

## **International Hydrological Programme**

23<sup>rd</sup> session of the Intergovernmental Council  
(Paris, 11-15 June 2018)

### **DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE CHANGE OF NAME OF IHP**

Item 4.3 of the provisional agenda

#### **Summary**

In compliance with the decision of the 56th session of the Bureau of the International Hydrological Programme (IHP), this discussion paper analyzes the pros and cons of the proposed rebranding of IHP's name.

## Renaming the International Hydrological Programme

**A Concept Paper**  
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**At the request of the IHP Secretariat**  
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### **Introduction**

In compliance with the decision of the 56th session of the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) Bureau, a concept paper has been prepared analyzing the pros and cons of the proposed rebranding of the IHP's name. The paper analyses the actual name of IHP, its history and background and discusses new terms, considering a change of the name from its current one "International Hydrological Programme" to a new one. The examination of the new name considers the preservation of its scientific focus with the word "Hydrological" or similar, while underscoring the fact that there are a number of initiatives and programmes under IHP's umbrella, as well as the UNESCO Water Family's network.

### **Background and History of the IHP**

UNESCO's work related to water started as a rather vague research programme and the idea in 1948 of creating an International Institute of the Arid Zone, which became a Major Project on Scientific Research on Arid Lands in 1956. Since the mid-50s, and in particular towards the end of the Major Project in the early 60s, the development of numerous research projects on natural resources and water-related studies exceeding the geographic framework of arid regions was the major common denominator present in these investigations and activities. Thus, in 1961, the idea for a global hydrological programme was proposed during an IAHS symposium held in Athens. In the UNESCO Executive Board, following this event, a resolution was adopted to include intergovernmental activities on scientific hydrology in its 1963-64 programme<sup>1</sup>. In this manner the "cornerstone had been laid for what was to become one of the great scientific programmes of Unesco"<sup>2</sup> that led to the International Hydrological Decade (IHD), which expanded over the period 1965-1974. During the IHD, major advances were made in hydrology or in the "sciences of the waters of the Earth, their formation, distribution and circulation, their physical and chemical properties and their interaction with the global environment, including living beings"<sup>3</sup>. The wrap-up of the IHD and the launching of the International Hydrological Program took place during the 18<sup>th</sup> session of the UNESCO General Conference, held in October-November 1974. The IHP Statutes and the first group of thirty Member States constituting the IHP Intergovernmental Council were also approved in this venue. Since its inception, IHP's scope has evolved and expanded to advance all major water-related sciences and address the most demanding challenges of the water sector worldwide, as established by today's IHP VIII strategy aimed to attain Water Security.

### **Criteria for rebranding of the UNESCO IHP**

Before addressing the change of the name of the International Hydrological Programme (IHP), it is important to indicate that there are two intergovernmental programmes at the UN specifically dedicated water. The CHy or Commission of Hydrology at the World Meteorological Organisation and the IHP at UNESCO. As per its mandate, IHP is the water-related intergovernmental programme of the UN system devoted to water research, water resources management,

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<sup>1</sup> Salih, A. 2015. IHP's Contribution to Hydrology and Water Resources Management. In *Water People and Cooperation*. UNESCO. Paris.

<sup>2</sup> Batisse, M., 2005. The UNESCO Water Adventure, from desert to water (1948-1974). UNESCO. Paris.

<sup>3</sup> Chow, V.T., 1988. Applied Hydrology. McGraw-Hill. Singapore.

education and capacity development. Presently, IHP has a membership of 169 countries, 70% of which are represented at Ministry level and 30% by academicians / researchers. This represents a major shift in representation since the first years of the programme when membership was mainly based on experts from the academia. The IHP Membership from governments are usually at director or technical expert level, leaving a gap on driving policy at Ministerial level<sup>4</sup>. Although since its inception IHP has been evolving to thematically adjust to the needs of Member States, moving from a purely data and scientific programme to a water resources management<sup>5</sup> and capacity development one, the same cannot be said about its governance.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, it is worth noting that in its 202<sup>nd</sup> Session in October 2017, the Executive Board invited the Director-General to continue facilitating dialogue with Member States, with the objective of reflecting on UNESCO's role supporting Member States in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6 through scientific knowledge as well as a possible need for adjusting the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) in the light of the United Nations reform process and providing input for further discussions at meetings of the IHP.<sup>7</sup>

