

# *UN-Water Briefing Note*

*A Reporting Service for Environment and Development Negotiations*

Online at: [enb.iisd.org/36th-un-water-meeting](http://enb.iisd.org/36th-un-water-meeting)

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## **Summary of the 36th UN-Water Meeting: 7-8 April 2022**

The 36th UN-Water Meeting offered members, partners, and observers for this UN interagency coordination mechanism the first opportunity to meet in person, after two years of online UN-Water sessions. Participants in Geneva were visibly relieved, eagerly taking the opportunity to advance some important agenda items, and catch up and exchange ideas in the corridors.

Central to the discussions were the preparations for the UN 2023 Water Conference, to be held at UN Headquarters in New York in March 2023. Participants highlighted that this Conference offers a “once-in-a-generation opportunity” to mobilize actors and generate action and partnerships to achieve internationally-agreed goals and targets, including those in Sustainable Development Goal 6 (clean water and sanitation). The ambition of the Conference to make a lasting global impact was clear, as it will conclude with a set of voluntary commitments—a Global Water Pact—and a roadmap for the second half of the International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development, which concludes in 2028, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are set to be achieved by 2030.

A panel discussion on Thursday focused on climate change and water, with participants identifying the Water Pavilion at the most recent Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as a success. Many emphasized that water should also be mainstreamed into the other Pavilions at UNFCCC COPs, including those for health, nature, energy, and agriculture, as well as into the negotiations themselves.

This marked a broader notion that surfaced several times during the meeting, namely that “water is not a sector,” as one participant put it, stressing that water as an underpinning theme should be strengthened across all sectors. At the same time, however, many lamented the fragmentation of water governance across organizations, processes, and sectors. As a way forward, participants suggested viewing “fragmentation” in a more positive light, namely as an opportunity to reinforce messages across sectors. They also saw water as a mode to build bridges, for instance with the climate adaptation agenda.

Another focus during the meeting was the Global Acceleration Framework for SDG 6. Participants addressed how to scale up country-level support and disseminate results from case studies. Capacity development for the water agenda was identified as a major cornerstone in this context—one that merits more international collaboration and financial support, as one participant emphasized.

Others reiterated this view throughout several agenda items, noting that capacity building is needed to advance the water agenda across all sectors and across ministries within individual countries.

As the meeting drew to a close on Friday afternoon, many felt that although much work remains to be done, in particular in the area of water governance and capacity building, the upcoming UN 2023 Water Conference will help “create a consistent drumbeat” to raise attention to water, in the words of one participant. The 121 registered participants gathered in person, in Geneva, Switzerland, and online for the 7-8 April 2022 meeting.

## **A Brief History of UN-Water**

While over 30 UN organizations carry out water and sanitation programmes, no single UN entity is dedicated exclusively to these issues. In 1977, the UN’s Intersecretariat Group for Water Resources began coordinating UN activities on water. Subsequently, in 2003, the UN Administrative Coordination Committee’s Subcommittee on Water Resources was transformed into UN-Water and was endorsed by the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB). UN-Water plays a coordinating role within the UN to ensure that the UN family “delivers as one” in response to water-related challenges.

UN-Water Meetings bring together Members and Partners (see the full list on the final page) twice a year to carry out the mandate of informing policies, monitoring and reporting, and inspiring action on water and sanitation issues. Participants include representatives of the UN Secretariat and UN agencies, funds, programmes and other entities, multilateral environmental agreements, civil society organizations, governments, and other organizations.

**Initiatives:** The overarching focus of UN-Water’s Members and Partners is to support UN Member States to sustainably manage water and sanitation. This mission is carried out through three areas of work: informing policies, monitoring and reporting, and inspiring action.

Efforts to inform policies focus on placing water and sanitation issues on the agenda of key UN agreements, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs. SDG 6 calls for the international community to strive to ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all by 2030.

Monitoring and reporting efforts seek to provide coherent and reliable data and information on key water trends and management issues. The Integrated Monitoring Initiative for SDG 6 (IMI-SDG 6) builds on and expands the experience and lessons learned during implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, and aims to:

- develop methodologies and tools to monitor SDG 6 global indicators;

- raise awareness at the national and global levels regarding SDG 6 monitoring;
- enhance technical and institutional country capacity for monitoring; and
- compile country data and report on global progress on SDG 6.

Efforts to inspire action include coordination of the annual observance of World Water Day on 22 March, and World Toilet Day on 19 November. UN-Water releases the annual World Water Development Report (WWDR) on World Water Day.

**Governance Structure:** UN agencies, programmes, and funds with a water-related mandate are Members of UN-Water. Partners are international organizations, professional unions, associations, and other civil society groups that are actively involved in water-related issues and that have the capacity and willingness to contribute to the work of UN-Water and meet UN-Water's partnership criteria.

UN-Water Senior Programme Managers (SPMs) are the representatives of UN-Water Members. They provide the overall governance and strategic direction and constitute the highest operational decision-making body of UN-Water.

