



## **World Water Council Position Paper on Water and the Post-2015 Framework**

### **WATER IS A PRE-REQUISITE FOR ALL DEVELOPMENT**

The World Water Council considers the formulation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be an endeavor of the highest importance to ensure a prosperous and equitable future for humankind. As part of this, the Council encourages the UN to move forward towards the new set of Sustainable Development Goals, and the development of a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound) Sustainable Development Goal on Water. In this effort, the World Water Council is compelled to reiterate its message that no development can occur without the necessary water security to nurture sustainable development.

The World Water Council is encouraged to have witnessed important events recently such as: the official recognition of the right to water and sanitation by the United Nations General Assembly; one chapter specifically dedicated to water and sanitation in the Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development Declaration; and the Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. These events testify to a growing awareness of the importance of water at the highest possible political levels, an objective toward which the Council has strived since its creation in 1996. The World Water Council also recognizes and supports the positive messages on the importance of water in the SDGs provided by UN Water, the Stockholm Statement of the 2013 World Water Week and the Budapest Water Summit.

Water is the common thread connecting all of the Sustainable Development Goals. It is not a coincidence that the water discussion space was the most visited of the eleven priorities in the thematic consultations conducted recently by the UN and that the report published by the High Level Panel headed by three Heads of State highlighted the need for a water goal.

A dedicated water goal is critical as part of the Post-2015 development agenda with measurable targets and indicators in support of life, well-being, economic development and the environment. In addition, while progress has been made on integrated water resource management since Rio+10, water resources management must be well integrated into the other goals, particularly as securing water, food, ecosystems and energy are among the greatest challenges ahead of us.

**The World Water Council supports dedicated water SDG to further encourage progress and achieve reasonable water security in the world.** Such an SDG should include targets for increasing social resilience in the face of new understandings of variability in climate, identifying socially acceptable trade-offs among competing water demands to manage freshwater resources, achieving universal and sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation and, protecting human health and our ecological life support systems. The World Water

Council also supports the UN-Water vision for a post-2015 goal dedicated to water, inscribing targets within the following themes:

- Universal access to water and sanitation;
- Sustainable use and development of water resources;
- Improved water quality and wastewater management.

Moreover, the World Water Council would like to bring further attention to a few key issues.

1. Water must also be appreciated, not only as an end in itself, but as a means for all other development: Water as a tool for improving livelihoods, water for empowering women and girls and giving them access to education, clean water for preventing disease, water for food, water for energy, water for green growth, water for increasing resilience to global changes, water for the environment, and the list goes on. **Water must be considered throughout the SDG framework, both inside and outside of the “water box.”** As such, it is necessary to work simultaneously with the countries and organizations involved in other goals (food security, risk management, energy, sustainable cities, health, ecosystems...) to be sure that targets relative to water will be linked to these goals.
2. Important, although unequal, progress has been made in reaching Target 7C of the Millennium Development Goals “Halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.” Even if we consider in some cases that this Goal was reached, 50% of the target population remains unserved in the best case scenario. We must now aim for universal coverage and multiply efforts on sanitation provision. **We must not lose the momentum generated by the Millennium Development Goals, while creating ambitions that go far beyond them.**
3. It is easy to draft global goals, but much more difficult to implement them, especially when financial flows are stressed. Because of the all-encompassing role of water within development, there is no way to break the vicious cycle of poverty unless we invest in water resources development and management of uncertainty and risk, along with water and sanitation access. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure; thus, investing in water now will lead to averted exponential costs and great benefits in increased productivity in the future. Efficiency must also be encouraged and wastage avoided, so as to consume less and manage better. Infrastructure decisions should be made within the context of broader water resource management, long-term sustainability, and building climate resilience. **The return on investment in water is exponential, and widespread investments are needed now so as to promote development through water security in every domain.**
4. It is essential to have a mechanism at the international level, determined by the UN, for the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the future water targets of the post 2015 Agenda so as to know more precisely the current water situation and its worldwide evolution.

One major challenge facing the global water agenda is the need for a proper platform where policy makers, scientists, the private sector and civil society meet to exchange roles and ideas on global water challenges. One of the main strengths the World Water Council offers is high-level multi-stakeholder convening power. Such a platform offers stakeholders from the public, private, academic and civil society sectors the opportunity to all work together towards providing knowledge and promoting safe water access in support of people and economies. This platform is unique and critical to provide a place where ideas meet, are challenged and where plans to implement these ideas are developed.

The World Water Council stands ready to contribute to this process of creating new SDGs by mobilizing all its areas of expertise and by working together with all stakeholders to make the post-2015 framework a reality, in particular through the collaborative action leading up to and during the next World Water Forum to be held in Daegu-Gyeongbuk, Republic of Korea, in April 2015. Because the WWC programs are the world's primary meeting point of technical and political decision makers at all levels of governance, it is well positioned to help in this effort. The WWC's vast core membership of technical and scientific organizations, NGOs, the public and private sectors, as well as development and donor agencies, in addition to ministries, local authorities, and intergovernmental and United Nations bodies, can contribute significantly to the development of the post-2015 framework especially by improving the political technical dialog relating to water's central role in achieving sustainable development in an interdisciplinary way.

An enormous challenge lies ahead of us—one of inventing our water future together. By taking into account the future of water, by guaranteeing its availability, we will guarantee security in many other domains. It is our responsibility, a huge responsibility, towards the generations to come.