



The **UNSGAB** Journey

United Nations Secretary-General's Advisory
Board on Water and Sanitation (2004-2015)

MANAGEMENT
DRINKING WATER
DISASTERS
SANITATION
WASTEWATER
FINANCING
MONITORING





Adequate sanitation, healthy aquatic ecosystems and sound water management are essential for human well-being and sustainable development. Yet increasingly, water-related problems are putting countries, ecosystems, economies and citizens, especially women and children, at risk.

I thank my Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation for galvanizing action on these critical global challenges. I value their thoughtful advice and welcome this report.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the importance of water and sanitation through a dedicated goal and a broad and ambitious set of targets. As we embark on implementing this transformative Agenda, I call on the international community, working with governments, the private sector and civil society, to mobilize to create a water-secure future for all.



His Excellency Ban Ki-moon



As Honorary President of UNSGAB, I am pleased and very proud of our 11 years work: we have been a watchful presence on the global stage, addressing major water problems that cause intolerable pain and distress to so many people. It is my strong hope that the world will draw wisdom from the work of UNSGAB and will intensify efforts so that there is increased awareness of the benefits to lives, livelihoods, and vibrant ecosystems that come from water security.

UNSGAB's experience attests that progress and change are possible. May you be inspired, and carry on the work.



His Imperial Highness the Crown Prince of Japan

HE Ryutaro Hashimoto



His Excellency Ryutaro Hashimoto, a former Prime Minister of Japan, was the first Chair of UNSGAB from 2004 to 2006.

His indispensable contribution to the Board was to recognize that such a body could be a powerful force for water. He arranged for the Japanese government to host two of the early sessions, recognized that HHH the Crown Prince of Japan had a long-standing interest in water and laid the groundwork for the Crown Prince's acceptance of the position of Honorary President.

Profoundly conscious of the impact of water-related disasters, HE Hashimoto laid the foundation for UNSGAB's work in this area with the former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea, HE Dr. Han Seung-soo, who acted as the President of the UNSGAB High-Level Expert Panel on Water and Disasters.

Ryutaro Hashimoto was Prime Minister of Japan from 1996 to 1998. He passed away in 2006 at the age of 68.

HM King Willem-Alexander



His Majesty Willem-Alexander was Chair of UNSGAB from 2006 to 2013, when he ascended the throne as King of the Netherlands.

His passion for water convinced others as to the importance of realizing the MDG targets for drinking water and sanitation. He and the UN Secretary-General made a statement by washing their hands in public for the world to see. He travelled the world to meet with villagers, water groups, engineers, mayors, bankers and, above all, ministers and other senior government leaders, spreading powerful messages about water.

The eThekweni Declaration was one of the pinnacles of his personal diplomacy in the interest of sanitation. Endorsed by African Heads of State in 2008, African governments pledged themselves to sanitation commitments for the first time.

Wherever he went, media and public attention followed, opening a multitude of doors along the way for UNSGAB and water issues.

HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal



HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan was invited to the Board in 2013, owing to his lifelong commitment to human dignity, regional cooperation and water management in the Middle East and Arab world.

As Chair, Prince Hassan championed outspoken and plain language advocacy of sanitation and its impact on girls and women.

HRH left the Chair position in 2014 in order to dedicate his time towards Middle Eastern affairs, given the severe crisis in the region.

Dr. Uschi Eid



The final Chair of UNSGAB, Dr. Uschi Eid, served on the Board from its inception. Before becoming Chair in June 2014, she ensured the smooth management of

UNSGAB's internal and external affairs as Vice-Chair, together with the Board Secretariat. Being a former Parliamentary State Secretary with long-standing experience in international development and African affairs, her convening power helped leverage partnerships and cooperation. Her effective liaison with various governments resulted in financial support, the hosting of UNSGAB meetings, and strong support, particularly from Germany, for a significant number of substantive issues.

Dr. Eid has been a passionate and outspoken advocate for sanitation, de-tabooing the topic and promoting sanitation in schools. She championed the International Year of Sanitation (2008) and the Sanitation Drive to 2015.



Mahmoud Abu-Zeid

Former Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation of Egypt (1997-2009). President of Arab Water Council (since 2004). Honorary President (since 2003) and co-founder of the World Water Council.

David Boys

Deputy General Secretary of the global trade union federation Public Services International (PSI), responsible for utilities, health and social services, local and regional government, and public administration. Coordinates PSI's support to trade unions for growth, organization and mobilization. Oversees PSI work on pension fund investment guidelines and multinational corporations.

Juanita Castaño

Former Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) New York Office. Former International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Special Advisor for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Has served as Regional Director of IUCN, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, and representative of Colombia at the United Nations during the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) process.

Margaret Catley-Carlson

As Canadian diplomat, Deputy Director General of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), President of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and the Population Council, and from the vantage point of two dozen water research and policy boards, she has worked on global issues and management of economic and social development.

Chen Lei

Minister of Water Resources of China, Deputy Commander-in-Chief, State Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters, Member of State Council South-to-North Water Diversion Project Construction Committee, Member of State Council Three Gorges Project Construction Committee. Formerly, Executive Vice-Chairman of the People's Government of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of China (2005-2007) and Vice-Minister of Water Resources.

Giorgio Giacomelli

Ambassador of Italy. Former Director General for Development Cooperation. Former Ambassador to Somalia and Syria. As UN Under-Secretary-General (1985-1997), among other roles, he was Commissioner-General of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and Executive Director General of the UN International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). Special Rapporteur of the UN Commission on Human Rights (1999-2001). Former President of Hydroaid.

Ángel Gurría

Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

(OECD). Former Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs (1994-98) and of Finance (1998-2000). Former Member of the World Panel on Financing Water Infrastructure (The Camdessus Panel). Chair of the Gurría Task Force on Financing Water for All. Former President of Mexico's Export-Import Bank.

Han Seung-soo

Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea. Founding Chair, High-Level Expert Panel on Water and Disaster / USNGAB. Honorary President, Korea Water Forum. Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General on Climate Change. President of the 56th Session of the UN General Assembly (2001-2002).

Kenzo Hiroki

Vice-President, College of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism within the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) of Japan. Former Councillor of the Cabinet Secretariat of Japan. Former Director of the Water Resources Planning Division, MLIT. Member and Vice-Chair of the Steering Committee of the Global Water Partnership (GWP). Vice Secretary-General of the 3rd World Water Forum (2000-2003).