The Chair of UN-Water is chosen among the UN Executive Heads after consultations in the CEB. The current Chair of UN-Water is Gilbert Hougbo, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The Vice-Chair of UN-Water is elected among the UN-Water SPMs. The Secretary of UN-Water is a senior staff member of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).

### UN-Water Report

UN-Water Chair Gilbert Hougbo opened the 36th UN-Water Meeting on Thursday, 7 April 2022. He thanked the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) for hosting the meeting at its headquarters. Hougbo highlighted that the UN 2023 Water Conference, which will take place in March 2023, would be the focus of the meeting. He also emphasized the importance of SDG 6 for UN-Water's work and its efforts to ensure the targets are delivered by 2030.

In an opening address, WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas reviewed how water is a key component of the climate system and how WMO reforms have incorporated attention to water systems. Among other data points of concern, Taalas noted that glaciers are experiencing a negative mass balance for the 33rd consecutive year and it is projected that, by 2050, approximately four billion people will experience severe water scarcity during at least one month every year. He recalled that the UN Secretary-General has announced an initiative to ensure that every person on earth will be protected by an early warning system within five years.

Participants adopted the agenda without amendment, took note of several reports and progress updates, and proceeded to launch into extended discussions on the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework, linkages between climate and water, planning for the UN 2023 Water Conference, and planning for the SDG 6 Synthesis Report 2023, among other agenda items. This report summarizes the discussions during the open sessions of the 36th UN-Water Meeting.

### *SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework: Unifying the international community's support to countries*

**Scaling up country-level engagement:** Marianne Kjellén, UN Development Programme (UNDP), introduced this agenda item. Noting that country-level engagement requires strong institutions, skilled staff, and high-quality data, she described pilots that ran

in 2020-2021 in nine countries with diverse needs. She said pilot activities included provision of wastewater management expertise, collection of innovative case studies, and development of a framework for human rights. Kjellén said while COVID-19 is a multiplier of challenges and a cause of delay, it is also an enabler of new virtual, integrated, and inclusive ways of working.

Noting the "false dichotomy" between UN-Water and UN Country Team members can hinder constructive engagements, Kjellén stressed the need to: develop inter-agency guidance to scale up coordinated support on SDG 6 through the UN reform; develop the new country-level engagement webpage; and provide continued support to pilot countries and new target countries. She also underlined the importance of engaging with governments, civil society, the private sector, and other stakeholders.

UN-Water highlighted the power of learning by doing. The World Health Organization (WHO) called for country-level meetings to promote water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). The UN Human Rights Office advocated integrating human rights into processes and guidelines. The Global Water Partnership noted the need to collect the feedback from the nine pilot countries before scaling up and to push Country Teams to associate more with stakeholders, including civil society. The International Labour Organization called for demand-driven activities and translation of documents into local languages.

The Women for Water Partnership (WfWP) asked that partners and other stakeholders be assisted in better interacting with UN agencies. WfWP supported the development of guidance materials to help link regional structures and stakeholders to UN-Water efforts. The UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) called for stronger links with regional commissions and linking water with major issues that countries are facing at the national level, such as climate change. The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) suggested listing on the UN-Water website the support and services UN agencies can offer, rather than just asking members and partners to formulate what they need.

Participants decided the Task Force on Country-Level Engagement would remain in place for the 2022-2023 biennium with the recommended activities and budget and would report back on progress at the 37th UN-Water Meeting.

**Collaboration with AMCOW:** Rashid Mbaziira, Executive Secretary of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW), said AMCOW is currently developing a monitoring and evaluation system on water that, among other things, results in evidence-based interventions. Noting that African countries have lamented how competing processes and reporting duties are putting a strain on their resources, he stressed the need for: increased intersectoral collaboration on knowledge gathering and dissemination; practicable and functional systems for data collection and analysis; and national coordination platforms. Mbaziira concluded that the focus of collaboration should be on collecting high-quality information and making it readily accessible to all stakeholders.

**Update on the Country Acceleration Case Studies:** Marianne Kjellén, UNDP, discussed the work of the Expert Group on the 2030 Agenda to develop case studies to share best practices among countries. She noted that, following a call for suggestions, nine case studies will be developed in total, with case studies on Costa Rica, Pakistan, and Senegal to be released in 2022. She said the case studies would be presented during side events at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and World Water Week, to be held in July and August 2022, respectively.

**Update on the SDG 6 Capacity Development Initiative:** Tomoyuki Okada, UN Department of Social and Economic Affairs (DESA), opened the discussion on this agenda item, noting that capacity-building initiatives are implemented based on a Member State's request. He said the initiative is planned for a ten-year period, from 2021-2031, and will begin in three countries this year.

During the discussion, speakers emphasized the importance of good governance to attract resources for this initiative and the need for more resources to support it. One speaker highlighted that the floods in Germany in July 2021 demonstrated the need for capacity building in all countries, not just developing countries. Other speakers highlighted that a key part of the initiative is the ministerial coordination to evaluate the gaps, and it is important to keep the initiative demand- rather than supply-driven.

