are a critical level at which many of today's most complex water challenges need to be addressed in a comprehensive way.

#### **HLPW APPROACH**

The HLPW will encourage and draw attention to more innovative and integrated ways of managing water resources and services in cities: integrated into river basins in order to better manage floods, scarcity, intermittent supply, and water quality; and integrated into city planning and management in order to better deliver sustainable water supply and sanitation services, as well as support the urban economy and quality of life.

#### **POTENTIAL INITIATIVES**

- ♦ Integrated urban water management
- Water and migration



### Water and the Environment

#### **CHALLENGE**

When the environment is healthy, it helps humans manage water by providing natural storage, filtering and cleaning dirty water, managing floods and by reducing droughts and water scarcity. The environment in turn requires sufficient water. Water pollution and overexploitation negatively impacts biodiversity and ecosystems.

Protecting or restoring the environment and taking an integrated approach to both built and natural infrastructure is often a cost-effective and sustainable approach to avoiding water stress.

#### **HLPW APPROACH**

The HLPW will encourage more integrated approaches to built (grey) and natural (green) infrastructure and scaling up wastewater treatment, will promote improved water quality, and will endorse action and research that advances understanding of environmental water allocation.

#### **POTENTIAL INITIATIVES**

♦ Water for environmental outcomes



# Infrastructure and Investments

#### **CHALLENGE**

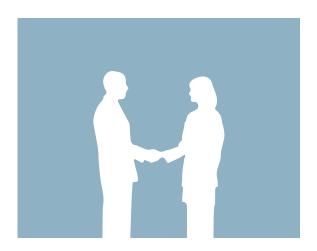
Infrastructure necessary to manage water resources and provide water services is of vital importance for social and economic development, but the investment gap is large and growing. Water infrastructure is expensive and water service charges are often too low to recoup investment costs, making it difficult to attract commercial financiers and operators. In addition, water infrastructure needs to become smarter, adapting to climate change and being designed to work in concert rather than in competition with nature.

#### **HLPW APPROACH**

The HLPW will focus on efforts that combine increased and resilient infrastructure investment, including more integrated upstream planning, financial mobilization, institutional reforms, operation and maintenance programs, and capacity building. It will also encourage political leadership and funding support to key projects.

#### **POTENTIAL INITIATIVES**

- Preparing resilient infrastructure
- Financing infrastructure investments



### Water Governance

#### **CHALLENGE**

Water crises are usually governance crises. Technical solutions are often known but the challenge is translating that into "who does what, at which level, and how." Solutions without functional institutions will not be sustainable. While the basin is a key scale for managing water, around 60% of the world's basins have no agreements governing them.

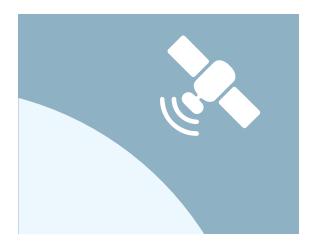
Water governance is inherently complex with many stakeholders across multiple sectors, hydrological and administrative boundaries that often conflict, and incomplete data. It requires a "whole of society" approach.

#### **HLPW APPROACH**

The HLPW will promote multi-level approaches to water governance - such as the OECD water governance principles - including filling multiple gaps in objectives, policies, administration, capacity, information, funding, and accountability. It will also help foster much needed political leadership and coordinated action at the local, national and international levels.

#### **POTENTIAL INITIATIVES**

 Strengthening domestic and transboundary water governance





## Water Data

#### **CHALLENGE**

Good water resource management and service delivery requires good data – currently lacking in many parts of the world on key topics. The last few decades have seen rapid advances in satellite based data, but in-situ measurement of water resources is in decline globally. Data that does exist is not sufficiently analyzed or shared.

#### **HLPW APPROACH**

The HLPW will encourage investment in water measurement and data, as well as more effective and innovative ways to understand, share, and audit the data.

#### **POTENTIAL INITIATIVES**

 Better data for better water management

## Valuing Water

#### **CHALLENGE**

While water stress is growing, farmers, businesses and households often face few incentives to consume less, maintain water quality, or allocate it to the most productive use. Making the social, environmental and economic values of water explicit provides incentives to manage it more efficiently, and helps decisions and trade-offs about water get made in a more transparent and better-informed manner – clarifying vested interests and enabling equity and sustainability to be addressed.

#### **HLPW APPROACH**

The HLPW will promote efforts to reach clarity and common principles among all stakeholders to address the related and often controversial issues of allocating, valuing and trading water.

#### **POTENTIAL INITIATIVES**

### HIGH LEVEL PANEL ON WATER

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General (Co-Convener) Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank Group (Co-Convener)

- H.E. Mrs. Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, President of Mauritius (Co-Chair)
- H.E. Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto, President of Mexico (Co-Chair)
- H.E. Mr. Malcolm Turnbull, Prime Minister of Australia
- H.E. Ms. Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh
- H.E. Mr. János Áder, President of Hungary
- H.E. Mr. Hani Al-Mulki, Prime Minister of Jordan
- H.E. Mr. Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of The Netherlands
- H.E. Mr. Pedro Pablo Kuczynski Godard, President of Peru
- H.E. Mr. Jacob Zuma, President of South Africa
- H.E. Mr. Macky Sall, President of Senegal
- H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon, President of Tajikistan

Special Advisor H.E. Dr. Han Seung-soo, Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea

The areas described herein together represent a comprehensive and transformative approach in support of the water-related dimensions of the SDGs. For these goals to be reached, everyone needs to do their part and collaborate across sectors, interests and borders: governments, businesses, civil society, academia. The HLPW is committed to engage with stakeholders. Join us!

\* To access the full digital version of the Action Plan or to engage with the Panel, visit https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/HLPWater

