

## **A Sustainable World is a Water-Secure World**

### **The Budapest Water Summit Declaration**

8-11 October 2013, Budapest, Hungary

*Summit Draft (24 September, 2013)*

1. Water has brought civilizations livelihood, sustenance and well-being. Water has been a central factor shaping both earth system history and human history. Therefore, water carries the collective memory of humanity. Water has been instrumental in our past development. It is equally *the* key to our future development and safeguarding our life support on Earth, which is increasingly under pressure from global changes.
2. Water unites. It unites people among and across generations, nations and cultures and is a source of cooperation. Its uneven temporal and spatial distribution worldwide, in addition to numerous challenges such as demographic and climatic changes, renders water management essential and critical as our entry point for sustainable development and poverty eradication. All basic planetary and ecosystem functions will be endangered if water is not governed properly and therefore water must underpin all future Sustainable Development Goals.
3. Tapping the power of water for our era to meet the water challenge requires new policy approaches, both within the water sector and in concert with other social and economic sectors, especially, health, food and energy. Human-centered development and environmental stewardship, including preserving the function of ecosystems and protecting biodiversity must reinforce any modern paradigm of water management.
4. To achieve the agreed upon Millennium Development Goal targets related to water and to move towards the new set of Sustainable Development Goals, as well as to create new approaches to water management, the Budapest Water Summit, in consideration of the many ideas and discussions preceding to and over the course of the Summit preparation process, recommends the development of a SMART[ER]<sup>1</sup>, comprehensive Sustainable Development Goal on Water. This proposal is supported by additional outcome policy recommendations presented in the *Annex* of this document.
5. Engineering ecosystems into 21<sup>st</sup> century water resources development systems will be an important shift towards sustainability and ensuring multi-generational water security. Collateral damage to ecosystems in the name of water provision and sanitation, if executed without proper precautions for environmental protection, is contrary to the aspirations of a sustainable water future.

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<sup>1</sup> Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound [Evaluated and Re-evaluated]

6. Lessons of the water and sanitation related Millennium Development Goals show the critical need for a sound scientific underpinning, socio-economic, institutional, technical and engineering capacity from within the water sector. The development of broader and more inclusive Sustainable Development Goals provides an even greater challenge to the water science and professional communities. In this context, the lack of trained professionals and delivery capacities is a recognized limitation toward attaining meaningful Goals.
7. The overarching recommendation of the Summit, therefore, is to create a SMART[ER] “Water-Secure World” Sustainable Development Goal with the objective to
  - a) Achieve universal and sustainable, human rights based access to safe drinking water as well as gender-responsive sanitation and hygiene services in all households, schools, health facilities, workplaces and emergency contexts such as refugee camps;
  - b) Identify socially acceptable trade-offs to manage freshwater resources, including transboundary basins and aquifers, in an integrated way across sectors to maximize benefits to human and societal development with a view to food and energy security as well as to ecosystem protection through strong public regulation of water management, thereby, promoting a reasonable use of water resources and appropriate conflict resolution mechanisms;
  - c) Protect human health and the environment from municipal, agricultural and industrial wastes and pollutants and from open defecation with a view towards minimizing the effect of vector-borne diseases; reduce pollution, collect, treat and maximize the re-use of wastewater; and
  - d) Increase social resilience by preparedness against, and adaptation capabilities to, the impacts of ongoing and future global changes such as growing water insecurity, climate change, population growth, land use change and the frequency of natural extreme hydrological events, through wise use and development of resilient water infrastructure and appropriate social programmes.
8. The critical nature of water for human populations and the planet, conditioning any future sustainable development agenda, requires a more robust intergovernmental process to regularly monitor, review and assess progress in the water and sanitation sphere. Due to the overarching goals, conditions and constraints, it is recommended that appropriate institutional mechanisms are soon put in place to regularly review and assess progress in an integrated manner. Considering that the last full-fledged intergovernmental conference on water was held thirty-six years ago,<sup>2</sup> during which time many new water challenges have emerged, the Budapest Water Summit recommends to governments and the United Nations to create an effective mechanism to address water and sanitation issues in a more measured, comprehensive and cohesive framework in cooperation with the scientific community and civil society

