



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization




International  
Hydrological  
Programme


# WATER IN THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Side event during the 21st session of the Intergovernmental Council of the International  
Hydrological Programme of UNESCO

19 June 2014, 13:15 – 14:45  
UNESCO Headquarters – Room IV

Concept note

 13:15 – 14:45

 UNESCO Fontenoy Building, 7, place de Fontenoy, 75732 Paris Cedex 15

As a side event during the 21st session of the Intergovernmental Council of the International Hydrological Programme, UNESCO will organize a special event on the importance of water in the post-2015 development agenda and future Sustainable Development Goals.

## BACKGROUND

In 2015, the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations will reach the target date. Consequently, discussions on defining the global development agenda beyond 2015 have been taking place in several interlinked and converging processes that are evolving continuously. At the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012, the Member States agreed, as adopted in the Rio+20 outcome document "*The Future We Want*", to launch a process to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that will be built on the Millennium Development Goals, while also including other challenges of sustainable development. Following these developments, different processes have been initiated both within and outside the UN System to define of the future SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda.

Recognizing the importance of water for sustainable development and its interlinks with other development challenges, UNESCO places special attention to the need to continue global efforts on water and sanitation building on the MDG process, while also emphasizing the importance of other water-related issues in the context of the global development agenda beyond 2015. As the leading agency with the mandate to promote water sciences in the UN system, UNESCO has taken active steps towards raising the profile of water in the shaping of the post-2015 development agenda and SDGs.

## OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of the side event is to provide a platform for discussion for Member States of UNESCO, IHP National Committees and other participants on the importance and role of water in the post-2015 development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals. The event also aims to inform UNESCO Permanent Delegations on the contributions of IHP to the different processes of the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda and SDGs.

Especially, the event will focus on:

- 1. Discussing why a dedicated global goal on water is important for sustainable development and why it should be included in the SDGs framework**

Water issues are strongly linked with other development issues such as poverty, hunger, health, education, gender inequality, ecosystem integrity, climate change and disasters. Consequently, water plays a key role in sustainable development. Therefore, IHP considers that the SDGs should provide a framework to tackle water problems beyond the MDG focus on water and sanitation. A global goal on water is important to all three aspects of sustainable development, including the economic, social and environmental aspect. A well-defined and dedicated water goal is needed to address all interrelated global water issues in a coherent way.

## **2. Taking stock on ongoing discussions towards the formulation of water-related SDGs and reviewing IHP's proposal for a stand-alone SDG dedicated to water and its supporting targets**

IHP proposes a global, stand-alone goal to “Ensure Water Security for Sustainable Development” in the SDGs framework, addressing the broader concept of water security by encompassing the human, environmental and economic aspects of sustainable development. It includes supportive targets related to water and sanitation, water-use efficiency, water quality and wastewater management, the IWRM-based approach to water resources management, and water-related disasters.

## **3. Informing UNESCO Member States and IHP National Committees on IHP's contributions to the post-2015 development agenda and SDG processes**

IHP is providing technical advice and input to other processes outside UNESCO that contribute to the development of the post-2015 agenda and SDGs, including UN-Water-led processes, the work of the UN Secretary General's HLP of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 development agenda and the UNGA's Open Working Group on SDGs.

Highlighting UNESCO's areas of expertise and comparative advantage, IHP has been contributing to the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda and SDGs on water-related issues through two main interlinked processes: (i) Thematic Consultation on Water and (ii) formulation of Sustainable Development Goals, with particular focus on a stand-alone SDG dedicated to water.

## **DISCUSSION POINTS**

1. Why should a dedicated global goal on water be included in the post-2015 development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals?
  - The need to continue MDG efforts on water and sanitation
  - The need to address water challenges in the post-2015 period through an integrated approach looking beyond the MDG focus on water and sanitation
  - Ensuring water security for sustainable development
2. IHP's proposal for a stand-alone goal for water as part of the SDGs
  - The proposed water goal and its supporting targets
  - Indicators and monitoring mechanisms for water-related SDG targets
  - Issues for means of implementation and cross-cutting issues
3. IHP's contributions to the post-2015 development agenda and SDG processes
  - IHP contributions through the UN-Water-led process
  - IHP contributions to UN Secretary General's High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the post-2015 development agenda
  - IHP contributions to the UN General Assembly's Open Working Group on SDGs

## **PARTICIPANTS**

UNESCO Permanent Delegations, IHP National Committees and other participants of the IHP Council session are invited to the event.

## **LANGUAGES**

The event will be held in English and French, with simultaneous interpretation.

## **LUNCHBOXES**

Lunchboxes will be provided to all pre-registered participants.

## **VENUE AND TIME**

UNESCO Headquarters - Room IV  
Fontenoy Building, 7, place de Fontenoy, 75 732 Paris Cedex 15

Thursday, 19 June 2014 – from 13:15 to 14:45

## **CONTACT**

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