

Means of Implementation: A focus on Sustainable Development Goals 6 and 17

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The means of implementation (Moi), as defined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are fundamental to the post-2015 development agenda. In addition to providing a general overview of the proposed Moi, SDG 17 also defines specific aspects which must be taken into account. This summary presents key messages from SDG 17 sections as they relate to water and sanitation. For additional detail, refer to “Means of Implementation: A focus on Sustainable Development Goals 6 and 17”, a comprehensive report released by UN-Water to coincide with discussions during the Third Conference on Financing for Development (July 2015)¹.

For SDG 6 on water and sanitation and its related targets, a solid base of experience in monitoring and implementation already exists in many countries but needs to be scaled up with support required from the international community. This will be essential to fully realize the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, which the United Nations (UN) General Assembly recognized in 2010. Furthermore, there is considerable evidence that achieving SDG 6 will bring significant economic benefits that exceed the investment needed. For water and sanitation alone, research shows that benefits exceed the cost of an intervention by **3 to 6 times**. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank have found that the global economic return on sanitation spending is US \$5.50 per US dollar invested².

FINANCE: Financial estimates suggest that achieving universal access to basic water, sanitation and hygiene (targets 6.1 and 6.2) could cost roughly USD \$50 billion per year – yet in 77% of countries public finance is still insufficient to meet these targets.

WHO estimates losses due to inadequate water and sanitation services in developing countries at a total of **US \$260 billion a year** – or up to 10% of GDP for some very poor countries³. And a recent evidence-based report published by the University of Oxford indicates that **water insecurity** is a drag on economic development in the order of **US \$500 billion** annually – excluding environmental and other non-monetized impacts⁴. In rural China, for example, water pollution is estimated to cost 0.3% to 1.9% of annual GDP. All sectors of society are affected by water challenges and can benefit from implementing SDG 6, leading to advances in water efficiency and resources management, pollution reduction, and ecosystem protection.

Apart from this sound economic case, the social and environmental benefits and their

¹ The full report is available at <http://www.unwater.org/publications/publications-detail/en/c/284949/>.

² Tackling the Challenges of SDG Monitoring: A Roadmap Outlining the Costs and Value of a Water Sector Monitoring System (2015).

³ World Health Organization (2004), “Costs and benefits of water and sanitation at the global level”. Available at http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/wsh0404summary/en/.

⁴ Sadoff C. *et al* (2015), “Securing Water, Sustaining Growth”. Task Force for Global Water Partnership and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 13 April 2015. Available at: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2015-04-13-water-insecurity-drag-global-economy-0>.

importance to the poorest and most vulnerable groups are also well documented. Moreover, implementing Goal 6 is essential for the achievement of many, if not all, of the other Goals, especially those related to poverty, food, energy, gender, ecosystems and climate. Yet according to the 2014 UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) Report, public finance in 77% of countries is still insufficient to meet targets 6.1 and 6.2 on universal drinking water and sanitation access.⁵ Official Development Assistance (ODA), vertical funds, blended finance and partnerships with the private sector can all leverage domestic financing and play a valuable role if designed and used smartly. **There is also scope for innovative financing from new sources, including sovereign wealth funds, philanthropy and micro-finance.** Addressing a critical issue, the draft Financing for Development Outcome Document⁶ called for a platform to bridge the 'infrastructure gap', pledging to **double annual investments for sustainable infrastructure** including a priority on water and sanitation meet the '1 to 1.5 trillion-dollar annual infrastructure shortage in developing countries'⁷.

TECHNOLOGY: Using smart monitoring for better decision-making together with sustainable and locally adapted technologies are critical steps towards achieving the SDGs.

There have been significant advances in water and sanitation technologies, related to both infrastructure and to monitoring, since the launch of the MDGs. These new water- and energy-efficient technologies must be used when designing and building new infrastructure. Encouragingly, many options are readily available for use at the county level. However, in many developing countries innovation and technology adaptation is still needed for cost-effective implementation, such as in the area of wastewater treatment. The challenge is to bring these technologies to scale and create an enabling environment.

