Agenda Item 2.3

Agenda Item: **Presentation from the Task Force on Regional Level Coordination**
Background Brief
30th UN-Water Meeting – 31 January and 1 February 2019 – Rome, Italy

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Main Issues of this Agenda Item:

- Outcomes of the work of the Task Force
- Consideration of future work of UN-Water on regional level coordination

Introduction / Background / Rationale (less than 200 words please)**:**

The current work of the Task Force on Regional Level Coordination responds to Decision 3 of the 25th Meeting of the UN-Water Senior Programme Managers (SPM), which requested the Task Force on to develop a concept note on how to coordinate UN-Water regional level activities in all regions. Decision 4 of the 26th UN-Water SPM Meeting subsequently requested the Task Force to conduct: (1) a consultative mapping exercise of the five regions covered by UN Regional Commissions; (2) up to five regional level conversations to identify ways to cooperate; (3) review lessons learned and exchange experience; and (4) consolidate a report on the proposals generated.

These tasks were pursued through consultative processes involving UN-Water Members and Partners operating at the regional and sub-regional levels. Different modalities for consulting with regional counterparts were adopted in each region based on regional specificities. Special focus was given to regional consultations and mechanisms for regional follow-up on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and specifically SDG6.

Progress Update (less than 200 words please)**:**

Regional consultations on water and SDG6 were undertaken in each of the five regions covered by the United Nations Regional Commissions. Formal consultations were undertaken by ECA, ESCAP and ESCWA with a view to setting up regional mechanisms for improved coordination on water. Regional consultations focused on SDG6 and the 2030 Agenda were organized by the UNECE and ECLAC, noting that these regions concluded that it was unnecessary to set up formal regional consultative mechanisms in Europe or in Latin America and the Caribbean, respectively, given the existing landscape of partners and water-related programming in those regions.

The consolidated report presenting the outcome of those regional consultations and lessons learned is presented in Annex I. Annex II provides the certified financial statement of the Task Force and reports on the remaining available balance.

Proposed Action by UN-Water, if any (less than 100 words please)**:**

The Task Force completed its work, as per SPM decisions and its terms of reference by completing regional consultations, to the degree possible. It is thus recommended that the SPM consider the work of the Task Force completed.

In regions where consultations were held, the usefulness of regional level coordination on water that engage partners beyond the UN-Water membership was highlighted, as well as the importance of looking at water-related issues in an integrated manner.

It is therefore recommended to establish an open-ended Expert Group on Regional level Coordination to facilitate regional coordination on UN-Water programming and related activities. The membership of this Expert Group would extend beyond that of UN Regional Commissions and include all UN-Water Members and Partners interested and engaged in regional level work on water in support of UN-Water programming.

The creation of an institutional mechanism at UN-Water to support regional level coordination of its activities is of strategic and timely importance given current reforms underway in the UN System and the benefits of pursuing coherence when coordinating the organization of regional preparatory meetings to the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Water Action Decade. The responsibilities of the Expert Group would be determined based on the preparation of its Terms of Reference and work plan developed by its members. To support the development of the Terms of Reference and work plan, a meeting could be organized before the end of 2019 using the unspent balances allocated to the Task Force. The work plan may result in a request for financial support from UN-Water that could generate opportunities for complementary funding from Regional Commissions and associated mechanisms that support regional level activities on water.

Proposed Draft Decision, if any (less than 100 words please)**:**

- The SPMs gratefully thank the Task Force on Regional Level Coordination for completing its work and take note of the Report on the regional consultations. Having successfully completed its task, the Task Force is therefore closed.
- The SPMs establish the Expert Group on Regional Level Coordination, coordinated by UNESCWA and UNESCAP, and invite UN-Water Members and Partners to express their interest in joining the group by 15 March 2019.
- The SPMs decide that the unspent balances allocated to the Task Force be used to organise a meeting to support the development of the Expert Group's Terms of Reference and work plan before the end of 2019.
- The SPMs invite the Expert Group to submit its Terms of Reference for consideration by the SPMs at the 32nd UN-Water Meeting, recommending that the Expert Group should consider how it wishes to engage with existing and proposed regional level coordination arrangements established in selected regions.

Annexes (if any)**:**

- Report on the regional consultations
- Financial report

Annex I: Report on the regional consultations

I. Summary of conclusions

Regional consultations on water and SDG6 were undertaken in each of the five regions covered by the United Nations Regional Commissions. Formal consultations focused on regional coordination were organized by ESCWA, ESCAP and ECA and resulted in support for the establishment of regional coordination mechanisms on water. Regional consultations focusing on SDG6 and the 2030 Agenda were conducted by ECE and ECLAC, resulting in the conclusion that there was no need to establish dedicated regional consultative arrangements on water in Europe or in Latin America and the Caribbean, respectively, given the existing landscape of partners and water-related programming at the regional level.

II. Outcomes of regional consultations

In the Arab region, ESCWA supported a regional consultation on water with United Nations and League of Arab States (LAS) organizations serving the Arab region (Cairo, October 2017). This consultation resulted in a recommendation to establish a regional Working Group on Water under the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) for the Arab Region. Proposed terms of reference were then prepared by United Nations and LAS counterparts. The proposal was reviewed and approved by the RCM for the Arab Region in November 2017.

Following consultations with regional counterparts, the first meeting of the RCM Working Group on Water was held in Cairo from 26-27 November 2018. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Working Group are elected and serve on a rotating basis. The League of Arab States Secretariat was elected to serve as the first Chair of the Working Group, and the UNESCO Cairo Office was elected to serve as its first Vice-Chair. ESCWA serves as Secretary of the Working Group.

