



## BUDAPEST APPEAL

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, exacerbated by climate change. 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 involuntary displacement and migration of large numbers of people. As we stand on this precipice, we offer both warnings and hope.

### WHAT WE NEED TO DO:

- Recognize the value of water in the fullest sense, spanning all people and countries, across social, cultural, religious, economic and financial perspectives, through water flows in rivers, lakes and groundwater;
- Create a water-secure future by empowering citizens including indigenous people, the youth and women, scientists, artists, faith leaders and the private sector, working together to build a new culture of water;
- Ensure coordination across sectors and between policy-setting institutions to make sure well-meant measures in one area do not create new problems in another, including documenting and addressing trade-offs;
- Build on the opportunities offered by innovative technologies, remote sensing and digital methods to help us understand the unprecedented rapid changes that are taking place in the hydrosphere. Cyber security is of essence and big data and artificial intelligence should be used with judgement and through the rigor of verification at ground level.

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. Yet there are principles and approaches that can be applied in local and national contexts with imagination and sensitivity and in interconnected ways.

THIS IS HOW WE CAN DO IT:

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

- making information on policies, processes, and data transparent, timely, and accessible to all people with the use of multiple languages and accessible terminologies and methods;
- making the idea of partnerships and participation (which includes responsibilities and entitlements) a reality by invoking the approach of Nothing About Us Without Us;
- ensuring multi-stakeholder and multi sectorial platforms, interventions and inputs.

**2. Strengthen the role and capacity of institutions by:**

- ensuring gender balance and multi-stakeholder involvement, arrangements and accountabilities;
- at the local and national levels through public information and participation and publicly accepted regulatory functions;
- ensuring regular exchange of views and policies at international fora on global issues;
- rethinking the role of UN institutions in relation to water.

**3. Facilitate knowledge sharing** about water (science, technology and management, social-economic impacts, agreements) within and across geographic, administrative, sectoral and national boundaries.

**4. Build capacities through education, vocational training and reviving local and indigenous/traditional knowledge** so we have enough “hands and minds” to implement the water agenda in a holistic manner.

**5. Encourage a radical reorientation of financing flows, by**

- ensuring that all investments and programs (such as urban development, landscape changes, agriculture expansion, alternative energy and insurance) take account of and reduce water related risks;
- allocating risks and revenues to attract a wide range of financiers;
- further developing approaches for (economic) valuation to deal with trade-offs and the ‘hidden’ water-stranded assets;
- targeting subsidies for water services to the ones who need them.

**6. Frame every development policy with 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.

Water is not only the source of life, it is an opportunity and our responsibility. Without good water management, all investments in fighting poverty, improving health, education, ensuring economic development and prosperity, protecting our planet and its ecosystems will be in vain.