Omar Kabbaaj

Advisor to His Majesty the King of Morocco. Honorary President of the African Development Bank. Former President, African Development Bank (1995-2005). Member of the Conseil d'administration of the Agence Française de Développement (AFD).

Olivia la O' Castillo

Chair and Founding Member of Sustainable Development Solutions for Asia and the Pacific (SDSAP). Member, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) Board of Trustees. Former Member, Board of Directors, International Environmental Technology Centre (IETC) - UNEP in Shiga, Japan. Former Chair and President of the Asia Pacific Roundtable for Sustainable Consumption and Production.

Antonio Miranda

Water and sanitation engineer. He brought his experience as former Director and Head of Brazilian public operators and as former Head of the Brazilian Association of Municipal Public Water and Wastewater Operators. Participant in international initiatives, mostly as a public sector management expert; he was Member of the first Steering Committee of the Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA).

Maria Mutagamba

Minister of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, Uganda. Woman Member of Parliament, Rakai District. Former Minister

of Water and Environment (2006-2012). Former State Minister of Water (2002-2006). Former President of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW), 2004-2006.

Poul Nielson

Former Commissioner of the European Union for Development and Humanitarian Aid (1999-2004). Danish Minister for Development Cooperation (1994-1999) and Energy (1979-1982). Member of Danish Parliament (1971-1999).

Eric Odada

Prof. Odada is a fellow of the Kenya National Academy of Sciences (KNAS) and the World Academy of Art and Science (WAAS). He has served on many international scientific committees of the International Council for Science (ICSU) and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) of the World Bank.

Gérard Payen

As a practitioner of water services, he headed a group of companies providing safe water to over 100 million people per day and then headed AquaFed, the International Federation of Private Water Operators. He is working in the international community to improve water management and financing through better public policies.

Judith Rees

Vice-Chair of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at the London School of Economics (LSE), and Professor of Environmental and Resources Management. Immediate past President of the Royal Geographical Society. Formerly, Deputy Director (1998-2004) and Interim Director (2011-2012) of LSE.

Richard (Roy) Torkelson

Managing Director at the Ascending Markets Financial (AMF) Guarantee Corporation. Former senior investment banker at JP Morgan / Merrill Lynch, and senior executive in the US and NY State governments, with experience in implementing water-related financial innovations, such as revolving funds, stand-alone and pooled financing structures in the USA, and in developing countries.

Yordan Uzunov

Former Bulgarian Deputy Minister of the Environment (1993-1997). Headed the Department of Bioindication and Environmental Assessments at the Central Laboratory of General Ecology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS), 1997-2010. Chair of the Department of Aquatic

Ecosystems at the Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research (IBER-BAS), 2010-2015.

Koos Wieriks

Strategic Advisor in the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, with broad experience in national, transboundary and international water policies. Former Secretary General of the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine (ICPR), Institutional Water Advisor of the Minister of Public Works of Indonesia, General Secretary of the Netherlands Water Advisory Board, Personal Advisor to HRH the Prince of Orange, and Councillor at the Netherlands' Embassy in Berlin.

FORMER MEMBERS

Michel Camdessus – Former Managing Director, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Governor of the Bank of France

Jocelyn Dow – Red Thread, Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), Guyana

Ronnie Kasrils – Former Minister of Water, South Africa

Hideaki Oda – Former Director General, MLIT, Japan, and Secretary-General of the 3rd World Water Forum

Wang Shucheng – Former Minister of Water Resources, China

Christine Todd Whitman – Former Governor, New Jersey

Peter Woike – International Finance Corporation (IFC)

ADVISORS

Anthony Cox – Deputy Director, OECD

Bert Diphooorn – Former Division Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

Jin Hai – Vice-President, Development Research Center, Ministry of Water Resources, China

SECRETARIAT / STAFF LIST

Francois Guerquin – Head of Secretariat (2008-2015)

Kenzo Hiroki – Head of Secretariat (2005-2008)

Osamu Mizuno – Deputy Head of Secretariat (2012-2015)

Leanne Burney, Seiji Ito, Koen Overkamp – Experts

Nicolas Franke, Florence Poppe – Associate Experts

Nicole Kranz, Nina Odenwälder, Philipp Peters – Advisors to Dr. Eid

FINAL REPORT

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How UNSGAB worked

In early 2004, the then United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan called on former Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto of Japan to devise and execute this idea: bring together eminent people to advise on how to solve the planet's foremost water and sanitation troubles, suggest a handful of attainable recommendations and a concise plan of action, and then provide the high-level leadership needed to galvanize the international community into action on the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets for drinking water and sanitation. The Prime Minister and his Chair successors took up these challenges.

We became known as UNSGAB, an international group of about 20 individuals who met a total of 25 times over the course of the following decade. Board Members were chosen by the Secretary-General's office. These were diverse individuals with a wide range of experiences gained over two to three decades. They were all ready to work in a personal capacity, not to act as a representative for UN Member States or interest groups, and to use their networks and influence to help the water agenda move forward where it most needed the boost.

There were disadvantages to be sure: with no in-built mechanism for renewal, we could never be sufficiently representative and the process of enlisting new members with different skills was painstakingly slow. More crucial, the Board in its 11-year life span operated without a UN budgetary envelope, having to appeal repeatedly to generous and supportive donors. And ultimately, getting water and UNSGAB on the priority list of a busy Secretary-General proved a constant challenge.

In a bid to ensure maximum efficiency and impact, at the outset we decided that we would not write reports on the existing water situation, nor would we implement projects; other groups were already doing this. Rather, we would use Board Members themselves as the major change agents, and we would work by pinpointing the changes needed on the part of stakeholders in the water sector. All Board Members worked without payment, our employers allowing us to contribute our time.

While there was much that we disagreed about, we toiled to find common ground. Our influence and stimulus went mainly towards understanding existing mandates, studying the plethora of resolutions and decisions that had already been accepted, and trying to push new ideas for solutions to the surface that would advance the achievement of the MDG targets for water and sanitation. As such, the Board decided to exercise high-level persuasion to urge quicker and better action by the water community to counter the scourge of millions of people living in abject water-related conditions, and the degradation of ecosystems.

Eleven years have now passed, and UNSGAB has reached the end of its journey. Therefore it is time to take stock of what was accomplished, ponder how it was achieved, learn from successes and failures, and most especially, voice the unfinished business. Certainly, a lot has been accomplished, but the bucket of water challenges to be solved remains quite full, and the Board's overwhelming concern is that much more has to be done.

