

# High level panel on Bridging Climate and Water

8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum in Brasilia - 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2018

## *High-level Panel discussion paper*

### **Overarching Context:**

Following the adoption in 2015 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), there is a window of opportunity for water to become the vehicle of coherence.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development not only delivered a specific goal for water and sanitation (Goal 6), but the SDGs also recognize water's interlinking capacities across all the other 16 Goals.<sup>1</sup> In that capacity, water and resilient water governance become a key underlying factor and entry point to guide the successful implementation of the entire 2030 Agenda.

In the Paris Agreement, the majority of countries who submitted their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) prioritized water in their adaptation chapters. Hydropower, which directly depends on water security, is the largest provider of renewable energy.

Additionally, 90% of all-natural disasters occur through water (most of them climate-related, such as floods, droughts, tropical cyclones, extreme weather events) making water a priority for risk management. Resilient water management can be used explicitly as the tool to reach policy objectives that span the SDGs, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Disaster Risk Reduction Framework, and the New Urban Agenda.

Within the two other Multilateral Environmental Agreements besides Climate Change (Biodiversity, Desertification) and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, water is a common denominator in both the challenges and solutions to design resilient systems.

The global agendas promise much but are cumbersome to implement and not intelligible with each other. The SDGs identify global targets to reach and requests countries to deliver Voluntary National Reports (VNRs). The Paris Agreement gives an overarching objective—remain under 1.5-2°C by 2100 — to be reached via Nationally Determined Contributions, which will be strengthened over time. Resilient water management and governance mechanisms will help ensure that these goals are credible, efficient, and fundable, rationalizing scarce water resources across sectors, institutions, borders, and global frameworks.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.unwater.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/unwater\\_new/docs/UN-Water\\_Analytical\\_Brief\\_Water%20and%20sanitation%20interlinkages%20across%20the%202030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development.pdf](http://www.unwater.org/fileadmin/user_upload/unwater_new/docs/UN-Water_Analytical_Brief_Water%20and%20sanitation%20interlinkages%20across%20the%202030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development.pdf)

## **Recommendations for Action:**

Since COP21, non-state actors have shown a strong interest in supporting Parties reach the goals set out in the Paris Agreement. The water community has engaged more prominently through different networks, interlinking with other sectors and communities and delivering on the GCA and ongoing Talanoa Dialogue. A core group of organizations and networks composed of AGWA, CIW, SIWI, and WWC are leading and contributing to this work and would like to take it a step further. Countries are invited to support them in their endeavors.

The ideas set out below illustrate how the water community can contribute to a paradigm shift to reach climate-resilient societies in the context of the NDCs and VNRs and accelerate resilient development.

Because the NDCs are cross-sectoral contributions, developing a water-framework for prompt and comprehensive cooperation with the national Focal Point for the UNFCCC and with other sectors (e.g. in the context of a NAP process) is crucial for the proper mainstreaming and reporting of water related aspects in the NDCs. Where they are available, national climate change coordination mechanisms should be actively used.

In collaboration with climate impact and sector experts, the water-related effects of climate change within and between areas such as energy, cities, agriculture, water supply and sanitation, ecosystems, forestry, and should be explored so that these interconnections can be rationalized and prioritized. Resilient solutions must be trans-sectoral and take into account existing climate and development plans and coordination mechanisms such as National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process and highlight ways of contributing to achieving the 2030 Agenda.

However, because NDCs provide an overall summary of the country's climate contributions, the degree of detail on specific sectors is limited. This means that additional efforts on how to implement them are necessary in each sector. The water sector should therefore also draw up its own action plans geared to the NDCs. In addition, water-related adaptation goals should be mainstreamed outside the water sector through corresponding dialogues.

It is planned that the NDCs will be revised for the first time in 2020 as part of the mechanism for raising the level of ambition. Since water is a key component of the adaptation chapters, countries should establish their action plans for water and report back on progress within the SBI. The Adaptation committee could help in developing a common framework and National focal points could contribute to this reporting.

## **Next Steps**

Considering all these elements, participants of the High-level panel on Bridging Climate and Water at the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum in Brasilia on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March are invited to contribute to a working group on water and climate change. The group has the objective to address key questions and provide recommendations to Parties through the National Focal points, subsidiary bodies of the UNFCCC overlooking to support the implementation of the Paris Agreement (SBI and SBSTA) and other groups and committees (Adaptation Committee, Nairobi Work Programme, Loss and Damage Committee, Standing Committee on Finance,

Technical Examination Process on Adaptation (TEP-A)), as well as the water community and other water related users and consumers.

The key questions that need to be addressed are (but not exclusively):

- How can the water sector play a constructive part in implementing the Paris Agreement and the NDCs?
- What can be done to ensure that NDCs, adaptation plans and sector plans congruently connect with each other and contribute to the 2030 Agenda?
- How should sector investment plans be designed if they are to add value to the processing of NDCs and achievement of their goals and to other climate processes (e.g. adaptation plans)?
- To what extent is there a need to specify the contribution of the water sector in the revision of the NDCs? What should the relevant guidelines look like?
- What can be done to ensure that decision makers in the water sector take greater account of the climate perspective in sector strategies and plans?
- How can the water sector cooperate with other sectors for developing joint climate resilient projects (for instance via the Green Climate Fund)?
- How can the wealth of water expertise (e.g. on sustainable and cross-border resource use) be constructively incorporated into climate policy and climate financing processes and thus also contribute to joint strategy formulation?

Information sharing and capacity building on these issues can be undertaken through publications, policy briefs, reports, workshops, events.