

UN-Water Annual Report 2021



UN-Water, 2022

Cover: Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, and H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir, President of the 75th session of the UN General Assembly, during the opening segment of the High-level Meeting on the Implementation of the Water-related Goals and Targets of the 2030 Agenda–UN General Assembly, March 2021.

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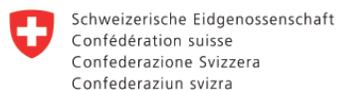
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About UN-Water

UN-Water coordinates the work of the United Nations (UN) on water and sanitation. It was formally established in 2003, building on a long history of collaboration within the UN. UN-Water comprises the UN bodies that have a focus on, or interest in, water-related issues as Members and other international organizations as Partners.

The main purpose of UN-Water is to complement and add value to existing programmes and projects by facilitating synergies and joint efforts, so as to maximize UN-wide coordinated action and coherence and to reduce overlapping and duplication. In so doing, UN-Water seeks to increase the effectiveness of support provided to

Member States in their efforts towards achieving international agreements on water. This is done along the following three main lines of work:

- Informing policy processes and addressing emerging issues;
- Supporting monitoring and reporting on water and sanitation; and
- Building knowledge and inspiring people to take action.

At the end of 2021, UN-Water had 33 Members and 43 Partners.

www.unwater.org

Chair's message

Mr. Gilbert F. Houngbo, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development and Chair of UN-Water



What does water and sanitation mean to us?

The importance of valuing water was at the heart of our work in 2021. The year's UN-Water-led World Water Day and World Toilet Day campaigns, helped focus attention on achieving the sustainable development goals of clean water and sanitation for all as a route to human health, dignity, and security and the sustainability of life on earth.

Our discussions yielded a broad consensus that a well-managed water cycle is an essential defense against disease and inequality and a barrier to challenges posed by a changing climate and increasing demand.

As the pandemic raged for a second year, imposing operational limitations, UN-Water Members and Partners remained resolute, delivering on their mandates and helping some of the most vulnerable communities in the world.

As the UN-Water family, we sought to minimize disruption caused by COVID-19 and focus squarely on the immense task ahead.

The Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) Summary Progress Update produced by UN-Water's Integrated Monitoring Initiative for SDG 6 in February, set out how the world is doing against each indicator and what still needs to be done.

We must all do more, faster. Governments need to quadruple current rates of progress if we are to attain the global target of universal access

to water and sanitation by 2030. The SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework, launched by UN-Water in 2020, is designed to get us there.

During 2021, the Framework helped increase momentum and became an organizing principle in the UN system.

The Bonn Water Dialogues for Results 2021 built sound new recommendations upon the Framework. And, at the High-level Meeting on Water convened by the President of the General Assembly in March 2021, discussions were guided by the Framework's five cross-cutting 'accelerators' designed to improve progress towards the SDG 6 goals: financing, data and information, capacity development, innovation, and governance.

2021 was a year of unity and clarity for the UN-Water family, as we gained more high-level support ahead of next year's UN 2023 Water Conference.

The focus at this once-in-a-generation event in March 2023, will be on government action but each of us has a role to play in achieving water and sanitation for all by 2030.

As an international community, we know what to do and we know how to do it. Across the world, billions of people now look to us to match our words with urgent action.

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Highlighted achievements and lessons learned in 2021

Spotlight

“For me, water means protection. A well-managed water cycle – encompassing drinking water, sanitation, hygiene, wastewater, transboundary governance, the environment and more – means a defence against ill-health and indignity and a response to challenges from a changing climate and increasing global demand.”

Remarks by Mr. António Guterres, UN Secretary-General, on World Water Day 2021

The World Water Day and World Toilet Day 2021 campaigns asked people “What does water/sanitation mean to you?”, and aimed to generate a comprehensive understanding of water and sanitation’s true, multi-dimensional value to help decision-makers safeguard critical resources and target action for the benefit of everyone.

These two international observances – World Water Day and World Toilet Day – aim to raise awareness of the billions of people living without access to safely managed water and sanitation, and focus on taking action to tackle this global crisis. World Water Day 2021 generated over 10.3 billion digital views and World Toilet Day 2021 1.6 billion digital views (during a period of 30 days).

In 2021, UN-Water also strengthened communications on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6, reaching technical and policy audiences at both the national and global levels. UN-Water published an SDG 6 Summary Progress Update 2021 as a key contribution to the High-level Meeting on Water convened by the President of the 75th session of the UN General Assembly. The key messages and data from the Progress Update were quoted and discussed by stakeholders at different conferences throughout the year.

Highlighted achievements

SDG 6 GLOBAL ACCELERATION FRAMEWORK

The SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework was recognized and included in different UN resolutions and processes, as well as international conferences. Since the Framework was launched in July 2020, the number of actions logged on the SDG 6 Action Space online platform has more than doubled, demonstrating the growing commitment from UN-Water Members and Partners, governments, civil society and business.

Highlights of the acceleration actions by UN-Water Members and Partners

- Support to UN Country Teams
- The Water and Climate Coalition
- SDG 6 Capacity Development Initiative
- Hand Hygiene for All initiative
- Roadmap for the Promotion of the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation
- World Water Quality Alliance
- State of the World's Sanitation report

Resolutions and processes that recognized and supported the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework

- UN General Assembly resolution (A/RES/75/212) on the UN 2023 Water Conference
- Human Rights Council resolution (A/HRC/RES/45/8)
- High-level Meeting on Water convened by the President of the 75th session of the UN General Assembly
- Joint Statement by 168 countries for the PGA High-Level Meeting on Water
- Bonn Water Dialogues for Results 2021
- The Council of the European Union conclusions on water diplomacy

“The SDG 6 Progress Update shows we are seriously off-track to ensure sustainable water and sanitation for all by 2030. [...] We must accelerate and do it fast if we want to meet our SDG 6 commitments.”

Remarks by Mr. Gilbert F. Houngbo, UN-Water Chair, at the High-level Meeting on Water convened by the President of the 75th session of the General Assembly in March 2021

UN-WATER'S SUPPORT TO THE UN 2023 WATER CONFERENCE PROCESS

The UN 2023 Water Conference will be convened in New York from 22 to 24 March 2023. As the first UN conference on water since 1977, it will be a major milestone to create momentum and accelerate progress on water and sanitation during the Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs.

In 2021, UN-Water's Members and Partners worked closely with the co-hosts of the UN 2023 Water Conference, Tajikistan and the Netherlands, and the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Liu Zhenmin. This included support to the High-level Meeting on Water convened by the President of the 75th session of the UN General Assembly (PGA), participation in the Bonn Water Dialogues for Results 2021 and other preparatory meetings, and development of proposals on the possible themes of the interactive dialogues of the forthcoming UN 2023 Water Conference.

SDG 6 PROGRESS UPDATE

Based on the country data compiled in 2020, progress updates for nine of the SDG 6 indicators were published in 2021: drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (6.1.1 and 6.2.1), wastewater (6.3.1), ambient water quality (6.3.2), water use efficiency and water stress (6.4.1 and 6.4.2), integrated water resources management (6.5.1), transboundary cooperation (6.5.2), and ecosystems (6.6.1). In addition, the SDG 6 Summary Progress Update 2021 was launched to inform global policymakers about overall progress towards SDG 6 as well as the acceleration needs. The Update was presented to the Permanent Missions to the UN in New York and the accompanying infographic was highlighted on the official PGA website.

“Valuing toilets is a collective obligation. [...] Technologies and practices have innovated. So too should our strategies to address the challenges of a global sanitation crisis. It is incumbent upon national governments and the international community to prioritize greater support for sustainable innovations.”
Remarks by H.E. Mr. Abdulla Shahid,
President of the 76th session
of the UN General Assembly,
on World Toilet Day 2021

Lessons learned

During COVID-19 restrictions, UN-Water remained fully operational and continued with digital engagement and interaction instead of traditional in-person meetings.