Hence, with this, our first and indeed only report, we are not yearning to sing our praises but rather to bequeath the lessons of our experience so that it may help others to follow suit. And so, in unison, one ultimate time, inspire to action.

Our way of working was to meet and talk about water around the world. The support of our hosts and of international financial institutions (ADB, IDB, AfDB and IsDB) was fundamental and indispensable. The support of Board Members' affiliated institutions was also key, allowing us to devote time and effort to these meetings and to our preparatory and follow-up work.

UNSGAB BOARD MEETINGS

Location	Date
UN Headquarters, New York	July 2004
Tokyo, Japan	December 2004
Rome, Italy	November 2005
Berlin, Germany	February 2006
Mexico City, Mexico	March 2006
Paris, France	July 2006
Tunis, Tunisia	December 2006
Shanghai, China	May 2007
Bogota, Colombia	November 2007
Tokyo, Japan	May 2008
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia	November 2008
Sofia, Bulgaria	May 2009
Amsterdam, the Netherlands	December 2009
Singapore	June 2010
Seoul, Republic of Korea	November 2010
UN Headquarters, New York	June 2011
Bonn, Germany	November 2011
Panama City, Panama	June 2012
Nairobi, Kenya	November 2012
Milan, Italy	May 2013
Budapest, Hungary	October 2013
Singapore	June 2014
Tokyo, Japan	October 2014
Gyeongju, Republic of Korea	April 2015
UN Headquarters, New York	November 2015

Some of our hosts and additional sponsors made it possible to put in place and run our Secretariat, to hold individual meetings and to cover expenses. Our thanks go to China, Denmark, France, Italy, Switzerland and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. A very special mention must be made of the Governments of Japan, the Netherlands and Germany for their recurrent and multi-faceted support, with the latter also making this final report possible.

I ask you always to provide me with the most open, **honest**, and **independent** advice.

Kofi Annan, 22 July 2004

Shining a light on 7 tipping points to transform the water world

As we set to work, the Board identified a series of transformational changes that required the most urgent attention, the pursuit of which, with a unified voice, could yield the most meaningful impact. Deep conviction that applying pressure on these transformational streams was going to improve people's wellbeing, guided our work and actions throughout our tenure.

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Clearly, when we succeed it is because others agree to act – and while taking some credit for these accomplishments, we acknowledge first and foremost the contributions of those who decided change was imperative – and acted.

1. Build attention to water and sanitation: create the will to act now

Where we focused

Despite a growing water crisis, with an increasing number of people living under water stress, worsening flood and drought catastrophes, degrading ecosystems, and exacerbated political tensions in water-scarce areas, water continues to be undervalued and badly managed. The symptoms of lack of attention can be seen everywhere. Most countries do not adequately monitor either the quantity or the quality of water resources and wastewater in particular, and the monitoring of sanitation and drinking water also remains a challenge. Too many countries respond to water-related disaster emergencies but do not integrate water risks in development planning. Water is distressingly underfinanced compared to other types of infrastructure. We discharge waste and toxins to our water. We have not paid enough attention to the ground rules of sharing water – across sectors, and across regional or national boundaries. Lack of adequate access to drinking water and sanitation plagues billions of people, especially the poorest. Water issues are important, but their management is difficult and often fragmented or ignored. There are answers, innovations, new ideas and success stories too – to spread these, the Board needed to convince the most senior decision-makers of the centrality of the water theme.

What we did

We focused on the most senior levels of governance in countries and organizations. Our Chairs took on key roles. Our Members and their support structures used their contacts. Our goal was to prompt change across the wide spectrum of water issues, with special concentration on the MDG targets for drinking water and sanitation, and later on securing a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) dedicated to water and sanitation.

We conceptualized and pushed tailor-made water management and sanitation support messages to the highest level of national and international authority. We worked to create new regional bodies on water, engineer meetings with financial authorities, give keynote speeches, make changes to international bodies, and convince national leaders.

We intervened to add water to the agenda of international conferences and expositions. We pushed to put sanitation on summit agendas and in their declarations. We urged national governments for national action. We lobbied UN Member States to support water initiatives in the UN system and also took up-front and behind-the-scenes steps to strengthen the capacity of UN-Water.

We attended and, on some occasions, co-hosted conferences and meetings worldwide, from national conclaves, to regional deliberations, to global fora.

In all our advocacy efforts we stressed the central role of water and sanitation in the realization of all the MDGs (to improve health and education, and banish hunger) and their close interlinkages with energy and food.

When it became clear that the SDGs would succeed the original MDGs, the Board campaigned vigorously and was actively involved in international efforts to ensure a comprehensive goal dedicated to water and sanitation with ambitious targets and suitable indicators.

FACTS*

Business ranks the water crisis #1 global risk, based on impact to society

World Economic Forum, 2015

Projected global increase in water demand between 2000 and 2050: 55%

OECD, 2012

Number of people currently living in river basins where water use exceeds recharge: over 1.7 billion

Gleeson et al., 2012

*The full references for all facts cited in this publication as well as photo credits are available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/water/unsgab/finalreport/references>

2. Drinking Water: More. Managed. Monitored. Made safe.

Where we focused

We spotlighted vital core preconditions for better drinking water systems:

- the need to improve the management capacity of utilities and water supply systems to deliver more good quality water to more people;
- an exposure to the reality that countries need support in building up national information, monitoring and reporting systems, and that globally, nothing less than an overhaul of the existing system of drinking water monitoring and reporting would suffice;
- the urgent need for an increase in the supply of drinking water to the unserved and underserved, directing attention to the provision of uncontaminated water and dispelling the general confusion between improved and safe drinking water.

The Board used its contacts, its influence within the international system and its knowledge of international organizations to motivate many actors to make real change – we were privileged to have been a welcome partner. For example, we engaged in constructive discussions, and on numerous occasions collaborated with the UN Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation in challenging the international water community to open up to new concepts and ideas.

What we did

Early on, we focused on urging UN action on the challenges posed by the many thousands of under-performing public, mainly municipal, water and sanitation utilities, as one precondition for meeting the MDG targets for drinking water and sanitation. Our recommendation was eagerly taken up by Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who mandated UN-Habitat to set up the Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA). GWOPA has helped establish dozens of utility partnerships and created regional platforms to stimulate alliances, supported also by development partners.

