



BUDAPEST APPEAL (Draft)

- Stand up Against the Crises –

Where We Are:

Four years ago, with strong enthusiasm and dedication, the international community agreed to transform our world into the future we want and adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Yet we are already off the track in implementing the water related SDG targets.

While there have been some undisputed successes, much of the world is still moving along an unsustainable trajectory. The crisis of too little, too much or too dirty water is here. The crisis already affects millions of people, threatening their health and well-being, undermining efforts at food security, destroying our ecosystems, compromising all spheres of development and causing the migration of large numbers of people. As we stand on this precipice, we offer both warnings and hope.

WHAT WE NEED TO DO:

Among matters demanding immediate attention are:

- The recognition of the value of water as a precious common good in the fullest sense, spanning people and countries through water flows in rivers, lakes and groundwater;
- The recognition that water security issues cannot be effectively addressed only through established water governance institutions; citizens including scientists, artists, faith leaders, the private sector, indigenous people and students need to work together to build a new culture of water and play their part;
- The opportunities offered by innovative technologies such as the new earth sciences, remote sensing and digital methods to help us understand the unprecedented rapid changes that are taking place in the hydrosphere. They help us ALL connect in the search for lasting solutions, using our rich cultural traditions and new ways of building our resources and capacities, both financial and human. Related to these opportunities is the need to understand that cyber security is of essence and that big data and artificial intelligence should be used with judgement and through the rigour of verification at ground level;
- The need to improve our understanding of water cycle management and its nuances including the realities of trade offs and the need to make informed choices;
- The recognition of the interconnectedness of the major international agreements when it comes to managing water and sanitation needs and issues that are tackled in the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework and the Habitat 3 Agenda.

Navigating these problems and arriving at practical solutions are not easy in a diverse world with unequal endowments of resources, water, finance and human capacity. And yet there are universal principles and approaches that can be applied in local and national contexts with imagination and sensitivity and in interconnected ways.

HOW WE CAN DO IT:

1. **Develop trust at all levels** by:

- >making information on policies, processes and data transparent and accessible to all people with the use of multiple languages and accessible terminologies.
- >reinforcing the concept of citizen science by making the obscure clear and understandable, through people's engagement.
- >making the idea of partnerships and participation (which includes responsibilities and entitlements) a reality by invoking the principle of NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US.

2. **Strengthen the role and capacity of institutions** by reconstituting their roles and accountabilities; at the local and national levels through public information and participation and publicly accepted regulatory functions, at the international level by redefining the role of UN agencies related to water as one of maintaining an overview and supporting role and not privileging their operational tasks or one specific sector over another.

3. **Facilitate the free flow and exchange of information** about water (science, technology and management) at a basin level within and across national boundaries and publicise the successes (and failures) of transboundary agreements so that lessons can be learnt and new agreements forged.

4. **Encourage a radical reorientation of financing flows**, by “water-proofing” investments that will benefit from – or affect – water security (such as urban development, land use changes and agriculture expansion), even though these investments are not tagged as water-specific. In this regard **the private sector is encouraged to play its part** not just by corporate responsibility projects, but by sharing new methods and techniques in financial and data management (to name just two examples).

5. **Further develop approaches for economic valuation to deal with trade-offs**, as consensus is not [always] a realistic option, and support the identification of preferable - win-win or compromise - solutions to reflect and combine the multiple values, needs of water and manage them equitably.

6. **Frame every development policy with our life support system, the environment, in mind** and conscious of the fact that freshwater endowments are limited, taking into consideration trade-offs, multiple interests, spillover effects, with “life cycle” approaches at the level of social and ecological systems

7. Facilitate establishing a **global observatory to monitor and preview water crises**, reach a transformative paradigm shift and implement the global international agreements and policy frameworks in an integrated manner, taking advantage of observation technology (remote and in situ), digital technologies and big data (including citizen science), to extract and generate new knowledge.

8. **Transform financial flows to projects that effectively contribute to water security on the ground, not merely to bankable projects**, that may generate little benefit for affected communities, both in developed and developing countries. Development finance has a critical role to play, to ensure that i) it contributes to beneficial projects, and ii) financial flows to such projects as irrigation extension, urban development or land use contribute to water security and do not stifle it.

None of these tasks and expectations are easy. But water is not only the source of life, it is an opportunity and responsibility to take as well.