The 2030 Agenda and the other related global agreements are proving to be blueprints for the COVID-19 response and can guide us to ‘build back better’. As the social and economic impacts of the pandemic unfold, there is a clear need for 1) better targeting of interventions and funding; 2) engaging previously unengaged stakeholders, prioritizing vulnerable and marginalized people; and 3) better coordination and coherence of all actors and more effective partnerships. The 2030 Agenda also embodies a clear commitment to addressing inequality and leaving no one behind, anchored in international law and with specific reference to the human rights to water and sanitation.

Informing policy processes and addressing emerging issues

SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework

Responding to the UN Secretary-General's Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs by 2030, UN-Water Members and Partners launched the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework in 2020. The Framework mobilizes UN agencies, governments, civil society, private sector and other stakeholders on five cross-cutting 'accelerators': financing, data and information, capacity development, innovation, and governance.

COLLECTIVE EFFORTS FOR ACCELERATING SDG 6

In the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework's second year, progress on achieving SDG 6 has been made by a variety of stakeholders. UN-Water Members and Partners have been developing initiatives and reports in support of the Framework, such as the Water and Climate Coalition, Hand Hygiene for All initiative, and the Roadmap for the Promotion of the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation.

The SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework was recognized and included in different UN resolutions and processes, including the UN

General Assembly resolution (A/RES/75/212) on the 2023 Water Conference and the Human Rights Council resolution (A/HRC/RES/45/8). Moreover, the joint statement by 168 countries for the PGA High-level Meeting on Water expressed support for the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework. The Council of the European Union conclusions on water diplomacy also underlined the need to back the Framework.

In addition, the Framework was discussed at high-level meetings and conferences and received a positive reception. For example, the five accelerators from the Framework served as an organizing structure for the two panel sessions at the PGA High-level Meeting on Water in March 2021 and the key messages and recommendations from the Bonn Water Dialogues for Results 2021 were built on the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework.

As an accountability measure, the Framework includes high-level and multi-stakeholder moments designed to enable stakeholders to maintain momentum on SDG 6, as well as share lessons and best practices. The first SDG 6 Special Event was held at the UN High-level Political Forum on 9 July 2021. The event focused on how the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework can support a

sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, and builds an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

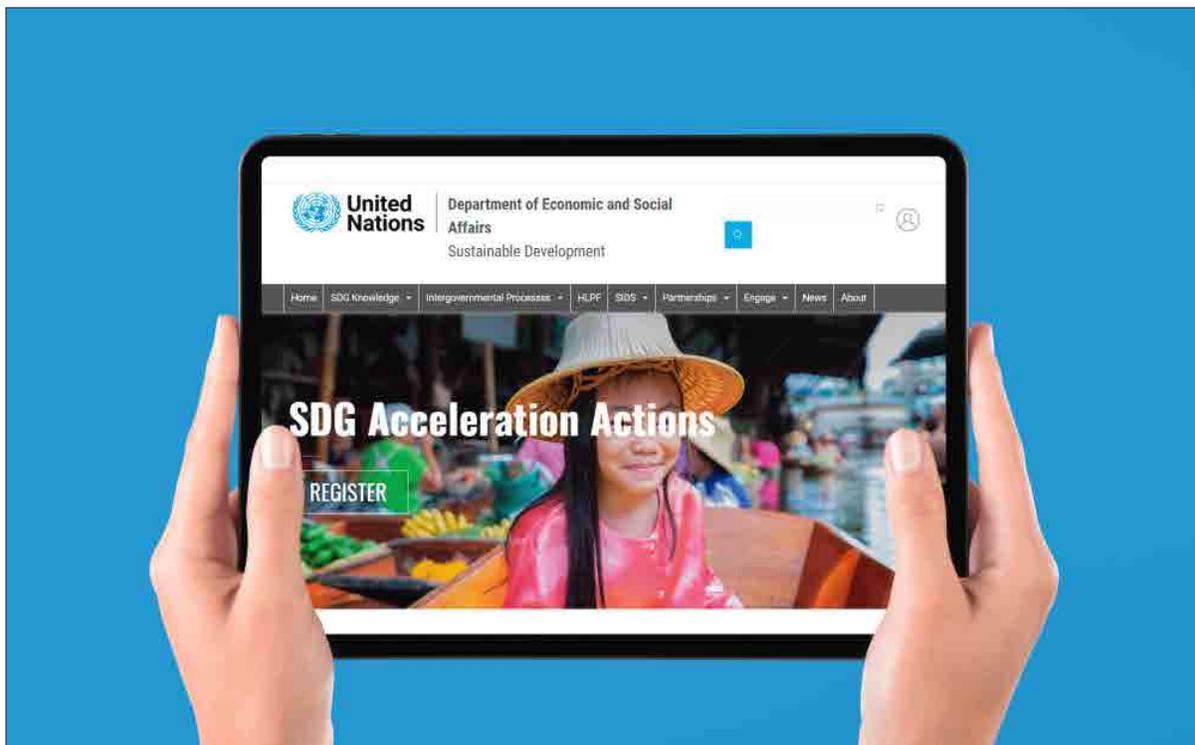
The Framework also introduced the SDG 6 Action Space, a platform that records and shares actions to capture progress, while tracking the latest evidence on what works. The SDG 6 Action Space allows the international community to learn quickly from both failure and success in order to quickly adapt to changing realities. By the end of 2021, the number of SDG 6 Acceleration Actions submitted to the platform had more than doubled since the launch.

To further support knowledge sharing between countries, UN-Water began developing country acceleration case studies that highlight country achievements and best practice.

COUNTRY LEVEL ENGAGEMENT

To support the UN reform process, UN-Water, in coordination with the UN Development Coordination Office, communicated an offer of support to UN Country Teams and Resident Coordinators to better leverage the full capacities of the UN system at the country level in support of SDG 6. The main purpose of UN-Water's country level engagements is to reinforce existing inter-agency collaboration as well as add value by facilitating connections to non-resident expertise and relevant processes. The offer included: data and insight, connection to expertise, advocacy, and seed funding.

During the 2020-2021 pilot phase, UN-Water Members and Partners supported nine pilot countries: Bahrain, Costa Rica, Guinea, India, Madagascar, Mexico, Nepal, São Tomé and Príncipe, and the United Arab Emirates. Activities included inter-agency coordination, the Common



Country Analyses (CCAs), capacity development, innovation, and integration of the human rights to water and sanitation. In addition, UN-Water supported other engagements with Resident Coordinator Offices (RCOs) in Central Asia, South Caucasus, and Latin America related to transboundary water cooperation and water scarcity.

Following the pilot phase, the second outreach phase will be carried out including a specific targeting of the 32 countries that will start carrying out their CCA each year.

Examples of the country activities during the pilot phase 2020-2021

- Supporting the UN Country Team in Costa Rica in accessing wastewater-related expertise and supporting the development of an inter-agency project addressing wastewater-related challenges.
- Supporting the UN Country Team in Mexico in their work on human rights to water and sanitation through connection to expertise and convening discussions.
- Supporting the Resident Coordinator in Madagascar with assessing water and sanitation interlinkages for the CCA and Cooperation Framework design.
- Providing the UN Country Team in India with innovation case studies collected together with the UN Innovation Network.
- Developing the SDG 6 Capacity Development Initiative to respond to Nepal's need for capacity development, to be piloted in 2022.