Equally, early contacts were forged with the WHO / UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) to urge improvements on monitoring baselines, reconciliation of global and national datasets, and disaggregation of data. Our April 2008 paper "Monitoring and Reporting: progress of access to water and sanitation, an assessment by UNSGAB" triggered a positive reaction from JMP. It was quickly followed by an appeal to the Secretary-General, resulting in increased ambitions and a revival of the Strategic Advisory Group to the Joint Monitoring Programme / UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS), which an UNSGAB Member chaired for 3 years. This work helped to improve the outputs of JMP and GLAAS. It also served to stimulate more interest in water and sanitation monitoring, including from the OECD.

In 2012, the UN announced that the MDG target for access to safe drinking water had been achieved. UNSGAB reinforced its vigorous campaign pointing out the disconnect between the target and the proxy indicator (use of an "improved drinking-water source") that was supposed to measure it: there is a difference between a drinking water source that is only 'improved' and drinking water that is truly safe. UN-Water has officially confirmed that most unsafe drinking water is classified as being improved. In many quarters, the correction has been made: safe

means safe, that is, uncontaminated. However, in too many others, including official UN statements, the fallacy persists and the global need for safe drinking water is thus seriously underestimated.

The concentration on monitoring resulted in UNSGAB taking an active role in working out detailed goal and target proposals for the SDGs. We also helped UN-Water to prepare 10 indicators that are necessary to buttress the post-2015 water-related targets. We urged UN-Water to enhance its monitoring capacity post-2015, by encouraging JMP to monitor new and enhanced WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) indicators, and by creating the new monitoring mechanisms needed for wastewater and water resources. This is now being done under the UN-Water Global Expanded Water Monitoring Initiative (GEMI).

Through the UNSGAB lens: next steps and needed actions

Safe should mean safe. To end confusion, the UN, governments and other relevant actors should only use the term "safe drinking water" when they mean uncontaminated drinking water.

To achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water, efforts to expand drinking water services must urgently be stepped up. For this, governments must fast-track institutional reforms, boost funding, eliminate corruption and strengthen capacities in their water services sectors.

Organize and reinforce national and global monitoring of drinking water quality.

WHO, UNICEF and UN-Habitat should make efforts to ensure that the global regression in access to drinking water (and sanitation) in urban areas is better reported.

FACTS

People who still lack improved drinking water sources: 1 in 10 (663 million in total)

People without access to improved drinking water: 8 in 10 live in rural areas; the number of people without such access is increasing in urban areas and in sub-Saharan Africa

WHO / UNICEF JMP, 2015

Number of people who use a source of drinking water that is faecally contaminated: at least 1.8 billion

Bain et al., 2014

3. Bring sanitation into the mainstream

Where we focused

Since sanitation was a taboo and hygiene a non-topic, neither of them were really on the table in 2004. Toilets, excretion and related body functions were deeply uncomfortable, even unmentionable, subjects. How to talk to governments about them? The Board focused its energy on bringing sanitation out of the shadows. We used our leverage in lobbying the UN Member States to introduce path-breaking resolutions on sanitation. We pushed for sanitation on regional summit agendas and in their declarations. Our Chair shook hands with women working as manual scavengers. To shed light on hygiene's neglected role, he and the Secretary-General washed their hands in front of international cameras. Political leaders and public personalities were enlisted to speak up and speak out. We supported independent initiatives like the Sustainable Sanitation Alliance and World Toilet Day, as important multipliers. We reached out to make the case that sanitation is a good economic investment, brings dignity, equality and safety, is vital for good health and sustains a clean environment.

What we did

We came up with the idea for making 2008 the "International Year of Sanitation" in order to address the sanitation challenge and approached a group of countries to sponsor the respective UN resolution. When momentum flagged after the International Year, we came up with a booster mechanism, the "Sanitation Drive to 2015", calling on governments to redouble efforts to meet the MDG target. It was backed by a resolution adopted by the General Assembly in 2010, which for the first time included a call to end open defecation. Our then Vice-Chair launched the Drive together with the Prime Minister of Rwanda at the opening of the AfricaSan 3 Conference in Kigali in 2011. To increase momentum, we spearheaded the creation of a well-used "Sanitation Drive to 2015 Planners' Guide". All this ultimately laid the foundation for the Deputy Secretary-General's "Call to Action on Sanitation" in 2013 and the UN resolution "Sanitation for All" in the same year. The latter officially designated 19 November as World Toilet Day.

During an intense meeting in Tunis in 2006, with African ministers and senior African Development Bank (AfDB) officials, the need for African leaders to speak out, together, on sanitation was hammered out. Our close cooperation with the African Union (AU) and the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) led to the precedent-setting AU Sharm el-Sheikh Declaration on water and sanitation, adopted in 2008.

We strongly supported the emerging movement for regional sanitation conferences and worked with relevant international bodies and WASH advocates to design and spur adoption of specific, 'new' national commitments. In 2007, UNSGAB initiated the first Asia-Pacific Water Summit, in Beppu, Japan, together with the President of the Asia-Pacific Water Forum. To give a ministerial-level impetus to the LatinoSan process, one UNSGAB meeting in 2007 was held in Bogotá, back-to-back with an Inter-American Development Bank meeting and LatinoSan I; and in 2012 in Panama City during the preparation period for LatinoSan III. The Board played an important role as partner of AMCOW in consecu-

FACTS

The world has missed the MDG target for basic sanitation by almost 700 million people

People who still lack improved sanitation facilities: 1 in 3 (2.4 billion in total)

People who practise open defecation: 1 in 8 (946 million in total)

WHO / UNICEF JMP, 2015

tive AfricaSan Conferences, in particular, AfricaSan +5, held in Durban, South Africa, in 2008, which produced the trailblazing eThekweni Commitments.

Triggered by growing scientific evidence of a close link between inadequate sanitation and poor nutrition, our suggestion to devote World Toilet Day 2015 to this topic was readily accepted.

UNSGAB has achieved its primary goal in raising the profile of sanitation. Open defecation is now the subject of public debate, presidents announce promises for universal toilet access, a Sanitation Muppet has been launched. Radio, TV and the blogosphere talk about toilets and access to sanitation.

Through the UNSGAB lens: next steps and needed actions

Despite progress, the sanitation MDG target has not been met. We call on the world to:

Widen the focus beyond the home – toilets are needed in schools, clinics, workplaces, markets and other public places.

Prioritize sanitation as preventive medicine and break the vicious cycle of disease and malnutrition, which especially affects women and children.

Get serious about scaling up innovative technologies along the sanitation chain and unleash another sanitation revolution, as a key economic and medical enabler in the run-up to 2030.

