



A SUSTAINABLE WORLD IS A WATER-SECURE WORLD

The Budapest Water Summit Statement

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1. Water has brought civilizations livelihood, sustenance and well-being. Water has been a central factor shaping both earth system history and human history; therefore, water carries the collective memory of humanity. Water has been instrumental in our past development. It is equally *the* key to our future development as well to maintaining our life support on Earth, our home.
2. Water unites rather than divides. It unites people among and across generations, nations and cultures and is a source of cooperation. Its uneven temporal and spatial distribution worldwide, in addition to the numerous challenges such as demographic and climatic changes, renders water management essential and critical as our entry point for sustainable development and poverty eradication. All basic planetary and ecosystem functions will be endangered if water is not governed properly and therefore water must underpin all future Sustainable Development Goals.
3. Tapping the power of water for our modern era to meet the water challenge requires new policy approaches both within the water sector and in concert with other social sectors, especially, health, food, energy and economy. Human-centered development and environmental stewardship, including preserving the function of ecosystems and protecting biodiversity must reinforce any modern paradigm of water management.
4. The Budapest Water Summit was driven by five important areas for robust water policy approaches with a view to contributing to the development of well defined, globally, regionally and national meaningful SMART¹ targets for:
 - a. Ensuring universal and sustainable access to safe water and sanitation;
 - b. Improved methods of integrating the technical, environmental, social and the political into water management;
 - c. Facilitating good and efficient water governance, relevant for any political system, with due consideration of local specificities when developing and

¹ Specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound





- implementing laws, regulations, management, pricing, subsidies and allocation methods;
- d. An effective philosophy and incentives for using water to create and support green economies;
 - e. New micro and macro, private and public funding mechanisms to be implemented for sustaining the management of blue water within green economics.

CREATING SMART TARGETS TO ASSURE UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE TO WATER AND SANITATION

5. Access to safe drinking water and sanitation are fundamental to health, well-being and poverty eradication. Commitments are required at global, regional and national levels to accelerate the achievement of universal access and the progressive realization of the human right to safe drinking water and basic sanitation that are essential for dignified human life. Narrowing the water and sanitation deficiency gap will protect and improve human health, advance gender equality, create education and development opportunities, especially for girls, economic development and poverty reduction.
6. It is imperative to achieve universal sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation in all homes, schools, health centres, workplaces and in places of humanitarian assistance such as refugee camps. The sustainability and quality of drinking water and sanitation services must be improved for all while giving priority to the most vulnerable, pursuing non-discrimination and increasing equity.
7. Drinking water and sanitation should be fully integrated into water resources management with the recognition that water and sanitation not only consume and use, but also pollute water and, therefore, negatively influence the water cycle as a whole, if countermeasures are not applied.
8. For hygiene, often forgotten in the water and sanitation discourse, it is important to identify realistic, monitorable and enforceable approaches and improving hygiene especially for women and adolescent girls.
9. The protection of human and ecosystem health from inadequate sanitation and municipal, agricultural and industrial pollution requires precaution, prevention and rehabilitation. The collection and treatment of wastewater and solid waste to reduce their negative impacts as well as closing material cycles to maximize their re-use in order to reduce environmental pollution is a prerequisite for prevention of water system deterioration and will continue to be a more cost-effective approach than post-damage remediation.
10. To achieve these objectives new partnerships, non-conventional approaches to and innovation in the technologies and behavioural dimensions of drinking water and sanitation must be promoted and developed. Successful approaches to ensure access to poor and disadvantaged populations should be identified. These are to include financing





mechanisms and budgets for operation and maintenance, minimising hurdle costs to accessing new or improved facilities and services, improved accountability and transparency among sector actors, encouraging utilities to respond by extending coverage and improving quality of services, while addressing rural backlog and urban population growth.

11. Developing capacities at all levels must be incentivized. Sustained service delivery requiring appropriate institutional and governance arrangements by ensuring adequate new infrastructure along with rehabilitation and renewal of ageing infrastructure is to be paid greater attention. It is also critical to identify effective approaches to small communities, including demand management especially at higher levels of service, adapt existing and new systems, particularly water storage, to manage hydrological uncertainties and risks with a view toward ensuring and increasing resilience to the impacts of water scarcity and climate change.

INTEGRATED CONSIDERATION OF WATER WITHIN ITS MANAGEMENT CONTEXT AND IN ALL SOCIAL SECTORS

12. The connective power of water should aim to be reflected in its management. Reconciling water uses among competing social needs is a political as well as technical process. The same water is often claimed by different needs. However, water is the vehicle that connects these social demands and can encourage new and productive political, technical and social dialogues to meet them. Due to population growth and economic development, such as for food production and changes in diet, water demand is growing fast. What have been perceived as regional or local scarcity and resource allocation problems are already accumulating to the global scale. Hence, water resources management should avoid spatial and thematic fragmentation. It should, however, promote consolidation and integration. Beyond the water domain, full integration must involve other sectors relying on water. Domestic water supply, sanitation, agricultural and industrial use, navigation, energy generation and recreation, but also ecosystem health considerations are as much part of it as addressing urban – rural issues, links to poverty eradication, adaptation to climate change and mitigating the impacts of extreme events that seem to have an ever increasing frequency.