SDG 6 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

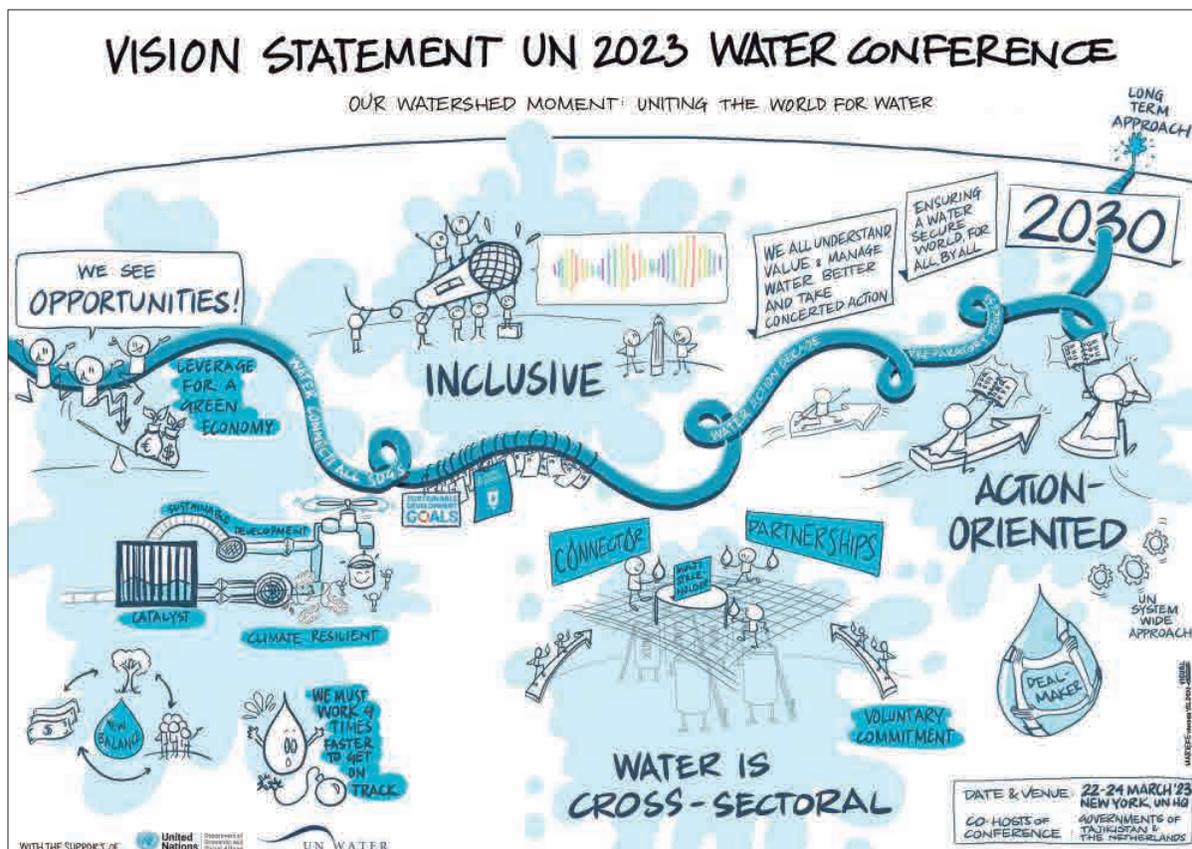
In 2021, UN-Water created the SDG 6 Capacity Development Initiative to support coordination of SDG 6-related capacity development work, facilitate uptake and deployment of capacity

development activities, and accelerate implementation of SDG 6 and related targets as part of the UN Decade of Action and the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework. The Initiative aims to be demand driven, which means being responsive to specific country's capacity development needs by providing support from the UN system and other development partners at various levels of operation, while encouraging national-level ownership. At the end of 2021, the initiative had 35 institutional members and is co-coordinated by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

UN 2023 Water Conference

In resolution A/RES/73/226, the UN General Assembly decided to convene the 2023 Conference for the Midterm Comprehensive Review of Implementation of the UN Decade for Action on Water and Sanitation (2018-2028) in New York from 22 to 24 March 2023. The Conference, which is referred to as the 'UN 2023 Water Conference', will focus on the sustainable development and integrated management of water resources for the achievement of social, economic and environmental objectives, the implementation and promotion of related programmes and projects, as well as on the furtherance of cooperation and partnerships at all levels.

In December 2020, the General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/75/212 detailing the modalities of the UN 2023 Water Conference. According to the resolution, the Conference will be co-hosted by Tajikistan and the Netherlands and will result in a summary of proceedings by the President of the General Assembly. The co-hosts are committed to ensuring the event is inclusive, action-oriented and cross-sectoral.



[Source: UN 2023 Water Conference website, available at <https://sdgs.un.org/conferences/water2023>]

UN-WATER’S SUPPORT TO THE PREPARATIONS TO THE UN 2023 WATER CONFERENCE

In May 2021, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres appointed the UN Under Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Liu Zhenmin, as Secretary-General of the UN 2023 Water Conference to serve as the focal point within the Secretariat for providing support to the organization of the Conference. Mr. Guterres requested Mr. Liu closely coordinate with UN-Water for the substantive preparations of the Conference. Since then, the UN-Water family has been supporting Mr. Liu on the UN 2023 Water Conference and its preparatory process.

In December 2020, the General Assembly resolution A/RES/75/212 decided that the Conference will comprise five interactive dialogues. The General Assembly requests the Secretary-General of the Conference to prepare proposals for themes of the interactive dialogues in a background note, in consultation with Member States, with the support of UN-Water and relevant UN entities. The President of the General Assembly is requested to hold a one-day preparatory meeting by November 2022 at UN Headquarters in New York to “finalize the themes of the interactive dialogues and other outstanding organizational matters” pertaining to the Conference. To this end, the UN-Water family developed a set of options on possible themes of the interactive dialogues with pros and cons of the different options.

The proposals emerged from several discussions within the UN-Water network, including at its 35th UN-Water Meeting in October 2021.

PGA HIGH-LEVEL EVENT ON WATER

On 18 and 22 March 2021, the President of the 75th session of the UN General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir, convened the High-level Meeting on the Implementation of the Water-related Goals and Targets of the 2030 Agenda. This meeting aimed to promote the implementation of water-related goals and targets in support of the implementation of the Water Action Decade and the High-level Political Forum.

The meeting consisted of an opening segment, a high-level plenary, panels on data and information and governance, and financing, innovation and capacity building, and a brief closing segment.

During the opening segment, the President of the UN General Assembly, the UN Deputy Secretary-General and the President of the Economic and

Social Council, Heads of State (the co-hosts of the UN 2023 Water Conference), the Chair of UN-Water, and a youth representative highlighted the need for urgent and accelerated actions, including through multilateral cooperation to achieve the water-related sustainable goals and targets of 2030 Agenda.

“It is a moral failure that we live in a world with such high levels of technical innovation and success, but we continue to allow billions of people to exist without clean drinking water or the basic tools to wash their hands.”

President of the 75th session of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir

Seven Heads of State and Government, 48 Ministers, and more than 100 representatives from intergovernmental organizations, the UN system and stakeholders engaged in the meeting via pre-recorded statements, livestream and limited in-person attendance.



H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir, President of the 75th session of the UN General Assembly, during the opening segment of the High-Level Meeting on Water–UN General Assembly, March 2021.

The meeting demonstrated clear political support for tackling water challenges and highlighted priority areas for accelerating actions to meet the water-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. The meeting also acknowledged the significant role of the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework and paved the way for the UN 2023 Water Conference.

Participating in global processes

FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT GLOBAL DIALOGUE ON WATER

In 2021, the UN Secretary-General convened a Food Systems Summit as part of the Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs by 2030. Prior to the Summit, Ms. Agnes Kalibata, Special Envoy of the Food Systems Summit, and Mr. Gilbert F. Houngbo, UN-Water Chair and President of IFAD, co-convened a Food Systems Summit Global Dialogue on Water in April.

The Food Systems Summit Global Dialogue on Water aimed to explore the fundamental inter-connections between food systems and water systems, and their relations to other areas fundamental to the SDGs, such as energy, climate, and the environment. During the dialogue, 117 participants from the food community and the water community discussed how water is an essential ingredient for sustainable food systems to ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all, shift to sustainable consumption

patterns, boost nature-positive production, advance equitable livelihoods, and build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress.