Make a business case for sanitation by realizing the resource potential of human waste.

De-taboo the topic of menstrual hygiene management, which deserves to be addressed as a priority by the UN and governments.

4. Push for increased and improved financial flows

Where we focused

The strong financial sector affiliation of several Board Members was brought to bear, using their memberships, official positions and networks to create: better capacity and awareness of financial issues, better monitoring of data on existing financial flows to better inform political decisions, new global awareness of financing possibilities for water, better understanding of obstacles to local finance, better use of fiscal resources. We worked to address the constraints that kept funds from covering investment needs in the water sector. In this respect, we recognized the need for municipalities and water utilities to have far better access to borrowing and capital markets, which means overcoming a variety of obstacles.

What we did

Frequent meetings with development banks provided good opportunities to exhort bank officials to support new water-related initiatives. Several of our Members played important roles in replenishments and funding discussions, and several memoranda were concluded with regional development banks and provided umbrellas for some Board Members to work on various policy issues. We talked with pension funds and encouraged them to invest in water.

Following meetings with the World Bank President, joint missions were conducted in Peru (2009) and Kenya (2012) to look at barriers preventing local water utilities to get easy and cheap access to local capital markets, and at possible solutions. This, *inter alia*, resulted in the establishment of an inter-ministerial working group on water financing in Kenya. The evidence gathered in these countries was an eye-opener on the key financing bottleneck for water utilities.

The privilege of having the OECD Secretary-General as an UNSGAB Member created mutual benefits. UNSGAB strongly supported the 2005 OECD move toward a major focus on water-related challenges and has been an integral part of OECD thinking and discussions on a number of important water management and monitoring instruments developed in the last decade. For instance, we vigorously supported the OECD's seminal 2009 paper "Managing Water for All", which highlighted the modes of water financing, non-refundable flows being always a blend of 3Ts (tariffs, taxes and transfers).

We also encouraged GLAAS' tracking of national water economics; their first detailed country studies revealed water expenditures well in excess of what had been expected.

For several years, our meetings with ministers and senior officials in all parts of the world provided a venue for explanations and appeals regarding national funding policies and priorities. Regrettably, our repeated meetings with Official Development Assistance (ODA) officials did not result in a greater focus on leveraging additional non-ODA financing for water to make more effective use of ODA funds. Partially in response to UNSGAB's request to report on 'impacts' and not only on 'inputs', several bilateral organizations (e.g. in France, Netherlands, Germany) and some multilaterals (e.g. the AfDB) have started reporting the numbers of people who gained access to water and sanitation as a result of their funding.

FACTS

Estimated loss in developing countries from lack of access to improved water sources and basic sanitation: 1.5% of GDP *WHO, 2012*

Priority given to public water expenditures varies widely between countries: from less than 0.5% to more than 2% of GDP

World Bank, 2009 & GLAAS, 2014

Water utilities in developing countries unable to cover their basic operation and management costs: over 1/3 (out of 1700 surveyed)

IBNET, 2014

Through the UNSGAB lens: next steps and needed actions

At the global level, continue strong advocacy for giving increased priority to the water and sanitation services sector as well as water resources management in national budgets. Respect and encourage political commitments to increase funding for on-site sanitation and wastewater management.

At country level, secure additional financial resources of all kinds, including user fees and public budgets, overcome obstacles to local currency capital market financing, and find the blend of tariffs, taxes and transfers that ensures the financial viability of all utilities to provide improved services.

Make better use of ODA and other concessional finance to leverage non-ODA fund inflows, and to provide technical assistance for project preparation.

Encourage better knowledge of country-wide expenditures on water through GLAAS and other relevant financial monitoring initiatives.

Facilitate achievement of all water-related SDG targets by thoroughly estimating related economic costs and benefits.

In the water sector, make more efforts to apply for and use funds available for climate change adaptation (and mitigation) measures, for example, from the Green Climate Fund.

Strengthen applied research on water financing, as a key input for realizing the 2030 water agenda.

5. Catalyze better water resources management. IWRM and Nexus: within and between countries, across sectors

Where we focused

From the outset, several Board Members were already working for greater integration of the regional, national and sub-national management of water resources for various uses. This is termed integrated water resources management or IWRM. The last decade has seen a groundswell of concern over growing environmental risks, resource degradation and shortages which have an impact on food, energy and water security, and on economic and social development. The Nexus Approach recognizes the interrelationships between water, energy and food systems and calls for management approaches which address cross-sectoral trade-offs and synergies. With the conviction that the adoption of a global legal foundation will make for better management within the 250+ shared watercourses of the world, we used Board Members' affiliations with key organizations to support their endeavours to secure ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses (UN Watercourses Convention).

What we did

All UN Member States had agreed to report on their water management plans to the 13th session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development in 2005. This was the first major UN meeting to address the issue of water since the 2002 Earth Summit in Johannesburg. When reporting rates lagged, the Board worked with the Secretary-General's office to reach out to each member country and urge compliance – and the reporting rate rallied appreciably.

To galvanize support, Board Members publicized the results of the two Global Water Partnership surveys on national water management and IWRM in speeches and during conferences. We successfully encouraged the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to increase its IWRM funding. We stressed that IWRM must include water resources allocation, conservation and protection. We successfully lobbied for IWRM to be incorporated in the SDG on water and sanitation.

By virtue of the fact that UNSGAB's then Vice-Chair was also Co-Chair of the Nexus Conference on Water, Energy and Food Security, held in Bonn in 2011, and other Board Members served on the conference executive, UNSGAB helped popularize the concept and its messages: increase policy coherence, accelerate access, create more with less, end waste and minimize losses, and value natural infrastructure. Building on these linkages, UNSGAB supported the initiation of Nexus Dialogues hosted by regional bodies on regional priorities. For example, the African Union and UNSGAB co-convened the "High-level African Dialogue on the Water-Food-Energy Nexus" in Nairobi, Kenya, in November 2012. The event served as a reference point for subsequent Nexus-related activities on the continent.

Our Chair advocated for the ratification of the UN Watercourses Convention in several bilateral meetings, including with Heads of State. The Chair and then Vice-Chair's participation in the 2008 Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly in Cape Town, South Africa, allowed for individualized interaction with key parliamentarians. The Vice-Chair's letter-writing campaign to parliamentarians around the world helped increase the number of ratifications. To boost the work of the World Wide Fund for Nature / WWF in promoting the Convention, we co-hosted a number of its events on the subject, for example, at the 5th World Water Forum in Istanbul in 2009.