13. Most of our water assessment and management tools are based on the assumption of stationarity, that is, the long-term predictability of water extremes like droughts and floods, water shortage and abundance. Yet, our world displays strong non-stationarity. The signs are all around us in terms of surprises and sudden changes, such as a perceptibly increasing frequency of hydrological disasters that cannot be explained by our earlier mind-sets and current methodologies. We need to adapt to that non-stationarity. Otherwise humans will be subject to growing risks, which can undermine sustainability.

14. Integrated water resources management principles and practice for a sustainable future should be accepted by all stakeholders who are bound in cooperation based on recognized responsibilities and processes, with adequate levels of accessible information





and data, a shared and open knowledge base, capacity development, partnerships and conducive institutional-legal frameworks. Appropriate capacities, ranging from data collection services to scientific research, are pre-requisites to sound integrated water management. Water management, however, should go beyond the focus on the water cycle and competing uses and involve socio-economic, environmental, legal and governance-related issues in a collaborative spirit. Responsibilities and processes should be clearly outlined in governance schemes at all levels.

15. Risks and uncertainties are unavoidable. However, innovative and alternative soft technologies should be tested and, when deemed successful, applied broadly. This includes approaches that rely on ecosystems services, adaptation strategies that enhance the resilience of our water resources management systems through structural and non-structural measures, to mitigate risks. Adequate monitoring, improved forecasting capabilities but also risk-sharing mechanisms further contribute to lowering the risks and uncertainties thus enabling the convergence to a more sustainable and water-secure world.
16. Providing comprehensive monitoring and early warning of emerging water problems will be critical to the success of the SDGs. Enormous progress in technology achieved over the past decade goes largely untapped, yet the technical and data resources are growing in their availability and sophistication. The free availability of much of these big data streams should be marshalled specifically to the task of monitoring progress on the SDGs. Further synthesis by the science community is necessary to interpret and track progress or lack thereof on the goals.

FOSTERING GOOD WATER GOVERNANCE

17. Achieving universal, sustainable access to water and sanitation and managing water in an efficient manner requires good governance. This requires adaptive, agile and resilient institutions that can first identify then solve the water problems of today and cope with those of tomorrow. Good governance relies on building accountability and inter-sectoral complementarities at the right scale and is intrinsically linked to the political system.
18. Good water governance is context-dependent and implies addressing interrelated issues. A set of overarching principles and place-based policies, aiming to better understand *who does what*, should be developed to enable the management of water at the appropriate spatial scales and levels. This should include innovative partnerships across sectors, monitoring and evaluation of progress and effectiveness, allocation of human and financial resources in line with responsibilities and enforcement of regulatory frameworks.
19. Water governance effectiveness depends on the institutional quality of authorities, the degree of sectoral and territorial integration, the performance of utilities, the level and diversity of stakeholder engagement, social inclusion, the quality and consistency of data disclosed, and anti-corruption practices. Together, all of these provide good water governance that is required for both a sustainable and a water-secure world. When it





comes to transboundary watersheds and aquifers water governance must go beyond national boundaries through the basin approach in management of shared resources through joint institutions and work programmes and wide international stakeholder participation.

USING WATER TO CREATE “GREEN ECONOMIES”

20. Just as there are different cultures, there will be different green economies, in developing and industrialized countries. Green economies are to feature both new and old technologies and tools, incorporate the socio-economic value of natural systems and ecological flow needs to water management, use new accounting for natural capital in cost-benefits assessments, emphasize water-use efficiencies, employ realistic behaviour change among users of water, integrate indigenous with modern methods of adaptively managing water, create explicit criteria for ecosystems health for design of water investments, treating wastewater and solid waste for use and adopting rehabilitation and asset management of built and natural water infrastructure, respectively.
21. Achieving green economies will require the setting of priorities among water uses. Water priorities will have to balance the three aspects of sustainable development and integrate socio-cultural, economic and environmental dimensions into national accounting systems and development policies. Such priority setting should include legislation, monitoring, financing, subsidies for affordable green technologies, markets, pricing, user pay along with polluter pay principles, paying for ecosystem services, green labelling of projects and products and broadened risk benefit assessments. Water policies are to promote the use of acceptable and affordable technology and needed infrastructure such as water storage that also benefit sustainable development, poverty eradication and green job creation.
22. Using goals of achieving green economies to modernize water policies will reframe the water dialogue worldwide. We must understand and account for the difference in perspectives and expectations between the rich and poor regarding green economy and act appropriately. This means enhancing green education and capacity development, balancing ecosystem services and societal aspirations, improving monitoring and capacities to adapt to feedback that monitoring brings, addressing accessibility, especially by the poor, to new technologies as well as their scaling up, including monitoring and an iterative approach towards a water-secure world.