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<sup>2</sup> United Nations Water Conference, Mar del Plata, Argentina, 1977

## **Policy Recommendations of the Budapest Water Summit to Reinforce a Sustainable Development Goal on Water**

1. The Budapest Water Summit was driven by five important issues for robust water policy approaches:
  - a. Well defined, globally, regionally and nationally meaningful SMART[ER] targets to ensure universal and sustainable access to safe water and sanitation;
  - b. Improved methods of integrating technical, environmental, social and political aspects into water, including waste water, management;
  - c. Good and efficient water governance, relevant for any political system, with due consideration of inclusiveness, integrity, shared ethical values, principles and local circumstances/conditions when developing and implementing policies, laws, regulations, management, pricing, subsidies and allocation methods;
  - d. Effective incentives for using water to create and support green economies;
  - e. New micro and macro, private and public funding mechanisms to finance the implementation of (a) through (d) and for the management of water within a sustainable development framework.

### Creating SMART[ER] targets to ensure universal access to safe and sustainable water and sanitation

2. Access to safe drinking water and sanitation are fundamental to health, well-being and poverty eradication. Commitments are required at global, regional and national levels to accelerate the achievement of universal access and the progressive realization of the human right to safe drinking water and basic sanitation that are essential for dignified human life. Narrowing the water and sanitation deficiency gap will protect and improve human health, advance gender equality, create education and development opportunities, especially for vulnerable groups, and facilitate economic development and poverty reduction.
3. It is imperative to achieve universal sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation services in all homes, schools, health centres, workplaces and in places of humanitarian assistance such as emergency contexts, post-conflict situations and refugee camps. The sustainability and quality of drinking water and sanitation services must be improved for all while giving priority to the most vulnerable, pursuing non-discrimination, affordability and increasing equity. This involves on-site training of the local population during the initial planning, construction and operation phases as well as using locally sourced materials and knowledge for lasting water and sanitation solutions.
4. Drinking water supply and sanitation should be fully integrated into water resources management policies with the recognition that water use and sanitation not only consume the resource, but also pollute water and, therefore, negatively influence the water cycle as a whole, if countermeasures are not applied.
5. Hygiene is often forgotten in the water and sanitation discourse. It is therefore important to identify realistic, monitorable and enforceable approaches and improving hygiene especially for women and adolescent girls.
6. The protection of human and ecosystem health from inadequate sanitation as well as municipal, agricultural and industrial pollution requires precaution, prevention, implementation and rehabilitation. The collection and treatment of wastewater and solid waste as well as closing material cycles to maximize their re-use in order to reduce environmental pollution is a prerequisite for prevention of water system deterioration that is and will continue to be a more cost-effective approach than post-damage remediation.
7. To achieve these objectives new partnerships, non-conventional approaches to old and new technologies and behavioural dimensions of drinking water and sanitation must be promoted and developed. Successful approaches to ensure access to poor and disadvantaged populations should be identified. This should include appropriate financing mechanisms and funding that are accessible for local actors for operation and maintenance, minimisation of hurdle costs related to accessing

new or improved facilities and services, improved accountability and transparency among sector actors, encouragement of utilities to extend coverage and improve quality of services, while addressing rural backlog and urban population growth.