In July 2021, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) hosted a pre-summit which included a panel discussion on how Indigenous Peoples' food systems are safeguarding biodiversity, protecting watersheds and preserving ecosystems.

COP 26

At the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow, a multimedia Water Pavilion was hosted from 1 to 12 November 2021 with inputs from UN-Water Members and Partners. The Water Pavilion offered a wide-ranging and inclusive series of events demonstrating the numerous ways that water is enabling transformative climate action at all levels. The UN-Water Expert Group on Water and Climate Change and the Water and Climate Coalition co-hosted an event titled 'Water action as answer to climate change – collaborative action for resilience' at the Water Pavilion, aiming to highlight the cross-cutting role of water solutions for adaptation and mitigation. The event showcased how water and climate change adaptation can be integrated into national policies, such as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), as well as how to mobilize financing for climate-resilient water management.

Supporting monitoring and reporting on water and sanitation

When Member States adopted the SDGs in 2015, they committed to regularly reporting data to the UN to track progress and ensure accountability. Credible and timely data are essential to the realization of the SDGs, as they help decision-makers to identify countries, people and sectors that are left behind, and to set priorities for increased efforts and investments. Six years into the 2030 Agenda, and with nine years left to “ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”, there have been two coordinated global data compilation exercises for SDG 6, taking place in 2017 and 2020. Thanks to the great efforts of all country monitoring focal points, water and sanitation data are now available from almost all countries.

In 2021, the UN-Water Integrated Monitoring Initiative for SDG 6 (IMI-SDG6) focused its work on communicating the current status of SDG 6 and the acceleration needed to achieve SDG 6 by 2030, targeting both technical and policy audiences at national and global levels. Based on the country data compiled in 2020, progress updates were published for nine of the SDG 6 indicators: drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (6.1.1 and 6.2.1, for which WHO and UNICEF are custodian agencies) wastewater (6.3.1, WHO and UN-Habitat), ambient water quality (6.3.2, UNEP), water use efficiency

and water stress (6.4.1 and 6.4.2, FAO), integrated water resources management (IWRM) (6.5.1, UNEP), transboundary cooperation (6.5.2, UNECE and UNESCO), and ecosystems (6.6.1, UNEP).¹

UN-Water also published a Summary Progress Update on SDG 6, to inform global policymakers about overall progress as well as the acceleration needs, noting that, on average, governments must work up to four times faster to be able to achieve the Goal of ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all by 2030. This update was an important input to the 2021 High-level Meeting on water hosted by the President of the UN General Assembly. (See page 19 for the Summary Progress Update on SDG 6 infographic).

Implementing a coherent, integrated and efficient monitoring framework

In 2021, during the 2020 Data Drive, the UN custodian agencies for the SDG 6 indicators took stock of country feedback and experiences and refined their monitoring methodologies accordingly, including the following: further alignment of existing mechanisms for collecting wastewater statistics

¹ See Annex 1 for the organizations' full names.

and the development of a mechanism for city-level monitoring (6.3.1), advancing the accounting of environmental flows and agronomic parameters (6.4.1 and 6.4.2), and the identification of new Earth observation datasets on river flows (6.6.1).

In addition, across indicators, the work on gender contextualization intensified, starting with the development of a conceptual model for the work and an inventory of existing tools. A group of 33 gender experts from different sectors and regions was created to support the work.

Engaging Member States and enhancing national capacity

While country engagement in 2020 focused on capacity-building support for monitoring and reporting (continuing well into 2021 to maximize the number of countries reporting), the engagement in 2021 revolved around the analysis and communication of data and information.

UN-Water communicated overall progress towards SDG 6 and the acceleration needed to achieve the goal by 2030 to national and global policymakers and diplomats in advance of the UNPGA High-level Meeting on the water-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda in March (PGA Meeting), to ensure an evidence-based follow-up and review process. Indicator-specific results were presented and discussed with country focal points and many others at the World Water Week in Stockholm and in a series of indicator-specific webinars in September (a total of 18 individual events). Many of the online events offered simultaneous translation in multiple languages. More than 174 UN Member States participated in these events.

For indicators 6.a.1 and 6.b.1, the 2021/2022 GLAAS (the UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water) cycle and country survey were launched, with a

special focus on hand hygiene as a front line of defence against infectious disease outbreaks. Countries received a survey package including the survey form and guidance, along with virtual trainings organized by the WHO regional offices.

To support countries' use of data for refining national targets and/or for informed planning and management, a number of indicator-specific activities were offered, including two online training courses on water pollution management and IWRM for climate resilience (6.3.1); a case study on water quality objectives/targets in Jamaica (6.3.2); visual data summaries for communication of IWRM status and progress for 185 countries and IWRM plans/roadmaps for six countries (6.5.1); and training on the development of freshwater action plans in three countries (6.6.1).

A great deal of effort went into planning the 2nd Global Workshop on Integrated Monitoring of SDG 6, seeking to repeat the success of the first workshop in 2017. Thanks to the online format, for the first time the overall and indicator-specific focal points from all participating countries could join at the same time. Three months prior to the main workshop, a 'kick-off' workshop took place in December 2021 with the participation of 272 country participants, representing 101 countries. The kick-off workshop provided guidance on intersectoral collaboration in the monitoring process and the introduction of a voluntary assignment to country monitoring teams. As part of the assignment, countries were encouraged to convene a meeting with all focal points within their countries to jointly respond to three discussion questions on past experience, use of data for policy, and needs for the future. With the overall objective of the assignment to strengthen and mainstream an intersectoral monitoring process and to help prepare for the forthcoming workshop discussions, the kick-off participants received hands-on training from the University of Maryland, USA, on communicating water and sanitation data to different audiences.

What is the role of the different country focal points?

- **Indicator-specific technical focal points** periodically receive requests for data from the custodian agencies, and are also the primary contacts for capacity-building and other outreach activities. Often, the focal points are working with colleagues within and outside their organization.
- **Overall focal points** work with indicator-specific focal points and promote coordination and collaboration across the indicators. They are the main point of contact for communications with IMI-SDG6 for all broad issues related to SDG 6 monitoring and the integrated analysis and use of data.

What is an intersectoral monitoring team and why is it important?

An intersectoral monitoring team is a mechanism to coordinate the work across all SDG indicators at the national level, and it may take many forms. The team typically comprises the overall focal point (who may be responsible for convening the team), the National Statistical Office (NSO) focal point (the NSO has overall responsibility for SDG reporting) and all the indicator-specific focal points. These focal points often come from different sectors and entities such as ministries and national governmental organizations and institutions, and work on closely interlinked, sometimes overlapping, topics. This underlines the importance of regular focal point meetings. The purpose of the intersectoral monitoring team is to work with monitoring and data across indicators and sectors, to facilitate learning, to streamline data collection and management, and to support joint analysis and use for policy- and decision-making.

Reporting on global progress

In 2021, UN-Water published the SDG 6 Summary Progress Update, with key messages presented to diplomats through a Friends of Water event in February and a dedicated

launch event during the PGA Meeting in March. In advance of the launch, 18 UN-Water Members and Partners, three Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) members as well as 18 representatives from the general public helped sharpen the report and its main messages.

Indicator-specific progress updates were published for 6.1.1-6.2.1, 6.3.1, 6.3.2, 6.4.1, 6.4.2, 6.5.1, 6.5.2 and 6.6.1 in July and August. The reports for 6.3.1 to 6.6.1 followed a joint theme (acceleration), joint production process (including a review by UN-Water Members and Partners, the SAG and other indicator-specific reviewers in May) and joint launch in August.

