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Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

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## **CONTRIBUTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL HYDROLOGICAL PROGRAMME (IHP) TO THE PREPARATION OF AND FOLLOW-UP TO THE 22<sup>nd</sup> CONFERENCE OF PARTIES (COP 22) TO THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC)**

### **SUMMARY**

This item has been included in the provisional agenda of the 200th session of the Executive Board at the request of Morocco.

An explanatory note together with a proposed draft decision is attached.

Action expected of the Executive Board: proposed decision in paragraph 13.



## EXPLANATORY NOTE

### I. INTRODUCTION

1. It is a disturbing reality that climate change directly impacts the abundance of natural resources. Water is a vulnerable resource and is therefore more exposed to the effects of climate change, with consequences on the sustainability of ecosystems and food security.
2. This vulnerability is also apparent in international law, as few international agreements expressly mention the link between water and climate change.<sup>1</sup>
3. In addition to the inequalities in the distribution of water resources owing to geography, water security is in many respects a unifying cause of the international community, in a context of global changes, where the impacts of climate hazards and anthropogenic factors have become fundamentally interrelated realities.
4. The interdependence between water and climate is increasingly evident. The majority of natural disasters are water-related, resulting in considerable economic losses.
5. Climate change is manifested essentially at the water cycle level, particularly through changes in average rainfall and the increased number of intense periods of drought and flooding. The socio-economic impact of these changes is an ever-present financial burden on the affected countries.
6. The international community is endeavouring to respond to the rise in climate variability through every available means; the Paris Agreement on Climate Change is a tangible illustration. However, progress in the fight against climate change will inevitably depend upon funding for climate mitigation and adaptation activities and solidarity mechanisms as well as technology transfer to developing countries, which are the most affected by the impact of climate change. One of the primary challenges is the right of access to water in Africa, a continent that bears the brunt of climate change.
7. Africa, one of the main casualties of disasters related to climate change, needs funding and expertise to propose effective contributions to adaptation.
8. In order to consolidate the achievements of the twenty-first Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 21) and prepare constructive contributions towards including the issue of water in the various aspects of the climate talks at the twenty-second United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 22), Morocco, in partnership with the French Ministry of the Environment, Energy and the Sea and the World Water Council (WWC), with the participation of staff at UNESCO's Division of Water Sciences (SC/HYD) and International Hydrological Programme (IHP), organized the International Conference on Water and the Climate, held on 11 and 12 July 2016, in Rabat, with the theme of "Water Security for Climate Justice". The debate focused on fundamental matters relating to the vulnerability of water with respect to climate change, its place in the implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and in financing mechanisms and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the interaction between water and energy, food security, health and education.
9. The recommendations of this Conference will be submitted in the form of a "Blue Book" on the occasion of World Water Day, on 9 November 2016, in parallel to COP 22, in Marrakesh. UNESCO has participated in several other water-related events as part of the preparations for

<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, **Article 4, paragraph 1**, provides that "All Parties, taking into account their common but differentiated responsibilities and their specific national and regional development priorities, objectives and circumstances shall:" **[sub-paragraph (e)]** "Cooperate in preparing for adaptation to the impacts of climate change; develop and elaborate appropriate and integrated plans for coastal zone management, water resources and agriculture, and for the protection and rehabilitation of areas, particularly in Africa, affected by drought and desertification, as well as floods".

COP 22, during which IHP plans to hold several workshops, including one entitled “Boosting SDG 8 by creating innovative jobs linked to the role of young professionals in the water sector”, and another focusing on “Funding water resilience and the reduction of urban carbon emissions relating to water management in emerging cities”. In this regard, Morocco calls on all Member States to encourage the mayors of megacities to sign the Declaration of the Alliance of Megacities for Water and Climate at the signing ceremony to be held in Marrakesh during COP 22.

10. Morocco would like to reiterate that IHP is the only intergovernmental programme of the United Nations system devoted to water research, water resources management, and water-related education and capacity-building. Through its strategic plan relating to water security, it contributes substantially to coping with global change. UNESCO, through IHP, thus has a central role to play in the fight against the effects of climate change on water resources, as well as the attainment of the SDGs, in particular SDG 6 on ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

11. Morocco, persuaded that water must be central in the various international fora involved in the COP negotiation process and that in this context, UNESCO and IHP can bring their expertise to bear in all water-related areas, including education, training and capacity building, hereby proposes this draft decision to the Executive Board.

12. The objective of this decision is to provide IHP with the necessary means to contribute to the implementation of the recommendations of COP 22, and participate actively in implementing the SDGs, to ensure universal and equitable access to drinking water by 2030.

#### **Draft decision**

13. In light of the foregoing, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 197 EX/Decision 45, and 36 C/Resolution 21, relating to UNESCO’s efforts to combat global changes, in particular climate change,
2. Having examined document 200 EX/5 Part 1 (C) “Proposal for an updated UNESCO Strategy for Action on Climate Change”,
3. Affirming its concern about the grave consequences of global changes, in particular climate change, on human societies and the planet, especially on freshwater systems and water security;
4. Recalling that the fight against global changes, in particular climate change, requires the attention and cooperation of all countries as well as their active participation in an effective and appropriate international response;
5. Takes note with satisfaction of Resolution XXII-9 of the Intergovernmental Council of the International Hydrological Programme (IHP), which encourages the Director-General of UNESCO to pursue action, taking advantage of the interdisciplinary mandate of the Organization to address global changes, in particular climate change, on the basis of the Member States’ reflections, foresight and anticipation in the field of water;
6. Welcomes with satisfaction the Director-General’s proposals for the updating of the UNESCO strategy for action on global changes, in particular climate change, taking into due consideration the outcomes of the twenty-first Conference of the Parties (COP 21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC);

7. Recognizing the efforts made by Morocco for the organization and preparation of the twenty-second Conference of the Parties (COP 22) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held, as was COP 7, in Marrakesh, Morocco, from 7 to 18 November 2016,
8. Considering UNESCO's fundamental role, consistent with the strategic plan for the eighth phase of the International Hydrological Programme (IHP), in mobilizing international cooperation for adaptation to the effects of global changes on water resources and developing institutional and human capacities for water security and sustainability to deal with the grave consequences of global changes, in particular climate change,
9. Invites the competent national bodies in the field of water, and International Hydrological Programme (IHP) national committees and focal points, to encourage their countries to participate actively in the various ongoing discussions for the preparations for and follow-up to the twenty-second United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 22) and to ensure that the issue of water is adequately addressed in international negotiations on climate change;
10. Encourages the Director-General of UNESCO to continue UNESCO's action, taking advantage of the interdisciplinary mandate of the Organization, to address global changes, in particular climate change, further promoting the International Hydrological Programme (IHP), which is the only intergovernmental programme of the United Nations system devoted to water research, water resources management, education and capacity-building;
11. Requests the Director-General to establish a Special Account for the International Hydrological Programme (IHP), which will enable it to receive financial assistance to meet the demands of Member States, mainly in the field of capacity-building activities in support of Member States and the major initiatives approved under the IHP strategic plan;
12. Also requests the Director-General to submit to it, at its 201st session, a strategy to give water its rightful place in the process of future meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, taking into due consideration the outcomes of the twenty-second meeting (COP 22);
13. Further requests the Director-General to also submit to it, at its 201st session, specific proposals concerning the contribution of the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) to implementation of the outcomes of the twenty-first and twenty-second Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 21 and COP 22), as well as proposals that contribute to achieving the goals of IHP, in order to meet the needs of Member States in coming years.