FACTS

Freshwater withdrawals for energy production are expected to increase by 20% through 2035 WWAP, 2014

Agriculture's share of worldwide freshwater withdrawals: about 70% FAO, 2014

Expected increase of people living in river basins under severe water stress: from 1.6 billion in 2000 to 3.9 billion by 2050 (over 40% of world population) OECD, 2012

Through the UNSGAB lens: next steps and needed actions

Prioritize water security at all levels and address the water component in all 17 global Sustainable Development Goals. More emphasis must be given to the reality that water scarcity, water pollution and deterioration of water-related ecosystems pose a threat to global sustainable development.

Governments should take action to improve the efficiency and sustainability of water use by promoting and scaling-up water conservation measures in industry, agriculture and cities, as this is key to addressing water scarcity.

At a minimum, follow the imperative for integrated management in agriculture, industry, cities, watersheds, and public health and disaster risks. Go beyond IWRM plans to tangible change through institutional reforms and strengthened water resources monitoring and reporting.

Implement the Nexus Approach at scale to enhance cross-sectoral policy making at the global level. Begin by strengthening the scientific basis through more dedicated research. Share lessons learned from successful Nexus interventions in the growing number of regions that are experimenting with this approach. Promote the Nexus Approach both top-down, by anchoring it in policy and ensuring top-level commitment, and bottom-up, through concrete projects.

Keep up the momentum for further ratification along with real implementation of the UN Watercourses Convention.

6. Demand UN attention to pollution prevention, wastewater treatment and safe reuse

Where we focused

Untreated wastewater poses a threat to human health, water resources and the wider environment. Grounds for concern include the increasing environmental load caused by the pollution of water bodies, and the exposure of city dwellers, workers and farmers to raw or diluted wastewater. When we started our work, water pollution prevention and wastewater management were absent from the international agenda, and often attracted no national political attention. Farmers and some NGOs were already reusing wastewater, some governments had ambitious wastewater policies, professionals were actively promoting wastewater management, and international financing institutions were funding major investments. But there was no UN endorsement of the priority and no policy guidance to governments. UNSGAB had a threefold focus. Our primary efforts concentrated on urban wastewater management, also highlighting issues related to industrial and agricultural pollution. Secondly, we tried to draw attention to the potential for increasing water supply and decreasing energy consumption via wastewater recycling and safe reuse and thirdly, Board Members with the relevant expertise discussed the very important issue of setting global monitoring standards and targets for improved wastewater management with relevant bodies and in various fora.

What we did

The first important advocacy success came at the 5th World Water Forum in Istanbul in 2009, when ministers decided to take measures to develop wastewater collection, treatment and reuse approaches, and when mayors included wastewater in their final resolution. This was the first major conference to mention wastewater in a way requiring follow-up. Three years later, we successfully lobbied to make sanitation and wastewater a theme for the 6th World Water Forum in Marseille: wastewater was discussed in sessions and at a ministerial roundtable, and it featured prominently in the Forum Declaration.

We were one of the actors to lobby within the UN for greater attention to be paid to wastewater, by pushing UN-Water members to take a more balanced consideration of the full range of water problems, rather than focusing solely on drinking water or water use. UN-Water progressively addressed the issue by establishing a Task Force on Wastewater Management in 2009 and a UN Water Thematic Priority Area on Water Quality in 2010. It also decided that World Water Day 2010 would focus on water quality under the title “Clean Water for a Healthy World”. In the same year, UNEP and UN-Habitat launched the report “Sick Water?”, the first global UN study on wastewater, pollution and related threats to the quality of water supply. It laid the foundation for subsequent UN-Water action and UN work with Member States. Follow-up has included the Global Wastewater Initiative and a decision that wastewater will be the global theme for World Water Day 2017.

Wastewater issues have now found their way into seminal policy documents for action. Following sustained UNSGAB advocacy, pollution reduction and wastewater management became part of the Rio+20 outcome document and are now included in the SDGs as a target in its own right which aims to improve water quality by reducing pollution and halving untreated wastewater flows.

We worked with Regional Development Banks, particularly the ADB, to extend their sizeable investment programme in wastewater management and reuse into decentralized models which could be used by small communities, villages and NGOs.

Board Members persistently spoke out on the significance of wastewater monitoring, providing substantive support to various working groups on indicators, standards and targets. Following the Rio+20 Summit, we advocated that UN-Water create a global monitoring mechanism. This stimulated the setting-up of GEMI, a comprehensive global wastewater and water resources monitoring system.

FACTS

Number of countries with no publicly available information on flows of wastewater generated, treated or re-used: 57

Average wastewater treatment rate in countries: high-income, 70%; middle-income, about 33%; low-income, 8%

Sato et al., 2013

Nitrogen effluents from wastewater are projected to grow by 180% and phosphorus effluents by over 150% between 2000 and 2050 globally

OECD, 2012

Through the UNSGAB lens: next steps and needed actions

Countries must develop national wastewater policies and master plans, including cost estimates, timeframes, and sustainable financing plans, to ensure that capital investment plans are matched by external and internal funding sources. They must also pay more attention to wastewater operations and maintenance. National policies must include pollution prevention and safe wastewater reuse as well as on-site and off-site sanitation, considering all available technical options.

International financial institutions as well as UN and bilateral organizations with capacities in wastewater management should step up their support to countries. UN-Water members should make experiences of successful wastewater strategies available.

The global indicators for SDG target 6.3 should be selected for their ability to stimulate international progress now. UN Member States must strongly support the development of GEMI by UN-Water. GEMI should report on both SDG indicators and other indicators that will increase the global knowledge base.

Countries must expand the focus on urban wastewater to include industrial pollution, agricultural sources and resulting ocean contamination, and should endorse river basin clean-up actions worldwide.

Universities and research institutions should further develop the global evidence-base on wastewater pollution, treatment, recycling and safe reuse to better inform decision-makers.

7. Promote protection and prevent death and damage from water-related disasters

Where we focused

From the start, the Board's actions aimed to create stronger support within governments for implementing the recommendations of international disaster preparedness and risk reduction agreements. Disaster response communities consulted and improved their capabilities. But too little attention was paid to action that would reach across the responsibilities of different ministries and support collective regional and international efforts. Workers in particular are often at highest risk, yet disaster prevention and response critically depend on them. Climate change, urbanization and poor water management have increased disaster risk almost everywhere, especially in urban deltas. Our goal was to mobilize the world. The strategy was to create awareness and whip up support for steps to reduce vulnerability, improve preparedness, mitigate risk, build up resilience, and improve disaster response, including drinking water and sanitation management during disasters. Events such as the Asian tsunamis created growing international concern about the impact of water-related disasters, allowing pertinent efforts to reach a wider audience and attract more financing.