All the new data were added to the SDG 6 Data Portal, which also saw the addition of new datasets on wastewater, the release of a number of new functions (including the revision of 6.5.1, 6.5.2 and 6.b.1 snapshots; the conversion of indicators from total to total per capita and from proportion of population to number of people; making data viewable from all spatial scales at the same time); and the start of the development of the Data Portal in the six UN languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

The launch of the reports as well as the new data was accompanied by an extensive outreach campaign, including the sharing of social media cards, country data snapshots, infographics, a joint PowerPoint presentation, a storytelling site as well as videos. Thanks to this, the SDG 6 Summary Progress Update 2021 had similar download numbers to the SDG 6 Synthesis Report 2018 on Water and Sanitation (9,000 downloads), and the indicator reports had four times as many downloads (from the UN-Water website) as the 2018 indicator reports (24,000 downloads), and the Data Portal had twice as many visitors as in 2020 (65,000 visitors).

SUMMARY PROGRESS 2021: SDG 6 INDICATORS



July 2021

6.1.1 DRINKING WATER

2 billion people



lacked safely managed drinking water services in 2020



6.2.1a SANITATION



3.6 billion people



lacked safely managed sanitation services, and 494 million people practised open defecation, in 2020

6.2.1b HYGIENE

2.3 billion people



lacked a basic handwashing facility with soap and water at home in 2020



6.3.1 WASTEWATER

Globally **44%** of household wastewater is not safely treated



6.3.2 WATER QUALITY

The lack of water quality data for **over 3 billion people**

means that they are at significant risk because the health of their rivers, lakes and groundwater is unknown



6.4.1 WATER-USE EFFICIENCY

Since 2015 water-use efficiency has increased by



9%

globally

6.4.2 WATER STRESS



2.3 billion people

live in water-stressed countries

of which 733 million live in high and critically water-stressed countries

6.5.1 INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT



107 countries are not on track to have sustainably managed water resources by 2030

Globally, the current rate of progress needs to be doubled

6.5.2 TRANSBOUNDARY COOPERATION

Only **24** countries



reported that all the rivers, lakes and aquifers that they share with their neighbours are covered by operational arrangements for cooperation



6.6.1 ECOSYSTEMS

1/5 of the world's river basins

are experiencing rapid changes in the area covered by surface waters



6.a.1 INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION



Official development assistance (ODA) commitments to the water sector increased

9%

from 2015 to 2019, but disbursements showed little change

6.b.1 PARTICIPATION

Only **14** out of **109** countries

report having high levels of participation by communities in water and sanitation decision-making



Building knowledge and inspiring people to take action

In the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, UN-Water's engagement with its audiences, Members and Partners was almost exclusively online. Thematically, the outreach continued to channel a COVID-19-related narrative while offering a post-pandemic outlook. This built on the efforts of UN-Water Members, Partners and other key stakeholders to deliver coherent and coordinated outreach activities and products to mobilize the public, civil society, private sector, and Member States to take action.

Informing, engaging and inspiring action

WORLD WATER DAY

On 22 March every year, World Water Day celebrates water and raises awareness of the global water crisis, and a core focus of the observance is to support the achievement of SDG 6: water and sanitation for all by 2030.

The 2021 World Water Day 'pivot event' was held as a virtual event at the FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy. This included a high-level event with the presence of the UN-Water Chair, Heads of Agencies and Member States representatives. During the pivot event, the

2021 UN World Water Development Report was released, focusing on the same topic as World Water Day 2021: 'Valuing Water'.

The campaign theme of 'Valuing Water' explored the complex value of water for households, food, culture, health, education, economics and ecosystems, in addition to issues of cost and price.

The driving concept behind the campaign was to develop a more comprehensive understanding of water's true, multidimensional value to help decision-makers safeguard this critical resource for the benefit of everyone.

In the three months leading up to World Water Day, UN-Water conducted a pre-campaign 'social media listening exercise', encouraging people around the globe to respond to the question "What does water mean to you?", using the hashtag #Water2me for their social media contributions and sending in emails to the dedicated World Water Day Task Force to give their views on the value of water.

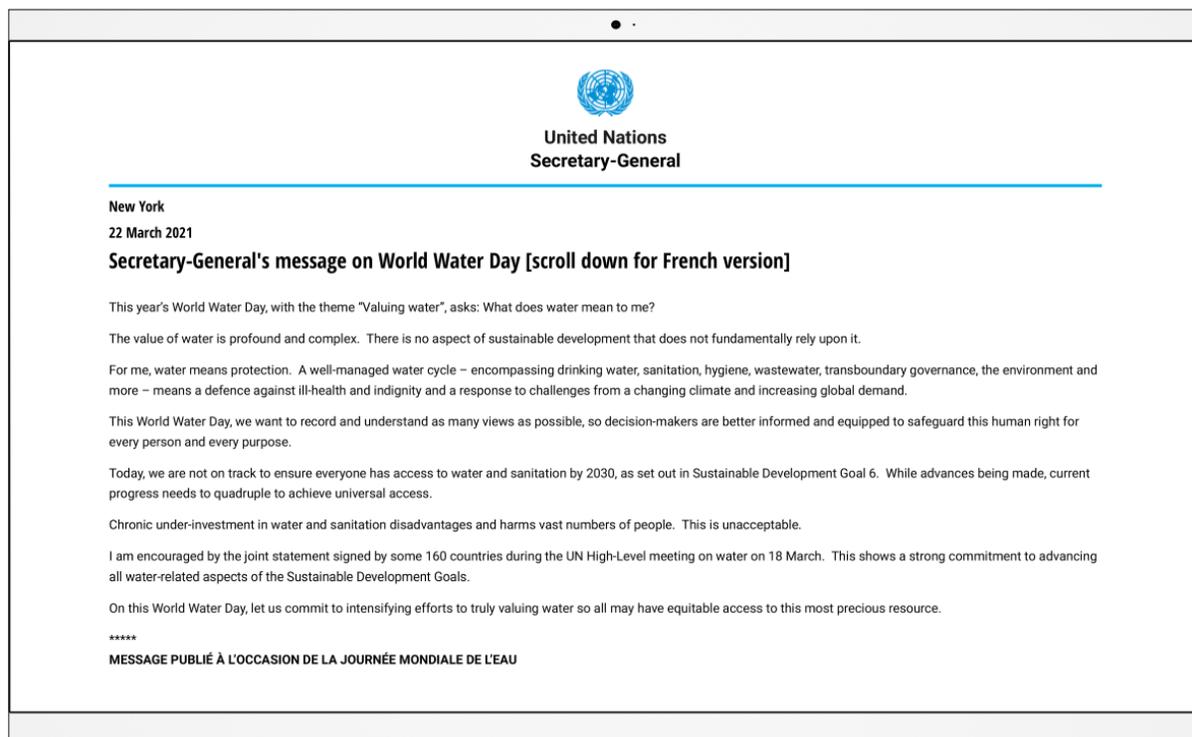
The summary of the listening exercise – available at www.unwater.org/publications/world-water-day-2021-listening-exercise-summary – is a snapshot of more than 6,000 social media conversations on blogs,



Samples of official UN posts from World Water Day 2021 social media activity.

LinkedIn, Instagram, news, Facebook, Twitter and Reddit with a reach of nearly 140 million potential impressions generated by over 3,000 authors. The conversations took place between mid-November 2020 and mid-February 2021 in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

The pre-campaign generated conversations in 140 countries, with USA, India, and the UK accounting for almost a third of the total mentions in the listening exercise. Notably, six of the 20 most engaged countries were in Africa, in the following descending order: Nigeria, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Kenya and Ghana.



Taken with the main campaign, the number of mentions online of World Water Day was more than 781,000 – an increase of 45 per cent on 2020 and the highest number of mentions since 2018. In total, World Water Day 2021 generated over 10.3 billion digital views (over a period of 30 days).

The campaign’s broad theme about valuing water succeeded in engaging a differentiated audience with a broader range of interests than the audience had in 2020.

The World Water Day campaign became the centre of several political initiatives around the world targeting issues related to hygiene and sanitation, the pandemic, and environmental issues in general.