The SDGs present a promising opportunity to leverage new technologies and approaches to increase the quality, frequency, scale, and accessibility of traditional data collection. Some illustrative examples of new data streams include Earth observations, mobile networks, smart meters, and citizen science campaigns supported by an ever-improving capacity to store and process large amounts of data. The applications of this 'data revolution' include robust weather monitoring systems that decrease the vulnerability of farmers as they plan ahead, early warning systems to help prepare for and adapt to water-related natural disasters, river monitoring advancements that improve decisions on water release to ensure endangered fish can move upstream to spawning areas, and smart metering of agricultural irrigation that improve water allocation across large watershed systems, especially in times of extreme events like droughts⁸.

Implementing SDG 6 requires strong ownership and leadership at the state level to create a pro-active enabling environment. This requires transparent and effective governance systems, clear roles and responsibilities, supportive policies and planning, and improved institutional and human capacity from national to local levels.

⁵ UN-Water GLAAS Report (2014), "Investing in Water and Sanitation: Increasing Access, Reducing Inequalities". Available at http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/glaas/2014/en

⁶ Updated document from 7 May 2015, available at http://www.un.org/pga/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/05/070515_financing-for-development-Inf-Consultations.pdf

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Tackling the Challenges of SDG Monitoring: A Roadmap Outlining the Costs and Value of a Water Sector Monitoring System (2015). Produced by a group of technical experts for the 3rd International Conference on Financing for Development.

CAPACITY-BUILDING: In the water and sanitation sectors, capacity-building is closely linked to investments that support the use, adaptation, and transfer of new technologies, in addition to public awareness and the dissemination of best practices.

Capacity development is integral to the success of the post-2015 development agenda, and a central component of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). Enhanced and targeted international support to develop capacities in areas including water and sanitation is a top priority. Capacity development platforms such as UNDP Cap-Net (Capacity Development in Sustainable Water Management Network) can play a crucial role. Such networks build on established partnerships of international, regional, and national institutions committed to capacity development in the water sector. To meet the Goals, capacity building will need to focus more on the development of in-country practical skills and less on academic theory.

DATA, MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORKS: The expansion of the water-related development agenda contained in the SDGs requires coordinated, fit-for-purpose monitoring systems that serve multiple actors, scales, and applications.

Data, monitoring, and accountability frameworks are important for ensuring that MoI are realized and that the targets are met. SDG 6 monitoring can build upon the extensive mechanisms put in place over the past 15 years for the MDGs, such as the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme on Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP) for targets 6.1 and 6.2, and GLAAS. GLAAS reports on the enabling environment for drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, together with the UN-Water IWRM status survey and report, can monitor progress towards SDG targets 6.a and 6.b on MoI. To cover the 'expanded' SDG agenda of wastewater management and water quality, water use and efficiency, water resources management and the status of water-related ecosystems (targets 6.3 to 6.6), several initiatives, mechanisms, and programmes exist. These are now being integrated into a new monitoring framework, GEMI – Integrated Monitoring of Water and Sanitation Related SDG Targets, a partnership of UNEP, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, FAO, UNESCO, WMO, and WHO that resides under the UN-Water umbrella.

PARTNERSHIPS: Instead of initiating a new partnership platform in the water and sanitation sector, efforts should be made to recognize existing alliances and build upon them to revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

As the final MoI section, **strengthened and extended partnerships** are important pieces of the new global, regional and national architecture that will be required to capitalize on state-of-the-art knowledge, leverage funding and ensure accountability. For targets 6.1 and 6.2, the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) partnership is an example of a platform for coordinated action and global high-level political dialogue. Similarly, for targets 6.3 to 6.6, the Global Water Partnership (GWP) brings together a broad set of stakeholders to balance the many, often competing, demands for limited resources formulated in SDG 6. There are many other key water and sanitation partnerships that can be brought together and expanded upon: this bodes well for a rapid start to implementing SDG 6. Governments can leverage these partnerships to engage with the private sector, academia and civil society to help implement SDG 6.