What we did

An UNSGAB disaster working group evolved into the High-level Expert Panel on Water and Disaster (HELP/UNSGAB, later the High-Level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disaster) under the chairmanship of UNSGAB Member Dr. Han Seung-soo, former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea. It brought together senior representatives of UNSGAB, governments and water and disaster organizations, from both rich and poor countries around the world. HELP and UNSGAB cooperated closely in a joint effort to advocate a shift in political attention from disaster response to disaster risk reduction.

After 18 months, the group published the "Water and Disaster Action Plan" with 40+ recommendations that would elevate the status of the topic. It was presented at the 5th World Water Forum in Istanbul in the presence of our Honorary President and our Chair.

The HELP Chair, together with the UNSGAB Chair, called for a UN Special Thematic Session on Water and Disasters, which took place in March 2013. Under the leadership of the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly, our Honorary President, our Chair and the HELP Chair, the event garnered high-level participation, shone a much needed light on, and drew policy-attention to the subject.

In 2013, the Secretary-General appointed the HELP Chair as Special Envoy for Disaster Risk Reduction and Water. In the same year, UNSGAB decided that HELP should stand on its own feet and become an entity independent from UNSGAB.

In September 2014, the Board was represented at the High-Level Special Event on Reducing Risks from Water-Related Disasters on the margins of the 69th UN General Assembly in New York. HELP and UNSGAB also gave input to the 2014 Sendai Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and the 7th World Water Forum in South Korea. This helped to elevate attention at a senior level.

FACTS

Number of people affected by floods, droughts and storms between 1992 and 2012: 4.2 billion (95% of all people affected by disasters)

Economic losses from water-related disasters between 1992 and 2012: USD 1.3 trillion *ISDR, 2012*

Expected economic value of assets at risk by 2050: USD 45 trillion (over 340% increase from 2010) *OECD, 2012*

HELP/UNSGAB efforts in the field of disaster risk reduction stimulated increased consultation among various relevant stakeholders, such as OECD, World Bank, US Army Corps of Engineers, the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) and insurance companies. UN-Water published "Water in a Changing World" to highlight water-related disasters. Partly due to the tireless work of HELP, the disaster risk reduction target is now also incorporated in SDG 11 on cities.

Through the UNSGAB lens: next steps and needed actions

Water-related disasters must be addressed as part of development planning, including required social protection.

Disaster risk reduction should put more emphasis on preventive measures, risk sensitive investment and building resilience, including through infrastructure investments for climate change adaptation.

Linkages between government and local authorities at all levels, especially at city-level, need to be improved, with the help of a user-friendly and innovative knowledge portal, as does collaboration between nations.

To take the necessary preventive action to protect the lives of hundreds of millions people in vulnerable environments, international and regional actions are needed to further raise awareness and develop capacities, in particular for workers who are often at highest risk and in need of training and equipment.

HELP should cooperate more closely with the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR).

Words of wisdom for future advisory groups

Success factors:

At the heart of our work has been the strong shared sense of mission that water management and water and sanitation services need to be improved, and that this can be achieved by exerting positive pressure on policy-makers. Board Members created a modus operandi, which was established early and observed for the whole decade. Some elements in it worked particularly well and might be adopted by any other UN-related advisory bodies seeking to have a strong impact:

- We did not write reports or produce publications; instead, we produced technical inputs, conducted internal analyses for UN consideration and suggested strategy ideas for UN resolutions.
- We did not get involved in programme management – although Members sat on management boards.
- Where possible, we selected priority themes and recommended actions from the copious existing recommendations / reports rather than try to create our own original recommendations. We concentrated on thinking about what it would take to get action in these areas and how to press for that action.
- We formatted this as “Your Action” and undertook to complement this with “Our Action”. This format was used for our first few years, in “HAP I” as we worked initially and continued to work under Hashimoto Action Plans (HAPs), named after our first Chair.
- We identified actors and approached them both at high and working-level.
- We did not seek publicity for ourselves nor manage public campaigns on water issues – rather, we used high profile Chairs and Members to speak out frequently to urge others to improve public information programmes about water.
- Members contributed more than words and ideas, and they had principal responsibility for taking action and making contacts. At the same time, the Secretariat took on an indispensable role in establishing networks, drafting and writing inputs, attending meetings and representing UNSGAB.
- Productive discussions on controversial topics were encouraged. The Chair arbitrated disputes rather than dismissing them.
- We used plain and frank language to lay out recommendation items, and focused on what was doable. We avoided use of ambiguous ‘UN resolution’ language and our meetings were run on the same lines.
- Having no budget from the UN, we actively raised funds and were lucky enough to encourage several nations to host our meetings and contribute generously. Without this support, we could not have held these vital discussions around the world, always face-to-face, which promoted the camaraderie within the Board, and fostered mutual learning.
- Members’ long-standing experience as politicians, ministers, parliamentary state secretary, diplomats, senior managers and academics lent them credibility and convening power. We had the ability to bring together people from different backgrounds to engage in productive and open dialogue.

Lessons learned:

The above describes what we believe to be the foundation of our successful actions. Were we to begin again, we would argue strongly for some core budgetary arrangement. We could have been more representative if the capacity for member renewal had been built in; on the other hand, we had the advantage of long-standing collegiality.

Board Members collectively found that the foremost factors leading to our successes, where and when we had them, were:

- the support of a proactive Secretariat
- collaboration between Members and the Secretariat
- focused and clear recommendations in HAPs I, II & III, in concise and straight-forward language
- the high profile of Chairs, Vice-Chair and Members

And, we learned that patience pays off: the influence of UNSGAB grew over time.

Clearly, when we succeed it is because others agree to act – and while taking some credit for these accomplishments, we acknowledge first and foremost the contributions of those who decided change was imperative – and acted.

Unfinished business and tasks for the future

We have offered thematic recommendations in Chapters 2 – 7 and have given advice on how future advisory boards can organize themselves for maximum impact. On the next two pages we lay out broad recommendations on essential steps as the world moves into a new era, and embraces a new international water agenda, with the global Sustainable Development Goals. A priority set of recommendations for action on this page is followed by structural recommendations for the global water architecture on the next page. Our recommendations are informed by a series of strategic dialogues and thus include inputs from stakeholders across the globe. They are intended to add impetus to the work of all actors eager to accelerate progress on the 2030 water agenda.

