

**UN-Water Task Force on Regional Level Coordination**

## Options for the Coordination of UN-Water Regional Level Activities

## Draft Concept Note for Discussion

**Background**

This draft concept note for discussion was prepared by the UN-Water Task Force on Regional Level Coordination as follow-up to Decision 3 of the 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the UN-Water Senior Programme Managers (SPM), which was held from 26 to 27 August 2016 in Stockholm. The SPM requested the UN-Water Task Force on Regional Level Coordination to **“to develop a concept note on how to coordinate UN-Water regional-level activities in all regions, and to present it at the next UN-Water Meeting. The SPM invite all UN-Water Members operating at the regional level to contribute to the preparation of the concept note.”**

The SPM Decision 3 was based on the findings and recommendations emanating from the external review of UN-Water/Africa, which was conducted from late 2015 to early 2016 at the request of the SPM by the Task Force. The review drew from prior assessments on regional coordination<sup>1</sup> and lessons learned from UN-Water regional coordination efforts. The report also refers to the UN-Water mandate to support coordination on water at the global regional and national levels, and the need for regional coordination mechanisms to support these efforts. Special focus was given to the need to clarify the needs and mechanisms for regional follow-up on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The report recommended that the UN Regional Commissions retain their existing leadership roles at the regional level and that UN-Water draws upon the existing UN Regional Coordination Mechanisms (RCM) to support regional-level coordination on water. The UN-Water SPM is thus kindly invited to consider this approach by recommending the establishment of a working group on water under each of the five RCMs or to propose other modalities for improving regional-level coordination on water through existing institutions and institutional networks operating at the regional level taking into account the role of the UN Regional Commissions through the modalities suggested in the proposed next steps below.

**Regional-level context**

Each of the five regions covered by the United Nations Secretariat through the UN Regional Commissions has its specific circumstances and conditions. However, there is one common priority for all – the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The UN Regional Commission are responsible for regional level follow-up on 2030 Agenda and are mandated to annually convene the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in their respective regions to support regional follow-up and review and preparations for the High Level Political Forum. In addition, the UN Regional Commissions offer a regional platform for pursuing an integrated approach to water-related SDG implementation, which includes aspects related to human rights, gender and socio-economic development.

Alongside this regional-level convening power mandated to the UN Regional Commissions, global coordination efforts are fostering exchange, formulating indicators, and vetting methodologies for

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<sup>1</sup> UN-Water Task Force on Regional Level Cooperation “Regional Coordination Mechanisms for Water”, UNW-DPC, 17 July 2014; and United Nations General Assembly Resolution, “67/226 Quadrennial comprehensive policy review” (Section D on Regional Dimensions), 22 January 2013 aiming at an effective, efficient and coherent UN development system.

monitoring and reporting on the water-related SDGs. Most importantly, there is the advanced work being conducted by the UN-Water Integrated Monitoring Initiative on SDG6 and the consultations being conducted by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), which presents recommendations for consideration by the UN Statistical Commission. The UN-Water Integrated Monitoring Initiative is largely coordinated by SPM members operating at the global level through their respective regional and country-level offices, with the exception of UNECE who has reached out to other UN Regional Commissions to facilitate their global communications work.

### ***Scope***

It is thus suggested that to inform the further development of this draft concept note for discussion on UN-Water regional-level coordination arrangements a pilot exercise on regional-level coordination arrangements under UN-Water focused on the integrated implementation and monitoring of SDG6 and its targets along with other SDGs be pursued.

Given differing regional circumstances, this concept note proposes to hold regional consultations and to identify a model for regional level coordination of UN-Water activities tailored to each region's specificities.

### ***Proposed Next Steps***

1. Conduct a mapping of the global and regional offices of the UN-Water SPM members engaged in sub-regional and regional-level coordination on the integrated implementation and monitoring of SDG 6 and targets with other SDGs in the five regions covered by the UN Regional Commissions. Consideration of the role of non-UN actors working at the regional level may also be referenced.

The mapping exercise would be conducted in a consultative manner with all UN-Water SPM members operating in one or more region and should list the organization's name, location, counterpart on water, and contact information. UN-Water Task Force on Regional Level Coordination would lead the preparation of this mapping exercise through the UN Regional Commissions and the UN-Water Technical Advisory Unit (TAU), with the support of a consultant, as suggested in the annex below.

2. Organize up to five regional consultations with UN-Water SPM counterparts identified as operating at the regional level to identify preferred modalities for cooperation and coherence among UN agencies on integrated implementation and monitoring of SDG 6 and targets with other SDGs to support overall implementation of 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development at the regional and sub-regional level.

Effort will be made to organize these consultations alongside other meetings being conducted on the 2030 Agenda in support of resource and time efficiency. Funds from the UN-Water Task Force on Regional Level Coordination could be drawn upon to support these regional consultations and the travel of UN staff. Selected proposals for these regional consultations are provided in the annex.

