
The Government of Canada appreciates the work of the Secretary General and UN-Water to develop a UN system-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation (SWS). We acknowledge that considerable work has been undertaken to date to create the draft strategy and thank UN-Water for the opportunity to provide input. We also wish to congratulate Mr. Alvaro Lario on his appointment as Chair of UN-Water and look forward to constructive dialogue and engagement on the finalization and implementation of the SWS.

The comments below reflect the comments from a number of federal Government of Canada departments and takes into consideration that that the implementation of work relating to water and sanitation in Canada is a shared responsibility between the federal government, provinces and territories, municipalities, and Indigenous governments.

General Comments
The Government of Canada appreciates that the SWS is aligned with ongoing efforts including other UN system-wide strategies, as well as common approaches, frameworks and action plans that have been developed outside of the UN system. We support the intention to leverage the comparative value-add of each implicated development entity for greater coordination and impact and encourage this continued prioritization of work on freshwater issues and toward achieving SDG-6 through the SWS. There is still a large amount of work that remains to be done. We are hopeful that the work laid out in the SWS will continue to be aligned with the objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development,” 2018–2028.

While the SWS notes that water is related to women’s empowerment, it does not reflect how the lack of access to water has different and disproportionate impacts on women. We would like the SWS to include clear references/acknowledgement of water’s connection to sexual and gender-based violence, menstrual health and hygiene, and gender equality, and their connections to health (sanitation, hygiene, disease prevention, menstrual health and hygiene) emphasized throughout the paper, in parallel with the connections made between water management and climate. Additionally, we note that the SWS mentions “youth” but not children. Statistically, children under the age of five have a greater risk of disease, malnutrition, or death because of unsafe water and sanitation. Discussions of improving outcomes for children through the SWS should be integrated, especially in discussion of poverty restricted areas, rural villages, and conflict-affected regions/countries.

The SWS is ambitious and will require a strong central presence to coordinate and direct efforts. The interconnectedness of water requires interconnected approaches and solutions. We hope for more clarity in the future on the progress for the appointment of a UN Special Envoy on water and the delineation of responsibilities between UN-Water and the Special Envoy. It would also be helpful to get a better understanding of the implications of some of the elements of the strategy with respect to new expectations from member states to report on or share information about water and sanitation activities.
We would also suggest that the SWS include a specific carve out for renewal/transition work in the lead up to 2030 in Section VII. C. Monitoring, review, and accountability measures. This work could be projected to start with the conclusion of the 2028 UN Water Conference to minimize the amount of delay that may result from the SWS’ renewal process and to create the necessary pathways to maintain momentum and continue any work that by necessity needs to carry on during this time.

Finally, we look forward to the detailed information to come in the Annexes and in the Collaborative Implementation Action Plan. In particular with the latter, we encourage constructive discussions which result in realistic targets, as well as the inclusion of more details on time-bound targets and the process for regular monitoring.

**Outcome 1**
We appreciate the inclusion of the role of the UN Special Envoy and agree with the Envoy’s positioning to work in conjunction with UN-Water Chair and the high-level dichotomy of roles and responsibilities between the two.

For Output 1.2, we would encourage UN-Water to leverage its position as coordinator/administrator of the SWS to ensure coherence and reduce duplication on the international freshwater agenda while ensuring transfer of information between the national/country and regional/global levels.

**Outcome 2**
For Output 2.1, we would also propose that RC/UNCTs can seek to proactively communicate out and share publicly in terms of what resident expertise is lacking from their areas of work. Member states can use this information as a catalogue and look for opportunities to contribute.

**Outcome 3**
Global fragmentation of internationally agreed conventions, treaties, frameworks and respective inter-governmental processes is the reality for water management, based on physical/geographic realities. In working to achieve the outputs under Outcome 3, we encourage the recognition and respect for localized solutions to local issues, recognizing that there is more than one way to achieve the peaceful management of transboundary and/or trans-jurisdictional waters.

Output 3.1 mentions “Collaborative Implementation Action Plan” to align water and sanitation elements in strategic plans, etc. It would be helpful to better understand the process envisioned to develop these plans, and the potential new pressures on resources to support this work.

Output 3.2 refers to a “human-development-peace nexus” which should be changed to the “humanitarian-development-peace nexus.”

For Output 3.3, we would encourage more national reporting against SDG-6 indicators to allow for better transparency and facilitate better information sharing/knowledge transfer among member states. In addition, we would suggest expanding the first sentence in Output 3.3 to include reference to the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. 
Outcome 4
The call for additional research, knowledge/data sharing will be fundamental to allow member states the necessary information to develop policies/frameworks that are conducive to their goals and are nationally determined.

For Output 4.1, there is a missing element to support issues related to water and sanitation in trade agreements. Another missing element related to finance and water valuation is assessments of affordability with respect to drinking water.

We agree with the importance of Output 4.2 and would like to suggest possible expansion of this output. Canada emphasizes the importance of collecting, analyzing, and reporting on demographic disaggregated data to inform water and sanitation policies, strategies, and plans. However, member states could also strengthen reporting on information on quality, quantity, aquatic ecosystems, availability, and use. This information would support a more holistic and knowledge focused discussion on water and sanitation data by recognizing these systems and services as it relates to geography (e.g., north versus south) and related contexts (e.g., pollution). We would also like to suggest integrating reporting metrics into output 4.2. Finally, a key element missing from Output 4.2 is a reference to UN support for open data sharing.

For Output 4.3, we note that there is a missing element related to the mobilization of researchers to effect knowledge and skills transfer.

For Output 4.5, we recognize the importance of strengthening governance of water and sanitation and that the SWS will create opportunities to make improvements through UN-system support. However, we would like to emphasize the need for integrated policy guidance, which draws upon input from and discussion with a wide range of representatives, in recognition of the diversity of partners and stakeholders with water and sanitation responsibilities. Federal, provincial, territorial, municipal, and Indigenous governments have various responsibilities with respect to water management in Canada, for example, and all of these jurisdictions will have a role to play in the development of national water management policy.

Outcome 5
For Output 5.2, we would recommend that the underrepresented groups outlined in Output 2.2 (women, youth, persons with disabilities, and Indigenous peoples) should be target groups for active inclusion in progress reviews.

B. Coordination and operation arrangements

In addition to developing website content for World Water Day and World Toilet Day, we encourage the development of similar content for Menstrual Health and Hygiene Day (28 May).