The Millennium Development Goals were – very broadly – a call to adjust government spending, at national and international levels, in order to alleviate poverty in developing countries. The Sustainable Development Goals bring more profound change: they are a response to complex and interconnected economic, social and environmental sustainability issues, challenges and risks, including serving the poor – and they require action by ALL countries within their own borders, and abroad. The 2030 water agenda, as reflected in the SDG on water and sanitation plus several other SDGs which also have water-related targets, emphasizes, but goes well beyond, drinking water and sanitation.

Recommendations for action on the implementation of the 2030 water agenda

- 1. Promote a global approach to water** – While many water impacts are found at local and regional levels, climate change and the globalized economy make the strong global dimension of water increasingly evident. Globalizing forces, such as virtual water flows, increasing water scarcity, water pollution and ecological degradation, intensifying water-related disasters and persisting and emerging public health threats from the WASH crisis, which remains unresolved in many parts of the world, need to be more systematically addressed from a global perspective. This will call for greater awareness about water on the part of politicians and in the climate community, promoting action on water within national and global climate change policies. Businesses, and national and local governments have to translate their growing awareness about water risks into comprehensive strategies for action.
- 2. Make better use of existing international legal instruments within the water sector** – Leverage the UN and UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) Water Conventions and use the Ramsar Convention as a bridge to Multilateral Environmental Agreements and between development and environment. Use the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation as a compass for the management of water services.
- 3. Tackle the growing urban water and sanitation crisis** – With ever more people living in cities, there is a need to better document and address the many water-related challenges in and around cities. To start with, it is important that the data reported by the UN at global level more accurately reflects water-related urban trends. This is particularly true for access to drinking-water and sanitation, where the global regression seen today in urban areas is not currently being explicitly reported. In addition, it will be necessary to better establish the water sustainability risks associated with urbanization, to create awareness about them, and to take relevant action, including mitigating water-related pressures from growing urban areas on the peri-urban and rural environment. UN-Habitat should take up these challenges in its priorities for action, also with a view to the Habitat III Conference.
- 4. Involve the private sector more strongly in dealing with growing water-related risks** – To make the 2030 water vision a reality, effective engagement with the private sector, both as an enabling partner and as a key player that needs to be held accountable, is indispensable. The key challenge of mobilizing the private sector lies at the local and national levels. Innovative approaches, such as the water stewardship concept, have to be further developed here, while also involving non-classical water stakeholders. The Global Compact and specifically its water component, the CEO Water Mandate, should support this effort. Governments should consider leveraging the water footprint concept by making water-use reporting mandatory for listed companies and large cities.
- 5. Governments must take proactive and preventive action on growing water-related risks** – Governments still lagging behind must fast-track institutional reforms for better management and enhanced accountability. They must boost funding and strengthen capacities, especially in water-related statistics and administrative monitoring. Extraordinary measures need to be considered, such as the creation of well-embedded water units within ministries of finance, in order to strengthen water financing at national and local levels, asking for water impact plans for investments to help promote funding for wastewater, and fostering inclusive multi-stakeholder partnerships to support implementation and ensure follow-up and review also from outside the government.
- 6. The UN must adapt in order to better support Member States in addressing water-related risks** – Considering that a lot of UN organizations deal with water but only as a marginal issue, nothing less than a full-scale water-cultural revolution within the UN is needed. Relevant UN organizations need to allocate (more) core funding to water and need to review their policies. It is, for example, high time that WHO endorsed water, sanitation and hygiene as primary prevention. Water-related data management within the UN needs to be improved and the respective role of UN-Water strengthened in order to address persistent and serious data inconsistencies in water-related UN communications. Efforts should be made to cooperate more closely with the OECD regarding its work on the economic, financial and governance aspects of water.
- 7. Form high-level alliances to tackle priority water-related challenges that are ripe for action:**
 - Document and take action on *the world's 20 water scarcity hotspots* in both North and South
 - Convene a Heads of State Panel on Water for *global advocacy around water resilience and adaptation*
 - Document and take action to reduce disaster risks and to invest in *resiliency in high risk urban delta areas*
 - Promote and scale-up *toilets in schools*
 - De-taboo and take action on *menstrual hygiene management*
 - Raise public awareness and take action towards *sustainable management of groundwater*
 - Prioritize *water management in post-conflict and fragile contexts*, contributing to combating causes for migration and flight
 - Anchor *water and sanitation* as a core concern in *sustainable urban development*

Structural recommendations for a more effective global water architecture

There is currently a mismatch between the integrated and ambitious 2030 vision of freshwater and sanitation management and the international political structures available to contribute to its implementation. Member States will have to organize themselves better within the framework of the UN vis-à-vis the water theme. In order that the global water architecture is more fit for purpose, we suggest the following:

- 1. Establish a UN Intergovernmental Committee on Water and Sanitation** – Formed after appropriate consultation among UN Member States and before the first thematic review of water by the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the Committee enables countries to discuss all freshwater and sanitation challenges regularly, to review progress towards water-related SDG targets, to guide UN actions and to make further political decisions on these matters. This Committee should work in close interaction with a structured representation of major stakeholders.
- 2. Form a UN Scientific and Practice Panel on Water and Sanitation** Mandated to gather global evidence on major challenges, water uses, their mutual impact, and water management, and to stimulate external research to close knowledge gaps, this global independent panel of scientists and practitioners regularly provides balanced, fact-based, transparent and comprehensive information, enabling Member States and the UN to make the right decisions on water and sanitation.
- 3. Strengthen UN-Water** – As the coordinating structure of UN actions on water and sanitation, UN-Water serves as the Secretariat and support entity for both the UN Intergovernmental Committee on Water and Sanitation (see Recommendation 1) and the UN Scientific and Practice Panel on Water and Sanitation (see Recommendation 2).
- 4. Set up a comprehensive and independently reviewed global monitoring framework** – Governments support UN-Water efforts to set up all the global monitoring mechanisms that are necessary to review progress on the water-related SDG targets and ensure that these mechanisms are independently reviewed on a regular basis.
- 5. Make sure there is an independent voice** – Governments and the UN system benefit from independent advice on water-related challenges, through an appropriate mechanism to be set up by the UN Secretary-General no later than 2017.

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