*Consequently, in the interest of improving the governance of IHP, raising awareness on IHP's work, augmenting its visibility in particular at the political level, and increasing participation of high level government officials in the Intergovernmental Council and other IHP venues, the rebranding of the IHP has been proposed, as one of the actions to address the new challenges being faced by the Programme.*

In this context, several names have been suggested, namely the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme, the Intergovernmental Hydrosociences Programme, the Intergovernmental Water Platform, the Intergovernmental Hydrosociences Programme, among others. To determine an appropriate new name to best rebrand the Programme, a set of criteria are adopted. These are:

1. Depiction of its intergovernmental nature
- 2. Continuation of its scientific focus serving policy advice**
3. Representation of its all-encompassing multi-programme structure
4. Inclusiveness of the UNESCO Water Family network

A quick glance to the proposed names listed above captures the fact that a small number of words shows in different combinations. Thus the need to analyze the adequateness of these words in the light of the adopted criteria by comparing their meaning.

*Intergovernmental versus International.* Certainly, the term *intergovernmental* fully meets the first criteria and unquestionably represents the nature of the program, in particular its intergovernmental governance structure represented in its Intergovernmental Council.

*Hydrological or Hydrosociences versus Water.* While the term water provides a more ample scope to the name, the terms *hydrological* and *hydrosociences* better comply with the second adopted criteria by clearly depicting the scientific focus of IHP. If the definition of *hydrosociences* given by Ven Te Chow<sup>8</sup> is accepted, then the difference in the use of the term *hydrosociences* versus *hydrological* is irrelevant. However, within the IHP scientific community, the term *hydrosociences* seems to have gained more acceptance and therefore a preference has been noted for its consideration vis-a-vis the term *hydrological*. However, among water managers the term hydrological seems to be more popular and still connected to the use of science for policy making.

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<sup>4</sup> Citation from the document IHP/Bur-LVI/6 Rev. Paris, 19 March 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Understating by the management of the water resources and the water services plus addressing risks related to water disasters

<sup>6</sup> Citation from the document IHP/Bur-LVI/6 Rev. Paris, 19 March 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Idem.

<sup>8</sup> Chow, V.T., 1988. Applied Hydrology. McGraw-Hill. Singapore.

*Platform versus Programme.* Considering that the IHP encompasses a series of programmes of considerable extension and contents being implemented in the various regions of the world, the term *platform* was proposed as an option based on the third adopted criteria. However, the word *platform* implies a mechanism that supports a given structure, which does not fully represent the totality of the concept implied in IHP. IHP embodies a number of platforms. For example, the Intergovernmental Council and its Bureau constitutes the governance platform of IHP. While, the various programs, constitutes the programmatic platform of the IHP, whereas the ensemble of the UNESCO Water Centres and Chairs forms an academic and research structure or platform that supports the scientific advancement contributed by IHP. Therefore, although it may seem paradoxical, the word *Programme* better represents the broad all-encompassing meaning of IHP, as it is known today in the wider water community. Finally, the word *Programme* also captures better the inclusion of the UNESCO Water Family and its depiction as an integral part of the IHP. Based on the above considerations, the name Intergovernmental Hydrosociences/Hydrological Programme represents the most supported and substantiated alternative to adopt for the change of name of the International Hydrological Programme based on the adopted criteria. The fact that the acronym for this name is still IHP provides the additional element of establishing a bond between the old IHP and new *IHP*, while maintaining the well-known and respected core essence of *IHP*. Furthermore, the acronym will also remain the same for the French and English versions of the name.