#### Integrated consideration of water within its management context and in all social sectors

8. The connective power of water should be reflected in its management. Reconciling water uses among competing social needs is a political as well as technical process. Different stakeholders often claim the same water. Water, however, is the vehicle that connects social demands and can encourage new and productive political, technical and social solutions to meet them. Due to population growth and economic development, such as for food production and changes in diet, water demand is growing fast. What have been perceived as regional or local scarcity and resource allocation problems are already accumulating to the global scale. Hence, water resources management should avoid spatial and thematic fragmentation and instead promote consolidation and integration. Beyond the water domain, full integration must involve other sectors relying on water. This could be achieved by fostering links within universities and educating new generations in interdisciplinary sciences so as to increase the visibility of interdisciplinary solutions and joint benefits in the future.
9. Domestic water supply, sanitation, agricultural and industrial use, navigation, energy generation, recreation and also ecosystem health considerations are as much part of water resources management as addressing urban – rural issues, links to poverty eradication, adaptation to climate change and preventing, through disaster risk reduction, and mitigating the impacts of extreme events that seem to have an ever increasing frequency.
10. Most of the water assessment and management tools are based on the assumption of stationarity. Our design tools are based on the assumption that the statistical characters of the processes involved remain the same. Yet, our world displays strong non-stationarity. The signs are all around us in terms of surprises and sudden changes, such as a perceptibly increasing frequency of hydrological disasters that cannot be explained by our earlier mind-sets and current methodologies. New appropriate tools to adapt to non-stationarity are to be developed with a sense of urgency. Otherwise humans will be subject to growing risks, which can undermine sustainability.
11. The process of developing integrated water resources management principles and practice for a sustainable future should be accepted by all stakeholders with adequate levels of accessible information and data, a shared and open knowledge base, capacity development, partnerships and conducive institutional-legal frameworks. Integration in national development plans, appropriate capacities, ranging from data collection services to scientific research, are pre-requisites to sound integrated water management. Water management, however, should go beyond the focus of the water cycle and competing uses and involve socio-economic, environmental, legal and governance-related elements in a collaborative spirit that ensure effective and meaningful participation. Responsibilities and processes should be clearly outlined in governance schemes at all levels.
12. Risks and uncertainties are unavoidable. However, innovative and alternative approaches should be tested and, when deemed successful, applied broadly as this can help mitigate risks. This includes methods that rely on ecosystems services, adaptation strategies that enhance the resilience of water resources management systems through structural and non-structural measures. Adequate monitoring, data-sharing, improved forecasting capabilities but also risk-sharing mechanisms further contribute to a more sustainable and water-secure world
13. Providing comprehensive monitoring and early warning of emerging water problems will be critical to the success of the SDGs. Enormous technological progress achieved over the past decade goes largely untapped, yet the technical and data resources are growing in their availability and sophistication. The free availability of much of these big data streams should be marshalled specifically to the task of monitoring progress on the SDGs. Further synthesis by the science community is necessary to interpret and track progress, or lack thereof, on the goals.
14. Developing education and capacities at all levels must be incentivized, focusing on ensuring a secure number of water professionals and knowledge passed on to subsequent generations. Educating and training the next generation of water leaders, as well as reinforcing the capacities of stakeholders such as local authorities, NGOs and CSOs, will be critical to achieving the water and sanitation related SDG. It is recommended to renew and reinforce the dialogue between researchers and practitioners, to speed up the uptake of research results, and to support innovation best practices to bridge the still existing gap between science and policy.

15. Capacity development, as part of both private and public projects, has to be encouraged and its long-term monetary value should be made aware to decision-makers. It is also critical to identify effective approaches to small communities, including community-based management, demand management, especially at higher levels of service, adapt existing and new systems, particularly water storage, to manage hydrological uncertainties and risks with a view toward ensuring and increasing resilience to the impacts of water scarcity and climate change.

#### Fostering good water governance

16. Achieving universal, sustainable access to water and sanitation and managing water in an efficient manner requires good governance. This requires adaptive, agile and resilient institutions at transboundary, national, basin and local levels that can first identify then solve the water problems of today and cope with those of tomorrow. Good governance relies on building accountability and inter-sectoral complementarities at the right scale and is intrinsically linked to political systems.
17. Good water governance is context-dependent and implies addressing interrelated issues. A set of overarching principles, place-based policies and baseline studies, aiming to better understand *who* does *what*, should be developed to enable the management of water at the appropriate spatial and time scales and levels. This should include innovative partnerships across sectors, monitoring and evaluation of progress and effectiveness, allocation of human and financial resources in line with responsibilities and enforcement of regulatory frameworks.
18. Greater attention needs to be paid to sustained service delivery requiring appropriate institutional and governance arrangements by ensuring adequate new infrastructure along with rehabilitation and renewal of ageing infrastructure.
19. Water governance effectiveness depends on the institutional quality of authorities at all levels, sectoral and territorial integration, the performance of utilities, the level and diversity of stakeholder engagement, social inclusion, transparency, public awareness, the quality and consistency of data disclosed, capacity development and anti-corruption practices. Together, all of these provide good water governance that is required for both a sustainable and a water-secure world.
20. When it comes to transboundary watersheds and aquifers water governance must go beyond national boundaries through the basin approach in management of shared resources through agreements, joint institutions and work programmes and wide international stakeholder participation.
21. Economic benefits of good water governance should be clearly stated. In the world driven by economic factors it is very important to stress the positive trade-offs of good water governance. An analysis of good water governance practices that contributed to economic growth and increased effectiveness should be widely distributed among stakeholders. Public-private partnerships should be encouraged.