WORLD TOILET DAY

On 19 November every year, World Toilet Day celebrates toilets and raises awareness of the fact that 3.6 billion people live without access to safely managed sanitation. It is about taking action to tackle the global sanitation crisis and achieve SDG 6: water and sanitation for all by 2030.

This year’s World Toilet Day had the theme ‘Valuing Toilets’, with the aim of drawing attention to the fact that toilets – and the sanitation systems that support them – are often underfunded, poorly managed or neglected in many parts of the world, with devastating consequences for health, economics and the environment, particularly in the poorest and most marginalized communities.

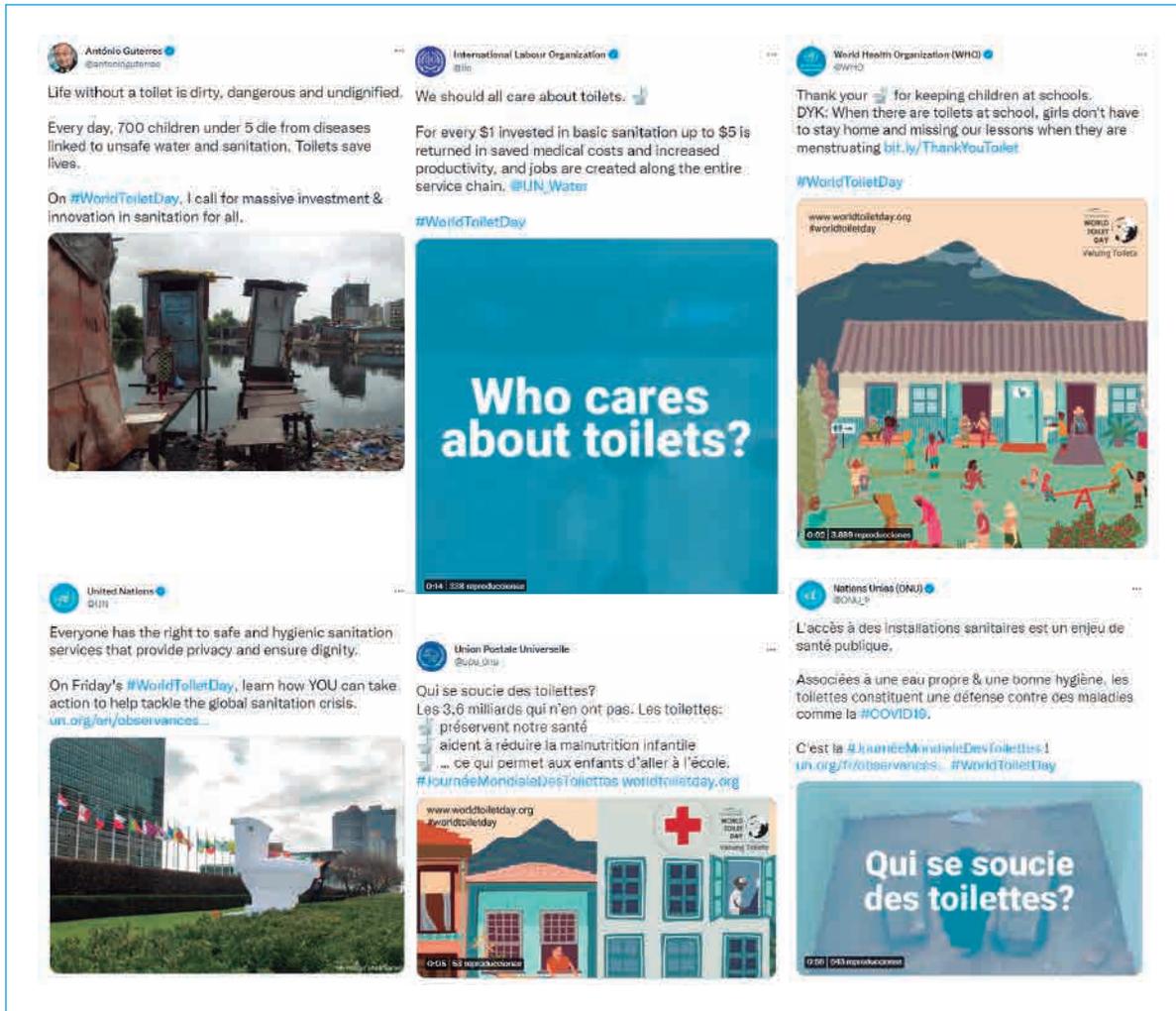


To celebrate World Toilet Day 2021, the UN released new postage stamps. The three new designs depicted some of the most important ways toilets, water and hygiene add value to our lives:

- Safely managed toilets and water services dispose of our waste, helping prevent food crops from being contaminated and ensuring sustainable use of water in agriculture.
- Good hygiene practices are only possible with reliable and affordable water and sanitation services, helping to protect people from preventable diseases such as COVID-19 and cholera.
- Toilets at home, school and workplaces benefit women and girls in particular, helping them play their full role in society, especially during menstruation and pregnancy.

On social media and online, as in 2020, India generated the most conversations around World Toilet Day, with the USA and UK also contributing significantly. Discussions connecting World Toilet Day to climate change issues increased compared to the previous year’s campaign, while links to COVID-19 and the pandemic decreased significantly.

Sanitation-related issues were the most prominent topic, accounting for 30 per cent of the discussion – an increase of 5 percentage points on 2020. The grave consequences of unsafe toilets for public health were repeatedly mentioned. Kenya, South Africa and Uganda made



Samples of social media activity from the UN and UN-Water family for World Toilet Day 2021.

up more than 10 per cent of the discussions. In 2021, the official UN accounts on Chinese social media also promoted World Toilet Day.

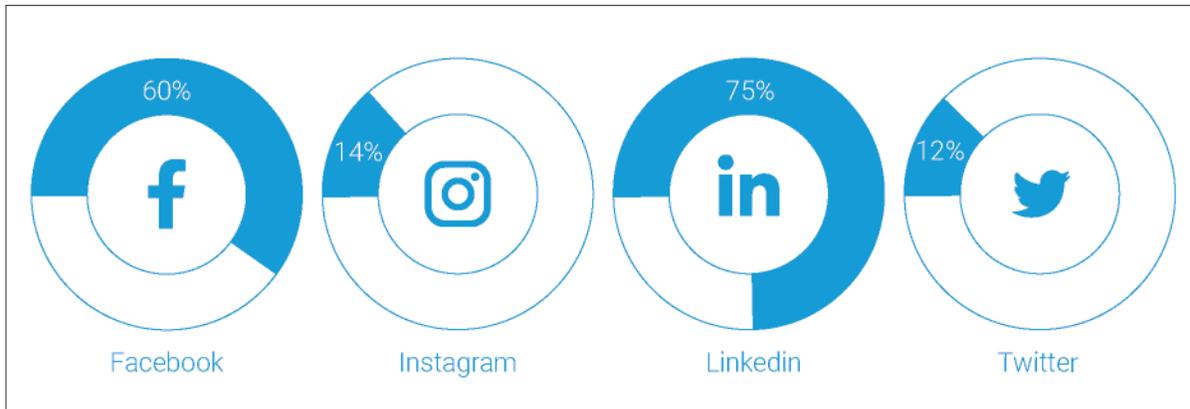
In terms of demographics and age, it was notable that the visitors to the World Toilet Day website were overall younger compared to the previous year, with the age group 18-34 growing by 9 percentage points to 41 per cent of the audience.

The global conversation was highly organic, with 85 per cent of the posts published by small accounts. The connection to climate change (the World Toilet Day campaign theme in 2020) was more

salient in 2021 compared to previous campaigns. In total, World Toilet Day 2021 generated over 1.6 billion digital views (over a period of 30 days).

Strengthening the UN-Water corporate brand

As the pandemic continued, digital traffic to the UN-Water websites remained strong, as the total number of page views UN-Water websites increased from 2.2 million in 2020 to 2.9 million in 2021.