CREATING NEW MICRO AND MACRO, PRIVATE AND PUBLIC, FINANCING METHODS

23. There is unfinished business to fulfil the MDG targets on water and sanitation and this will require innovative, inclusive and sustainable financing mechanisms at all levels and especially for the benefit of the poor. Drinking water and sanitation are not alone in this regard and while their needs are different, funding needs of adaptive water resources management should be addressed as well, especially with the expected impacts of global changes that confront humanity.





24. Often, financial resources are already there, but are difficult to access. An efficient use of existing financial resources for water would significantly help us achieve our water-related goals as would ease the barriers to access resources that already do exist. Water underpins many of the other future Sustainable Development Goals. Without safe drinking water and sanitation and well-managed water resources, food, health, energy and environmental sustainability will progress unnecessarily slowly. It is a matter of urgency, therefore, to show the importance of water in budget prioritization.
25. Financial resources are not the only critical resources. Improvements are needed to deliver on investments and financing the capacity of human resources in cost recovery and revenue spending as well. Transition from aid to sustainable service delivery is essential.
26. Sustainable development is about addressing future and intergenerational equity. Infrastructure degradation and asset management are to be addressed in this context by equally taking into account the maintenance and restoration of ecosystem services as well as the deterioration costs of those services. Environmental degradation that destroys ecosystems and their services will, by definition, also destroy water services and thus antithetical to the notion of sustainability.
27. Water is a means to many ends. Investments into water and sanitation will also have multiple benefits outside of water and should integrate sectoral benefits across sectors. One of the most effective ways to improve sustainable development and address poverty eradication, food security, energy security and improved well-being, therefore, is through investment in water and sanitation, where the benefits are multi-sectoral.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

28. To achieve the existing Millennium Development targets related to water and to move forward towards the new set of Sustainable Development Goals, as well as to create new approaches to water management, the Budapest Water Summit, in consideration of the many ideas and discussions preceding to and over the course of the Summit preparation process, recommends the development of a SMART, comprehensive Sustainable Development Goal on Water.
29. Engineering ecosystems into 21st century water resources development systems will be an important shift in the way we can ensure multi-generational water security. Collateral damage to ecosystems in the name of water provision and sanitation, if executed without proper precautions for environmental protection, is contrary to the aspirations of a sustainable water future.
30. Lessons of the water and sanitation related Millennium Development Goals show the critical need for a sound scientific underpinning, technical and engineering capacity from the water sector. The development of broader and more inclusive Sustainable Development Goals provides an even greater challenge to the water sciences. In this context, the lack of trained professionals is a recognized limitation toward attaining





meaningful Goals. Educating and training the next generation of water scientists, assessment experts, engineers, economists and policy experts will be critical to achieving the water and sanitation related SDGs.

31. The overarching goal is to create a SMART “A Water-Secure World” with the objective to

- a) Achieve universal and sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation in all households, schools, health facilities, workplaces and refugee camps;
- b) Identify socially acceptable trade-offs to manage freshwater resources, including transboundary basins and aquifers, in an integrated way across sectors to maximize benefits to human and societal development as well as to ecosystem protection;
- c) Protect human health and the environment from municipal, agricultural and industrial wastes and pollutants and from open defecation with a view towards minimizing the effect of vector-borne diseases; and
- d) Increase social resilience by preparedness against and adaptation capabilities to the impacts of on-going and future global changes such as growing water insecurity, climate change, population growth and the frequency of natural extreme hydrological events through wise use and development of resilient water infrastructure and appropriate social programs.

32. The critical nature of water for human populations and the planet, underpinning any future sustainable development agenda, requires a more robust intergovernmental process to regularly monitor, review and assess progress in the water and sanitation sphere. Due to the overarching goals, conditions and constraints, it is recommended that appropriate institutional mechanisms be put in place to review and assess progress in an integrated manner. Considering that the last full-fledged intergovernmental conference on water was held thirty-six years ago,² during which time many new water challenges as well as potential solutions have emerged, the Budapest Water Summit recommends to governments and the United Nations to create an open-ended mechanism to upgrade the intergovernmental track for water so as to address and regularly assess water and sanitation issues in a more measured, comprehensive and cohesive framework in the decades to come.

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² United Nations Water Conference, Mar del Plata, Argentina, 1977