#### Using water to create “green economies”

22. There are different approaches, visions, models and tools available to each country, in accordance with its national circumstances and priorities, to achieve sustainable development and the green economy is one of the important tools in this regard. Green economies are to feature both new and old technologies and tools, incorporate the socio-economic value of natural systems and ecological flow needs to water management, use new accounting for natural capital in cost-benefits assessments and emphasize water-use efficiencies. Green economies are to employ realistic behaviour change among users of water, integrate indigenous with modern methods of adaptively managing water, create explicit criteria for ecosystems health for design of water investments, treating wastewater and solid waste for use and adopting rehabilitation and asset management of built and natural water infrastructure, respectively.
23. Achieving green economies will require the setting of priorities among water uses. Water priorities will have to balance the three aspects of sustainable development and integrate socio-cultural, economic and environmental dimensions into national accounting systems and development policies. Such priority setting should include legislation, monitoring, financing, subsidies for affordable green technologies, markets, pricing, user pay along with polluter pay principles, paying for ecosystem services, green labelling of projects and products and broadened risk benefit assessments. Water policies are

to promote the use of acceptable and affordable technology and needed infrastructure such as water storage that also benefits sustainable development, poverty eradication and green job creation.

#### Creating new micro and macro, private and public, financing methods

24. There is unfinished business to attain the MDG targets on water and sanitation and this will require innovative, inclusive, equitable, adapted, ear-marked and sustainable financing mechanisms at all levels, especially for the benefit of the poor and most vulnerable populations. Drinking water and sanitation are not alone in this regard and while their needs are different, funding requirements of adaptive water resources management should be addressed as well, especially with the expected impacts of global changes that confront humanity.
25. Often, financial resources are already there, but are difficult to access. An efficient use of existing financial resources, for both small- and large-scale projects, for water would significantly help us achieve the water-related goals as would ease the barriers to access resources that already do exist. Water underpins many of the other future SDGs. Without safe drinking water and sanitation and well-managed water resources, food, health, energy and environmental sustainability will progress unnecessarily slowly, if at all. It is a matter of urgency, therefore, to show the importance of water in budget prioritization and allocation. It is also one of the best returns on investments since it improves health, education and nutrition and, consequently, enhances economic activities.
26. Financial resources are not the only critical resources. Improvements are needed to deliver on investments and financing the capacity of human resources in cost recovery and revenue spending. Transition from aid to sustainable service delivery is essential. Diversified, affordable, realistic and accessible financial management systems that correspond to locally available resources, both in terms of human capital and material, will ensure long-term success of projects.
27. Sustainable development is about addressing future and intergenerational equity. Infrastructure degradation and asset management are to be addressed in this context by equally taking into account the maintenance and restoration of ecosystem services as well as the deterioration costs of those services. Environmental degradation that destroys ecosystems and their services will, by definition, also destroy water services and are thus against the concept of sustainability.
28. Water is a means to many ends. Investments into water and sanitation will also have multiple benefits outside of water and beyond it, and should integrate sectoral benefits across sectors. One of the most effective ways to improve sustainable development and address poverty eradication, food security, energy security and improved well-being, therefore, is through investment in water and sanitation, where the benefits are multi-sectoral and intergenerational. Ultimately, if one invests into water, one invests into peace.