### **Pros and Cons**

To complement the discussion on the rebranding of IHP, as it relates to the change in its name, a final run through *pros* and *cons* is in order. The exercise is carried out in two modes. First, we present the *pros* and *cons* of the general concept of changing the name *International Hydrological Programme*. Subsequently, we refer to the *pros* and *cons* of rebranding IHP to Intergovernmental Hydrological/Hydrosociences Platform or Intergovernmental Hydrological/Hydrosociences Programme.

#### **General considerations of changing the name International Hydrological Programme**

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| <i>Pros:</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides an opportunity to better align the IHP name with the present reality and programmatic agenda</li> <li>- Supplies the prospect to reflect the intergovernmental nature of IHP</li> <li>- Allows to represent the conceptual structure of IHP, which includes multiple programmes</li> <li>- Permits the inclusiveness of the different actors and entities involved within the UNESCO Water Family network</li> <li>- Provide more clarity on the nature of the programme</li> </ul>        |
| <i>Cons:</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Partly discards a name that is well established worldwide</li> <li>- Requires additional labor, time to carry out the internal procedures that the change of name involves within UNESCO and in the Member States</li> <li>- Demands a well-coordinated, swift and efficient effort by all interested parties to explain the motives for the change of the name to partners and the wider water community, and to transition and position the new <i>IHP</i> in the international arena.</li> </ul> |

#### Specific considerations of changing the name to *Intergovernmental Hydrological Platform*

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| <i>Pros:</i> | <p>In addition to all of the above referred general pros,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Although it discards the name International Hydrological Programme, which is well established, it retains the term <i>Hydrological</i> which has been a constant term in the programme since the inception of the International Hydrological Decade (IHD) in 1965.</li> </ul> |
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- The Hydrological term captures the generation of scientific knowledge and is interpreted by policy makers as a term linked to water resources management
- Cons:* Same as above
- The Platform fails to describe the richness of the programme

Specific consideration of changing the name to *Intergovernmental Hydrosociences Programme*

- Pro:* In addition to all of the above referred general *pros*,
- The term *hydrosociences* seems to be increasingly used by the water research community to depict a broader set of water sciences, which includes hydrology. Thus, this name will truly reflect the multi and trans disciplinary nature of *IHP* in the realm of water sciences.
- Cons:* In addition to all of the above referred general *cons*,
- Because of the term “*scienc*es” imbedded in the word *hydrosociences*, the selection of this name may convey an erroneous perception of IHP as a purely scientific platform, which may hamper the elements of the program related to water policy. However, the presence of the term *Intergovernmental* counteracts this perception by marking the governance structure of the programme and its link to Member State governments, therefore referencing the ultimate mission of the program to contribute to advancement of water sciences to support Member States in the development and implementation of science-based policies in the water-related sectors.

## Legal Considerations

The change of the name of the IHP will entail the undertaking of some internal legal procedures. However, UNESCO has in place the necessary legal and procedural instruments for the process to be viable, straightforward and relatively expeditious, notwithstanding the inter-session time frames of the General Conference and the IHP Intergovernmental Council, since both governmental bodies need to be involved. Of course, the validity of the previous statement is dependent on the existence of a general acceptance to the IHP name change, as was the case during the 18<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference in 1974, when the IHD transitioned to the IHP. An important milestone in the IHP name change process will be the modification and approval of the Intergovernmental Council Statutes<sup>9</sup>. As stated earlier, these were approved during the 18<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference and amended at its 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> sessions. Subsequently, the Rules of Procedures (RoP) of the Intergovernmental Council will need to be modified and approved by the IHP Intergovernmental Council, in accordance with the amendment of the Council's Statutes by the General Conference of UNESCO.