UN-Water on social media: percentage growth of follower numbers in 2021, compared to 2020 numbers.

UN-Water’s social media engagement continued to grow substantially. All social media accounts experienced steady growth, though the fastest growing channels were LinkedIn, with a 75 per cent increase in followers, and Facebook, with a 60 per cent increase in followers.

As in previous years, a substantial number of earned posts in 2021 stemmed from the USA and India. In India and Pakistan, most posts concerned local initiatives and activities. The trends for 2021 showed similar results to previous periods.

The #SDG6 and #GOAL6 hashtags continued to dominate discussions in 2021. A large portion of discussions on SDG6 and its connection to UN-Water was concerned with high-profile events and conferences, such as World Water Week and the UN High-level Political Forum.

Climate change, as in previous years, was a key driver of engagement on Instagram and Facebook, with action-oriented posts resonating well with our audiences.

On Twitter, posts that highlighted concrete statistics on water-related issues – such as floods, droughts or food waste – were particularly popular. On both Twitter and LinkedIn, promotion of the IMI-SDG6’s webinar on the global status on water and sanitation provided positive engagement rates. Posts on sustainability issues that focused on real-world examples of water management also generated high engagement.

Governance and financial aspects

Documents

UN-Water's activities in 2021 were guided by the UN-Water 2030 Strategy and UN-Water Work Programme 2020–2021. All governance documents can be accessed at <http://www.unwater.org/about-unwater/governance/>

Annual UN-Water Meetings

As the COVID-19 pandemic still affected the possibility of holding in-person meetings, both the 34th and 35th UN-Water Meetings were held online.

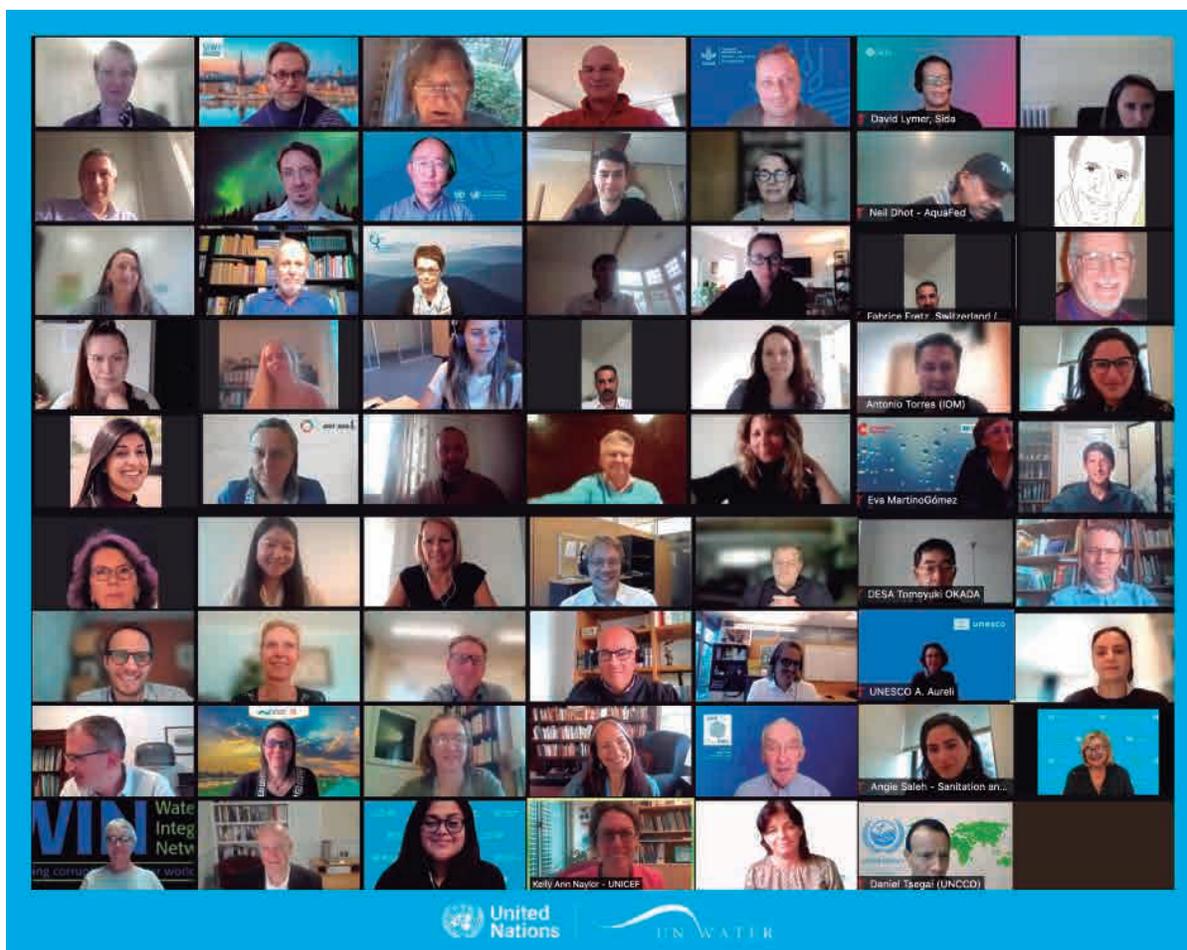
The 34th Meeting on 15 to 17 March focused mainly on the preparatory process for the UN 2023 Water Conference: the Conference co-hosts and its Secretary-General informed participants about preparations, organizers of previous preparatory meetings shared their experiences, and youth representatives offered their views. The IMI-SDG6 updated participants about its gender contextualization work and the UN-Water Capacity Development Initiative for SDG 6 was established as a UN-Water initiative. The Joint Steering Group presented its review and analysis of the UN-Water Partner Criteria, in response to which the UN-Water Senior Programme Managers (SPMs) decided to streamline and

consolidate UN-Water's governance documents related to UN-Water Partners. An open space session allowed participants to assess challenges and opportunities for achieving the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework.

At the 35th Meeting, the co-hosts and the Secretary-General of the UN 2023 Water Conference provided a new update on the Conference preparations, which was followed by a roundtable on the Conference preparatory process. The Meeting included the presentation of the UN-Water roadmap for the promotion of the human rights to water and sanitation and updates on the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework, the IMI-SDG6, UN-Water's regional level coordination and country level engagement, and the World Water Day and World Toilet Day 2022 campaigns. The UN-Water Guidelines on Partners, including clearer criteria to apply for UN-Water Partner status, were approved.

UN-Water Joint Steering Group

The Joint Steering Group steers the operational management of UN-Water in-between UN-Water Meetings. In 2021, it met twice to analyze, streamline and consolidate UN-Water's governance documents related



to UN-Water Partners for approval by the SPMs, and to review one application for Partner status received during the year.

UN-Water Inter-Agency Trust Fund

The UN-Water Inter-Agency Trust Fund is administered by the UN Office for Project Services. The indicative financial status² in 2021 is presented here as the total for targeted and core coordination activities:

Balance forward (2020): USD 2,265,935

Income (2021):

Austria:	USD 472,320
Germany:	USD 344,492
Netherlands:	USD 1,120,823
Sweden:	USD 701,466
Switzerland:	USD 2,927,883
Interest (2021):	USD 4,419

Total income without balance forward from 2021: USD 5,671,406

Total income including balance forward from 2021: USD 7,937,341

Total expenditure (2021): USD 5,314,790

Balance (31 December 2021): USD 2,622,551

² The figures presented in this report may be subject to minor changes in the final certified financial report.

Progress overview

UN-Water's governance and financial operations during 2021 included two well-attended UN-Water Meetings, Joint Steering Group interactions, and a review of UN-Water's governance documents related to UN-Water Partners.

Four new donor agreements – the Netherlands and Switzerland for core coordination activities, and Austria and Germany for targeted activities – showed again the willingness of UN-Water's long-term donors to extend their support to UN-Water's work in relation to addressing water and sanitation challenges and accelerating progress towards SDG 6.

