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CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



Advance briefing

SDG 6 Synthesis Report on Water and Sanitation

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

2018

EARLY SIGNALS

This is an advance briefing on the forthcoming **SDG 6 Synthesis Report 2018 on Water and Sanitation**. The report will be published in June 2018 ahead of the **High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development where Member States will review SDG 6 in-depth¹**. It will be a joint position from the UN family and builds on the baseline data on SDG 6 global indicators coming from JMP, GEMI and GLAAS².

Below are the early signals emerging from the writing process. We group these into five themes:

1. UNIVERSALITY



- **The issues concern everyone:** All countries face varying challenges in ensuring universal access to safe and sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene services for their citizens.
- **Water management is critical:** Water scarcity, flooding and quality are key determinants in social and economic development, and can be a major factor in international relations. Increasing water efficiency and improving (transboundary) water management are critical to balancing the competing and growing water demands from various sectors and users.

- **Pollution is increasing:** Water pollution is increasing in many parts of the world with profound impacts on the quality of water available to meet human needs and sustain ecosystems.
- **Solutions must be resilient:** Water pollution, scarcity and flooding are intensified by the occurrence of extreme weather events and climate change. Water-related disasters and the destruction of freshwater ecosystems are affecting countries' economic development and having profound impacts on social and environmental stability beyond the immediate areas. Improved water management, within and between countries, is an imperative for disaster risk reduction, resilience-building and risk management.

2. INTERDEPENDENCY

- **Goals and targets are indivisible:** Taking an integrated approach to the implementation of SDG 6 is key to balancing the competing demands for water from various sectors, protecting the health of ecosystems and building resilient societies. Such integrated action requires a shared understanding of all SDG goals and their interlinkages, and shared strategy and plans to strengthen synergies and address trade-offs.

3. INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS AND GOVERNANCE

- **Better governance is needed:** Improving ambient water quality and ensuring sufficient quantity entails all actors complying with agreed rules and acting for the common good.
- **Cross-sectoral cooperation is essential:** To effectively manage the entire water cycle, water sector institutions need to work in a coordinated and integrated way. In practice, the water sector is often fragmented across several ministries, and countries lack inter-sectoral policy-making structures and transboundary governance frameworks that can help address the competing demands on water resources.
- **Information should be easily accessible:** Improving water governance requires increasing transparency, accountability and participation. Water-related information needs to be freely available and easily accessible to all stakeholders to aid decision making.
- **Human rights must be central:** Human rights, which include the rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, must be fulfilled to ensure the participation of hitherto marginalized individuals and groups in the implementation of SDG 6.

(1) The set of goals to be reviewed in depth in 2018 will be SDG 6 (water and sanitation), SDG 7 (energy), SDG 11 (sustainable living), SDG 12 (consumption and production), SDG 15 (life on land) and SDG 17 (partnerships), which is reviewed every year. The High-level Political Forum will be held from 9-18 July and the theme will be 'Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies'.

(2) The WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene; the UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS); and the inter-agency initiative GEMI.

4. FINANCING, CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY



- **The costs are increasing:** It is estimated that achieving the water supply, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) targets of SDG 6 will cost USD1.7 trillion³. Currently, there are no estimates for what it will cost to achieve the whole of SDG 6. However, given the three-fold increase in existing levels of investments for WASH-related targets, the amounts will be well above historic allocations.
- **Aid is decreasing:** Aid commitments to water and sanitation are falling, requiring a better use of existing resources and an increase in the ability of the sector to attract additional sources of funding.
- **Households need support:** Households provide around two thirds of all funds for drinking water, sanitation and hygiene services through tariffs and self-supply (i.e. investing in wells, water tanks and household sanitation and hygiene facilities). Pro-poor subsidies need to be designed and applied so that no one is left behind.
- **Correct valuing is important:** The pricing of water and sanitation service provision needs to build in cost recovery to ensure sustainability, attract new investments, and extend service coverage.
- **More innovative financing is required:** New financing mechanisms should be developed further, with some being based on the recognition of the economic value of water and freshwater ecosystem.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT IN THE REPORT

1. Global status for all SDG 6 targets and indicators based on SDG 6 monitoring mechanisms.
2. Analysis of intralinkages among SDG 6 targets and indicators.
3. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of interlinkages between SDG 6 and other SDG targets and indicators.
4. Policy relevant messages aiming at accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