Presently, the IHP Intergovernmental Council Statutes are undergoing a review process which was initiated by a survey in the fall of 2015 as a result of the request made by the Bureau at its 52<sup>nd</sup> session (June 2015). Subsequently, the IHP Intergovernmental Council at its 22<sup>nd</sup> session (13-17 June 2016), by its Resolution XII-1, requested the update of the Statutes and RoP. The request was followed by an extensive survey in the Fall of 2016 and the formation of an informal Working Group consisting of the Permanent Delegations of the Bureau's Member States, aiming to synthesize the input received from the Member States along with results of the work of an open-ended working group on governance<sup>10</sup>. The results of the consultations will be presented in the next Bureau and Intergovernmental Council sessions in the month of June 2018.

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<sup>9</sup> Present Statutes at: <https://en.unesco.org/themes/water-security/hydrology/about-us/governing-bodies/statutes>

<sup>10</sup> This group worked on the analysis of the procedures and working methods of the governing bodies of UNESCO (established by the General Conference at its 38<sup>th</sup> session as per 38 C/Resolution 101; <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0025/002590/259083e.pdf>).

Independently of the result of the discussion and potential modification to be approved at the upcoming 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the Intergovernmental Council, a number of Articles will need to be changed accordingly should a change of name be agreed upon by the Member States, namely Articles I.1, III.1, IV.5, and X.I. It may also be of interest to change Articles VIII.4 and X.1, to include reference to the wider “UNESCO *Water Family*” in tune with some of the concepts that motivated the consideration of the change of the IHP’s name. In this same spirit, consideration may be given to adding one or more Articles to the Statutes to clearly characterize and delineate the rights and/or duties, if any, of the members of the wider “UNESCO *Water Family network*” and the interrelations of the various programmes under IHP.

For the new name of the IHP to be legally bounding, a resolution will need to be approved by the UNESCO General Conference, for instance at its 40<sup>th</sup> session to be held in November 2019. This resolution could be all encompassing, such as Resolution 2.232 approved at the 18<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference<sup>11</sup> which referred to the launching of IHP, listed the name of the Member States elected to the Intergovernmental Council and approved the new IHP Statutes.

Finally, legal consideration may also need to be addressed at the level of the Member States as it relates to the IHP National Committees or Focal Points, in terms of their internal statutes and in relation to their link and status within the context of the National Commissions to UNESCO. This is of importance, in particular in those countries where the IHP Committees have some kind of legal registration or status in its own right in accordance to the national laws or regulations.

### ***Final remarks***

The decision of changing the name of the International Hydrological Programme is not a task to take lightly, nor is it easy to accomplish. The driver of this discussion surges in the junction of very specific internal and external conditions that have been building up within UNESCO, the UN, and in the water sector, in general. Internally, the discussion of the new challenges facing the water sector calls for changes to the *IHP* structure and its rebranding as an intergovernmental entity focused on sciences and involving the entire UNESCO Water Family. Nonetheless, the change of the name is just but an element, although an important one, within the rebranding and restructuring process that the IHP has embarked itself on.

At the international level, the promoted initiative for a *UN Intergovernmental Body on Water* would have a special process of its own that requires the investment of the will of Member States. The interaction of such a Body with other UN system entities would require major integration of UNESCO within the UN and better coordination with UN-Water. Notwithstanding of this scenario, UNESCO’s present organizational and operational changes responds to the directives given by Member States to provide increased visibility to the intergovernmental nature of the programme and while supporting the development of water sciences to provide sound science-based policy advice. Whether the change of the name of IHP would further and strengthen this shared purpose needs to be seen and will depend on the support provided by Member States.

However, the UNESCO based IHP is envisioned to remain unique in its function as a science-oriented intergovernmental entity focused on supporting Member States in science-based policy/decision making/taking processes by enhancing the advancement of water sciences, expanding knowledge and information sharing, and increasing educational capacities and raising awareness on water culture. In this context, although the change of the name of the entity summarized by the acronym ***IHP*** is relevant, it is the consolidation of the uniqueness of the UNESCO IHP which provides for its continuation and prosperity as a science-focused mechanism aimed at advancing and supporting water policy, science education and culture.

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<sup>11</sup> Res. 2.232 of 18<sup>th</sup> Session General Conference at:  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001140/114040e.pdf>