Milestones:

- Matrix of proposed joint activities on water compiled.
- Terms of Reference for the Regional Coordination Mechanism Working Group on Water in the Arab Region finalized and made available in English and Arabic.
- RCM established working group and UN and LAS organizations were invited to join.
- The Regional Preparatory Meeting on Water Issues for the 2018 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development (AFSD) and High-level Political Forum (Beirut, March 2018) was organized by ESCWA in partnership with 10 UN and LAS organizations. The meeting resulted in Outcome Document that was presented to the AFSD (Beirut, April 2018) and serves as an Annex to the AFSD Report to the HLPF. SDG6 presentations were delivered by UNESCO/WWAP, FAO, WHO, UNICEF, UN Environment among others during the meeting.
- The first meeting of the RCM Working Group on Water was held in November 2018, resulting in a cluster of activities and proposed projects that would be jointly pursued by various agencies.

In Asia and the Pacific, ESCAP conducted initial regional consultations in three steps involving: (1) an online survey (Nov 2017); (2) a consultative meeting (Dec 2017); and (3) one-to-one interviews. Consultations resulted in the recommendation to use the already established Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) for Asia and the Pacific Thematic Working Group on Resource-Efficient Growth (TWG-REG) to develop and implement a work plan to strengthen UN coordination around SDG6 and UN-Water related activities.

Milestones:

- The RCM/TWG-REG work plan for 2018 was prepared and jointly implemented by UN agencies.
- The Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) was held in March 2018 in Bangkok and consolidated UN regional support for the SDG6 follow-up and review processes. A regional SDG6 goal profile was developed jointly through the RCM based on collaboration between ESCAP, UNESCO, ILO, UN Environment and the FAO. This goal profile was the main input to an SDG6 multi-stakeholder roundtable held during the APFSD that provided key recommendations on how to accelerate SDG6 implementation in the region.
- World Water Day and the launch of the UN International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development was held during APFSD as a side event, in partnership with the UNESCO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.
- Detailed mapping of UN efforts for the follow-up and review of SDG6 in the Asia/Pacific region is underway and is supporting further collaboration.
- Support has been provided for coordination on water under the RCM Thematic Working Group's annual work plan in 2018.

In Africa, ECA conducted a consultation involving UN-Water members, major African institutions and their development partners. The main recommendation was to revive a regional coordination mechanism for water in Africa that would be structured to include the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW), as the specialized technical subcommittee on water of the African Union; the African Development Bank's Water and Sanitation Department; the African Network of Basin Organizations (ANBO); the Water Units of the (sub) Regional Economic Communities; as well as major NGOs and development partners implementing regional programs in the water sector.

It was recommended that the regional coordinating mechanism could be called UN-Water Africa Plus or a more suitable name acceptable to the non-UN partners that would join the regional mechanism. The aim of the group would be to enhance and increase coherence in the implementation and monitoring of SDG6 and other water-related SDGs reflected in the African Water Vision 2025.

Based on internal consultations, ECA expressed its willingness to serve as the Secretariat of this regional arrangement and to provide the human and other resources needed to ensure the sustainable functioning of the Secretariat. The Secretariat could in turn serve as a link between UN-Water and the United Nations-African Union Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa, and facilitate regional coherence on water within the framework of the RCM.

In Europe, ECE investigated the need for a pan-European coordination mechanism on water within the UN system. Given the limited number of UN-Water Members active on water in the region, and the fact that other, mostly donor-led coordination mechanisms are already in place in Central Asia (where most of the UN support on water in provided in the region), it was determined that there is little appetite for strengthened regional coordination through formal mechanisms.

No request on the need for such a regional coordination arrangement was raised during a joint side event organized by the ECE and UN-Water on SDG6 at the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE (Geneva, March 2018). No further action in this regard is thus recommended.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC conducted a mapping of UN-Water Members and Partners working in the region on water. Internal discussions on the relationship between UN-Water, the Regional Coordination Mechanism for the ECLAC Region, and other water-related processes were held. These consultations concluded that there was no need for the establishment of a dedicated coordination mechanism or arrangement focused on water under the auspices of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for the ECLAC Region or through other modalities.

Annex II: Certified Financial Statement

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Statement of Income and Expenditure

For ESCAP, Project Coordination of UN-Water Regional Level Activities for the peiod ending 31 December 2018

Project Title: Coordination of UN-Water Regional Level Activities
Project Start date and End date: 3 November 2017 to 28 February 2019

Income	**Prior Years**	**Current Year**	**Total**
Contributions	99,766.72	-	99,766.72
Interest	105.98	993.75	1,099.73
Refunds	-	-	-
Other Income	-	-	-
Total Income	**99,872.70**	**993.75**	**100,866.45**
			-
Expenditure			-
Staff and Personnel Costs	4,950.00	18,920.00	23,870.00
Supplies, Commodities, Materials	-		-
Equipment	-	-	-
Contractual Services	49.50	1,597.18	1,646.68
Travel	-	5,626.07	5,626.07
Transfers and Grants to Counterparts	-	-	-
General Operating and Other Direct Costs	-	3,946.00	3,946.00
Total Direct Expenditure	**4,999.50**	**30,089.25**	**35,088.75**
Indirect Program support costs	349.97	2,106.25	2,456.22
Total Expenditure	**5,349.47**	**32,195.50**	**37,544.97**
Balance (Deficit)	**94,523.23**	**(31,201.75)**	**63,321.48**

This is to Certify that this statement of Income and Expenditure is correct and that the expenditures were incurred in connection with the approved project for which the contributions were received

Katinka Weiberger, Chief EDPS/EDD		09-Jan-19
Name and Title	Signature	Date
Lwin Maw Soe, Chief, Accounts Unit, Financial Resources Management Section		09-Jan-19
Name and Title	Signature	Date