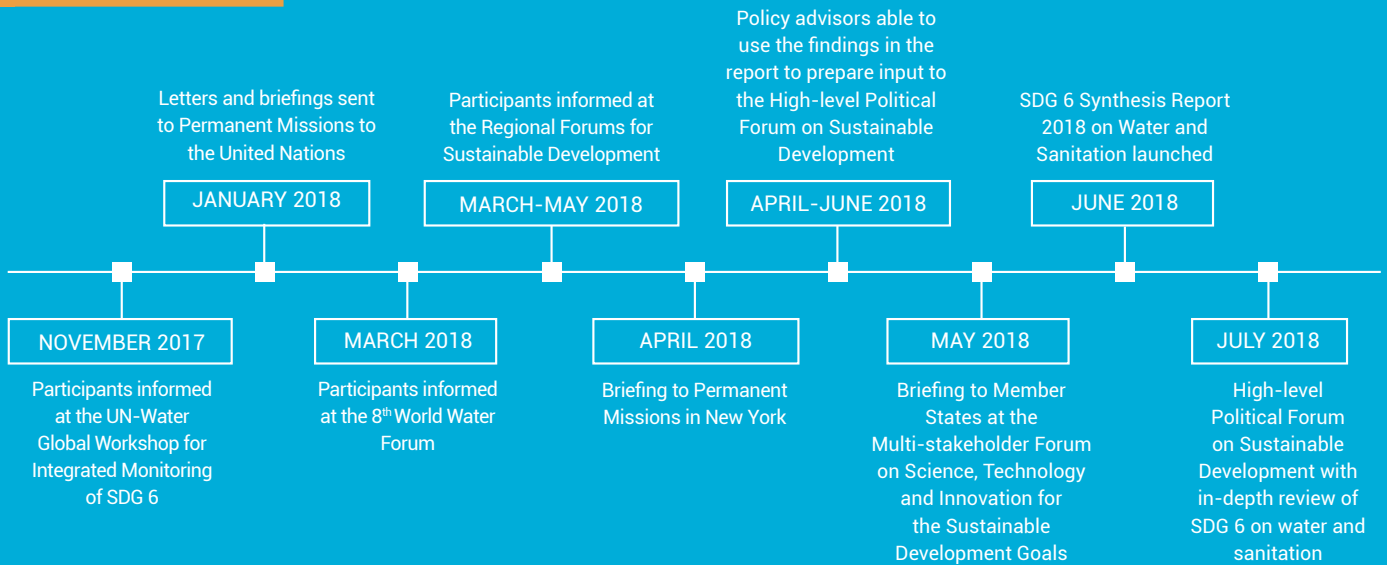
- **More capacity is needed:** Capacity development is required, from policy-making and service provision, to monitoring and accountability. Investments in infrastructures and technologies are not effective where skills to operate and maintain such systems are lacking. Building the capacity of local personnel and institutions also helps ensure job creation and income generation.
- **Technology transfer needs to be scaled up:** Through South-South and North-South cooperation mechanisms, agreements and innovation, technology transfer helps improve sustainability and stimulates the adoption of green, low waste/carbon, energy positive and water efficient technologies.

5. DATA, MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- **Monitoring systems need strengthening:** To track progress towards achieving SDG 6, national monitoring systems and capacities should be strengthened and more data should be produced and made easily available. This will also help increase the transparency and accountability of the decision-making process, and help build awareness and encourage public, private and civil society engagement.
- **Coordination is crucial:** Increased coordination is required between sectors at the country-level in order to harmonize and streamline approaches and improve the efficiency of often poorly-resourced data collection activities.
- **Innovation is important:** The use of innovative models for collecting data (i.e. earth observation, citizen science, private sector data) is increasingly important. However, this also creates new challenges related to the harmonization of different data formats, the assessment of reliability and the respect of standards.
 - **Quality is key:** Quality-assured, timely and disaggregated data, adherence to widely accepted data standards and open accessibility are often underdeveloped or lacking in many places. These fundamental pillars of informed water management decisions, essential for effective policy-making towards universal access to water and sanitation, urgently need to be improved in many countries.

(3) Hutton, G., and M. Varughese. 2016. "The Costs of Meeting the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal Targets on Drinking Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene." *Water and Sanitation Program Technical Paper*, World Bank, Washington, DC.

TIMELINE



PRODUCTION

UN-Water has established a Task Force to produce the SDG 6 Synthesis Report 2018 on Water and Sanitation. The Task Force is coordinated by the UN World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) of UNESCO and is comprised of the following UN-Water Members and Partners: CEO Water Mandate, FAO, ILO, UNDP, UNECE, UN Environment, UNESCO, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, UNU, WHO, WMO and the World Bank Group. The Task Force is also receiving support from Aquafed, WaterAid, Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) and UFZ.

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