Annex 1. Members and Partners

Members

(33 as at December 2021)

United Nations Secretariat

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)

Programmes and funds

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

World Food Programme (WFP)

Regional Commissions

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC)

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA)

Specialized agencies

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

International Labour Organization (ILO)

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)

United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

World Bank Group (WB)

World Health Organization (WHO)

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

Other entities

United Nations University (UNU)

United Nations-related organizations

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Conventions

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Partners

(43 as at December 2021)

AquaFed

CDP

Center for Affordable Water and Sanitation Technology (CAWST)

Conservation International

Gender and Water Alliance (GWA)

Global Water Partnership (GWP)

Green Climate Fund (GCF)*

Human Right 2 Water (HR2W)³

International Association for Hydro-Environment Engineering and Research (IAHR)

International Association for Water Law (AIDA)

International Association of Hydrogeologists (IAH)

International Association of Hydrological Sciences (IAHS)

International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID)

International Groundwater Centre (IGRAC)

International Hydropower Association (IHA)

IHE Delft Institute for Water Education

International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA)

International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC)

International Water Association (IWA)

International Water Management Institute (IWMI)

International Water Resources Association (IWRA)

³ HR2W became a UN-Water Partner at the 34th UN-Water Meeting, March 2021

Mandate of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation*

Public Services International (PSI)

Ramsar Convention

Rural Water Supply Network (RWSN)

Sanitation and Hygiene Fund (SHF) *

Sanitation and Water for All (SWA)*

Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future

Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)

United Nations Global Compact*

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)

Water Environment Federation (WEF)

Water.org

WaterAid

Women for Water Partnership (WfWP)

World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)

World Council of Civil Engineers (WCCE)

World Resources Institute (WRI)

World Water Council (WWC)

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

World Youth Parliament for Water (WYPW)

* Partner with Special Status

Annex 2. Expert Groups and Task Forces

Expert Groups

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development [UNEP]

With a focus on the 2030 Agenda, this Expert Group advises on the strategic scope of UN-Water's engagement in the 2030 Agenda and coordinates interventions among UN-Water's Members and Partners. In 2021, the Expert Group on the 2030 Agenda supported the implementations and activities around the Framework. For example, the Expert Group started developing the country acceleration case studies to support learning and sharing of good practices among countries.

Drinking-Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) [UNICEF, WHO]

This Expert Group brings together the technical experience of United Nations and other relevant experts to support ongoing global initiatives on WASH. In 2021, the Expert Group on WASH took the lead on developing a draft roadmap for promotion of the human rights to water and sanitation, with substantive support from OHCHR. The roadmap integrates the vision of the UN Secretary-General as expressed in his Call to Action on Human Rights and his subsequent report *Our Common Agenda*, and

aligns with the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework's four action pillars. In addition, the Expert Group on WASH coordinated the World Toilet Day 2021 campaign.

Regional Level Coordination [UNESCWA, UNESCAP]

The Expert Group on Regional Level Coordination was formed in 2019 from the former Task Force on Regional Level Coordination. In 2021, the five Regional Discussion Groups (Africa, Arab States, Europe and Central Asia, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean) were established by the Expert Group. Eighty-nine individuals from 42 organizations have registered for the five groups. The Expert Group started planning on organizing regional consultations to support the UN 2023 Water Conference.

Transboundary Waters [UNECE, UNESCO]

The UN-Water Expert Group on Transboundary Waters provides a platform to coordinate inputs to policy processes related to transboundary waters. The Group coordinates awareness-raising and outreach efforts supporting transboundary water cooperation and promotes coherence in activities by UN-Water Members and Partners in the area of transboundary waters. In early 2021, the UN-Water Expert Group on Transboundary

Waters published the UN-Water Policy Brief *The United Nations global water conventions: Fostering sustainable development and peace*. Additionally, the Expert Group started updating the UN-Water thematic paper on transboundary waters originally published in 2008.

Water and Climate Change [UNECE, UNESCO, WMO]

This Expert Group strengthens United Nations system coordination of activities related to water and climate change to support Member States in assessing the impacts of climate change on water and to adopt strategies for meeting the challenges of climate change in terms of both adaptation and mitigation in the related water sub-sectors. In 2021, the Expert Group co-hosted an event with the Water and Climate Coalition at the Water Pavilion during COP 26. Furthermore, as part of the UN-Water country level engagement pilot phase, the Expert Group provided support to Mexico for climate change and water-related issues, in cooperation with UNCT in Mexico and its dedicated results-based group on environment and climate change.

Water Quality and Wastewater [UNEP]

This Expert Group brings together the United Nations and other relevant expertise on water quality and wastewater. It also provides the platform to share information on and convene interested parties to join the World Water Quality Assessment (mandated by the United Nations Environment Assembly). Over the course of 2021 and since UNEA 5.1, the World Water Quality Alliance has made significant progress on the formalization and implementation of existing workstreams, as well as identification

of new workstreams (e.g. on youth, plastics, ecosystems), which will all contribute to the World Water Quality Assessment.

Water Scarcity [FAO]

This Expert Group brings together expertise on water scarcity and droughts, working closely with and in support of the Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG), launched by FAO in 2017. In 2021, the Expert Group published a UN-Water Analytical Brief on Water Use Efficiency.

Task Forces⁴

Country Level Engagement [UNDP, UNICEF]

The Task Force developed a strategy to strengthen UN-Water's engagement at the country level. This was in direct response to a recommendation made during the most recent external review of UN-Water. The Task Force developed and circulated UN-Water's offer to UNCTs and RCOs on UN-Water's support for providing data and insights into water and sanitation, connecting expertise, and advocacy for a better, coordinated response. The Task Force has been supporting nine pilot countries that expressed interest since 2020.

Water Action Decade Implementation [UN DESA, UNU]

Given the alignment of the 2018 UN General Assembly resolution on the 'Midterm comprehensive review of the implementation of the International Decade for Action, 'Water for Sustainable Development' 2018-2028', the Task Force led preparations for the UN 2023

⁴ Task Force coordinators in square brackets.

Water Conference. In 2021, the Task Force continued to support the Water Action Decade processes. The Task Force led the development of proposals on the themes for the interactive dialogues of the UN 2023 Water Conference.

World Water Day 2021 [FAO, AquaFed, PSI]

Under the theme of valuing water, the World Water Day 2021 Task Force coordinated a campaign that generated a global public

conversation on social media about how people value water for all its uses. World Water Day 2021 'Valuing Water' aimed to gain a much deeper understanding of how citizens value water and bring this to the attention of policymakers, to give a voice to citizens, and to explain the impacts citizens face from decisions made on water and sanitation. The World Water Day campaign also conducted a social media 'listening exercise' (#Water2me) to gather insight into key themes around valuing water.

Annex 3. Human Resources

Members of the UN-Water Joint Steering Group

Gilbert F. Houngbo, Chair, UN-Water

Kelly Ann Naylor, Vice-Chair, UN-Water (from September 2020)

Madhushree Chatterjee, Secretary, UN-Water

Marianne Kjellén, UNDP (until March 2021)

Rio Hada, OHCHR (until October 2021)

Daniel Tsegai, UNCCD (from February 2020)

Abou Amani, UNESCO (from September 2020)

Eva Mach, IOM (from March 2021)

Sonja Koepfel, UNECE (from October 2021)

UN-Water Technical Advisory Unit and others

Federico Properzi, Chief Technical Adviser

Daniella Boström Couffe, Communications Manager

Leanne Burney, Programme Officer

William Reidhead, Global Monitoring Officer

Maria Schade, Global Monitoring Specialist

Klas Moldéus, Technical Officer, SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework

Cheng Li, Programme Specialist

Nicolas Franke, Special Assistant to the Secretary (UN DESA)

Tamara Slowik, Administrative Assistant

Sarah Fragnière, Administrative Assistant



**United
Nations**

