

UN-Water Task Force to plan and organize the “International Decade for Action – Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028

Terms of Reference

On 21 December 2016 the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution A/RES/71/222 calling for the International Decade for Action, ‘Water for Sustainable Development’, 2018-2028. In paragraph 8, the mandate for *planning and organizing* of the Decade at global, regional and country level is given to the Secretary-General with the support of UN-Water. This paragraph also invites the Secretary-General to take steps within existing resources while considering the outcomes of the “Water for Life” 2005-2015 Decade. In a separate paragraph, the Secretary-General with the support of UN-Water is requested to implement the Decade.

Task Force Rationale and Objective

In response to this Resolution, UN-Water at their 26th meeting (6-7 Feb. 2017) established a Task Force on the Decade to facilitate UN-Water’s response to paragraph 8 to support the Secretary-General to plan and organise the Decade. The first part of the decision reads:

In support of the “International Decade for Action – Water for Sustainable Development” the SPM establish the Task Force on the Decade to facilitate UN-Water’s support to plan and organize between now and the start of the Decade on World Water Day 2018. The Task Force will be co-ordinated by the UN-Water Secretary and Dr. Reza Ardakanian of UNU.

Given that the Resolution requests that the Decade works with existing resources while taking into account the outcomes of the “Decade for Action”, 2005 – 2015, UN-Water included the following elements in its Task Force decision:

The SPM reiterate decision 11 taken at the 22nd UN-Water Meeting that “UN-Water will no longer have separate Programme offices or structures governed by UN-Water” and agree in response to the mandate articulated in resolution A/RES/71/222 (paragraphs 8) that support to the International Decade for Action – Water for Sustainable Development should rely on existing structures.

The Task Force’s objective is to prepare concrete suggestions for how UN-Water could support the implementation of the Decade, to be put to SPM members for decision at the 27th UN-Water Meeting (August 2017). Thereafter the Task Force could provide technical input to the Secretary-General to develop any future Action Plans that will guide the implementation of the Decade at global, regional and country levels. The guiding principle in the Action Plan will be to energize, strengthen and amplify existing activities through the Decade rather than creating additional entities that may draw resources which do not contribute to a coordinated and integrated response of UN-Water Members and Partners.

Action Plan Elements

The overall objective of the Decade is *‘a greater focus on sustainable development and integrated management of water resources for the achievement of social, economic and environmental objectives and on the implementation and promotion of related programmes and projects, as well as*

on the furtherance of cooperation and partnership at all levels in order to help to achieve internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’ (Paragraph 4).

The structure of the plan should closely follow the elements of the Resolution. Different suggestions to be discussed by the Task Force are presented in the Annex to these ToRs.

Mode of operation

UN-Water support to the Secretary-General on the Decade should take into consideration the work of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and other relevant United Nations structures, such as the High-level Panel on Water, as well as the support requested of specialized agencies, regional commissions and other entities of the United Nations system to facilitate the implementation of the Decade in cooperation with Governments and other relevant stakeholders, as per the enabling resolution.

Suggested Timeline

Activity	Deadline
Request for membership sent to UN-Water Members and Partners	End March 2017
Membership established	Mid-April 2017
1 st conference call of TF members	Beginning of May 2017
First draft Action Plan developed	End June 2017
2 nd conference call of TF members	Mid-July 2017
Revised draft Action Plan developed	Mid-August 2017
Draft Action Plan presented to UN-Water Members and Partners for discussion at the 27 th UN-Water Meeting	End August 2017
Revised draft Action Plan developed	September 2017
Informal UN briefing in New York	Early October 2017
3 rd conference call of TF members	October 2017
Final draft Action Plan developed and submitted to the SPMs	November 2017
Final draft Action Plan submitted to the Secretary-General for consideration	End December 2017
Action Plan launched by the Secretary-General	22 March 2018

Task Force Membership

Co-coordinators: UN-Water Secretary and Reza Ardakanian (UNU). As per the [UN-Water Operational Guidelines](#), the Task Force needs to be inclusive and at the same time have a lean structure for effective delivery. The membership of the Task Force is based on the entity’s expressed interest and proven expertise in the Action Plan’s main areas. The membership will be limited to one member per entity.

Annex - Suggestions on the structure of the Decade Action Plan to be discussed during the first TF teleconference

Suggestion A:

A/RES/71/222 contains several suggested objectives of the Decade along with ways to pursue these objectives. The action plan should entail at least the following elements:

1. To promote efficient water usage at all levels, taking into account the water, food, energy, environment nexus¹
2. To improve knowledge generation and dissemination²
3. To facilitate access to knowledge and exchange of good practices⁴
4. To generate new information relevant to the water – related Sustainable Development Goals⁴
5. To pursue advocacy, networking and promoting partnership and action by different actors to implement the water-related Goals and targets in coordination with existing initiatives⁴
6. To strengthen communication actions at various levels for the implementation of the water-related Goals⁴
7. To ensure the participation and full involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including women, children, young people, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and local communities, in the implementation of the Decade³
8. To accelerate and sustain action towards the mobilization of means of implementation⁴
9. To encourage the development, dissemination, diffusion and transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries in favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed⁶
10. To step up the international cooperation and collaboration in science, research and innovation for the sustainable development of water resources at the local, national and regional levels, including through public-private and multi-stakeholder partnerships, and on the basis of common interest and mutual benefit⁶
11. To encourage Member States, relevant UN bodies, the specialized agencies, the regional commissions and other organizations of the UN system, as well as other relevant partners, including the private sector, to contribute to the Decade⁵

¹ Para 5

² Para 6

³ Para 7

⁴ Para 9

⁵ Para 14

Based on the above elements of the resolution these could be clustered in the following way:

Sustainable Water Management

To promote efficient water usage at all levels, taking into account the water, food, environment nexus (1)

Knowledge generation

- Improve knowledge generation (2)
- Generate new information relevant to water-related SDGs (4)
- Develop and transfer environmentally sound technologies (9)

Means of implementation

- Encourage participation and involvement of all stakeholders (7)
- Accelerate and sustain action (8)
- Step up international cooperation in science, research & innovation (10)
- Mobilize Member States and UN system to contribute (11)

Communication and advocacy

- Disseminate newly generated knowledge (2)
- Facilitate access to knowledge and exchange good practices (3)
- Advocate, network and promote partnership and action by all actors (5)
- Strengthen communication at all levels (6)

Suggestion B:

Using the ‘decides’ paragraphs of the resolution as Objectives (rows) and the paragraphs that call for ‘enabling’, ‘emphasizes’, ‘taking into account’ as Mode of Implementation (columns) the action plan could be structured along the elements as per table below:

Objectives (a greater focus on...)		Improving knowledge generation and dissemination	Facilitating access to knowledge and the exchange of good practices	Generating new information relevant to the water-related SDGs	Pursuing advocacy, networking and promoting partnership and action by different actors to implement the water-related Goals and targets	Strengthening communication actions at various levels for the implementation of the water-related Goals
Sustainable development and integrated management of water resources						
The implementation and promotion of related programmes and projects						
The furtherance of cooperation and partnership at all levels in order to help to achieve internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development						