3. Exchange experience and draw lessons between regional processes

A teleconference or short meeting on the sidelines of a global event would be organized to facilitate the exchange of experiences and lesson learned to date on regional coordination processes within the framework of UN-Water activities.

4. Consolidate a brief report on the proposals generated from the regional level consultations conducted to date for consideration by the UN-Water SPM at their 28<sup>th</sup> meeting in February 2018. The report could be consolidated by the Task Force members and the TAU based on the activities undertaken by February 2018. Proposed modalities and findings drawn on regional-level coordination on integrated implementation and monitoring of SDG6 and targets with other SDGs could then support discussion on regional-level cooperation and coherence with respect to the launching and implementation of the UN International Decade for Action on Water and Sustainable Development (2018-2028).

### **ANNEX I: Selected proposals for the regional-level consultations**

The proposals offered below are outlined based on efforts initiated to support consultations on regional-level coordination on the water-related SDGs by UN Regional Commission within the framework of UN-Water's scope of work.

#### **UNECE**

Compared to the MDGs era, the UNECE region is now in a different situation given the universality of the 2030 Agenda and the ambition of SDG6. Many actions and initiatives have already been initiated and it is therefore timely to foster a reflection on how to best coordinate these efforts. UNECE will facilitate such reflection through a regional consultation involving UN-Water members at the regional level and key regional partners, with a special focus on priority and emerging issues in the region and on monitoring SDG6, in cooperation and coordination with relevant GEMI efforts in the region.

#### *Budget Estimate:*

Consultant: USD 10,000 to support the substantial and logistic preparations of the regional consultation.

Regional Meeting: USD 5,000 for travel and DSA of participants

#### **UNESCAP**

The "Regional Seminar on Integrated Approaches for SDG Planning: The Case of SDG 6 on Water and Sanitation," 28-29 November 2016 in Bangkok, Thailand recommended among others that ESCAP can "play the role of a regional coordinator, honest broker and "wise council" for promotion of a shared understanding and vision, as well as the bridge between the global and regional levels for systems thinking and other approaches to enhance integrated implementation of the SDGs. Transitioning to the SDGs requires in-depth understanding of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and ESCAP is in a key position to facilitate that, as well as a regional exchange of experiences and peer learning"<sup>2</sup>. The meeting was attended by UN-Water.

Following these recommendations, ESCAP would like to further study the available modalities for strengthening its role as a regional coordinator of the activities of UN-Water and will discuss and agree with all stakeholders, including the Regional Coordination Mechanism and its Thematic Working Group on Resource Efficient Growth, as well as non-UN-Water members at a regional event

#### *Budget Estimate: USD 45,000*

Consultant: USD 10,000 – to develop a proposal suitable for the Asia-Pacific region

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.unescap.org/events/regional-seminar-integrated-approaches-sdg-planning-case-sdg-6-water-and-sanitation>

Regional Meeting: USD 35,000 – for travel and DSA of participants

### **UNESCWA**

Under the auspices of the Arab Ministerial Water Council (AMWC), UNESCWA has been implementing with regional partners the MDG+ Initiative, which has been recognized a regional platform for building follow-up on the water-related SDGs. Within the context of this regional initiative, ESCWA organized the Expert Group Meeting on the Water-related Sustainable Development Goals ((Beirut, 12-13 April 2016), which involved regional experts and stakeholders and was attended by UN-Water; the High Level Meeting on the Water-related Sustainable Development Goals (Amman, 1-2 November 2016), which was attended by Arab Governments represented by the ministries responsible for water and national statistical offices and included presentations by the members of the UN-Water Integrated Framework Initiative on SDG6; and the Expert Consultation on SDG6 Indicators (Beirut, 21 December 2016), which involve the Arab States serving on the IAEG-SDGs and was convened based on the recommendation of the High Level Meeting. The AMWC at its 8th Ministerial Session (Cairo, October 2016) also adopted a resolution noting that they “Consider this initiative as an achievement for the Arab Ministerial Water Council and a starting point to initiate the monitoring of the SDG implementation and promote this achievement by Arab countries and Arab and regional organizations in international and regional forums as a success story and ascertain the continuity of the project.”

In light of the above, UNESCWA suggests convening a regional consultation with the relevant SPM partner organizations operating in the Arab States to improve regional-level coordination on the formulation of indicators, indicator methodologies, monitoring and reporting on SDG6 and the water-related SDGs in an integrated manner. Effort would be made to organize the consultation on the sidelines of another regional meeting related to follow-up on the 2030 Agenda.

#### *Budget Estimate:*

Consultant: USD 5,000 to intra-regional work to support the consolidation of the mapping exercise of regional-level actors operating in the regions covered by the five UN Regional Commissions to inform (and facilitate the extension of invitations to) the appropriate global and regional counterparts for these regional consultations.

Regional Meeting: USD 10,000 – for travel and DSA of participants