AMCOW said capacity development should not be undertaken for the sake of capacity development and emphasized the need to harness coordinating capacity to bring different interventions together. He noted, for example, that data on agriculture is available within some agencies but harnessing it to bring partners to the same table to use the data is a challenge. Several speakers emphasized the need to address how the pillars of the Acceleration Framework could work together.

Participants welcomed the presentation of the work plan for the SDG 6 Capacity Development Initiative and committed to participate in the mapping exercise of the UN-Water family's capacity development resources. An update of its implementation will be presented at the 37th UN-Water Meeting.

**Roadmap on human rights to water and sanitation:** Bruce Gordon, WHO, introduced this agenda item. He said the Roadmap had been framed in the vision of the Secretary-General's *Our Common Agenda*, in response to a decision taken at the 32nd UN-Water Meeting. He added that the Roadmap is aligned with the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework and the UN Reform Agenda, and contributes to the UN 2023 Water Conference.

Rio Hada, UN Human Rights Office, outlined key elements of the Roadmap, including:

- multi-stakeholder engagement, advocacy, and dialogues on the human rights to water and sanitation;
- alignment with international human rights principles and standards;
- the promotion of a human rights-based approach to WASH and practical implementation of the human rights to water and sanitation; and
- reaffirmed commitment to human rights and accountability for action.

Hada highlighted a results matrix including a listening exercise, a senior-level dialogue on human rights, and a UN-Water toolkit on the human rights to water and sanitation.

During the discussion, a participant suggested that reports of Special Rapporteurs be appropriately taken into account in the process towards a Roadmap and called for increased focus on practical implementation. Two government observers emphasized that water is crucial to a wide range of human rights, not just the human rights to water and sanitation. Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, called for recognition of and support for the people who fight for the rights to water and sanitation on a daily basis.

**Shoutout: Initiatives by UN-Water Members and Partners:** Participants were invited to highlight their own activities related to the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework. The UN

Children's Fund (UNICEF) said it has been using the Acceleration Framework as guidance in its actions, and highlighted collaboration with AMCOW, and with WHO on Water Security for All and Accountability for Sustainability.

The UN Global Compact described how its 30 member companies are working on global issues, including water quantity, quality and accessibility. He highlighted the Global Compact's 2030 Roadmap for Collective Action, a CEO initiative that sets out concrete goals, including creating a positive impact in 100 water-stressed basins, with a focus on data, innovation and finance.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) shared a proposal towards a national water roadmap approach, noting this would involve countries to draw up concrete plans to achieve all SDGs in their country in 2030 through a country-led participative approach.

**Wrap up: Way forward:** In wrapping up the session, Federico Properzi, UN-Water Chief Technical Advisor, said the Acceleration Framework helps UN-Water to be more effective and efficient in its work. He noted the essence of the framework is country-level support and called for increased focus on financing and innovation mechanisms.

### ***Interactive Session: Climate Change and Water***

Claudio Caponi, WMO, chaired this dialogue. Sonja Koeppel, UNECE, gave an overview of how the water community has reached out to the climate community. Among successes, she noted the establishment of an expert group on Water and Climate under UN-Water but noted that water is not yet sufficiently discussed in climate negotiations and finance discussions.

Lilian Daphine Lunyolo, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), outlined linkages between water and climate in the Glasgow Climate Pact, which encourages scaling up action, including through finance, technology, and capacity building. Stressing the vital importance of climate-resilient water infrastructures, Lunyolo said 2023 offers significant opportunities to evaluate whether progress is sufficient.

Jasmine Moussa, Egypt, spoke as host country of UNFCCC COP 27. Stressing that water-related climate hazards are already affecting millions of people worldwide, she said COP 27 would be a "COP for Africa" and a "COP for implementation," with strong linkages with the UN 2023 Water Conference.

Jennifer Jun, Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), addressed the success of the Water Pavilion during COP 26, which she reported was a multi-stakeholder effort by 33 partner organizations and 20 funding partners. Outlining lessons learned, she said the water community is prepared and well positioned to demonstrate the transformative power of water in climate action. She emphasized that water is also relevant to the other pavilions planned for COP 27, including those for nature, resilience, food and agriculture, and energy.

Johannes Cullmann, WMO, elaborated on the Water and Climate Coalition, a cross-sectoral water action community under the SDG 6 Acceleration Framework. He said it is promoting an integrated climate and water agenda, focusing on closing the data and information gap. Among tangible outcomes, he highlighted the Global Water Information System (GWIS) and the UNIFY movement, which promotes youth involvement in water and climate action. He clarified that the GWIS is not a new database, but rather brings together existing initiatives.

A participant stressed that: water is also crucial to mitigation; more accessible language should be used; and while pavilions are a step forward, interaction with the COP negotiators is what really



counts. Another speaker added that COPs should not become targets in themselves.

Several speakers advocated integrated approaches to development, taking into account climate in conjunction with water and drought.

Jun called attention to an upcoming SIWI Water and Mitigation Report, which is funded by SIWI, UNDP, the Stockholm Resilience Centre, the Potsdam Institute, the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Lunyolo noted that the Glasgow Climate Pact also has a section on water and mitigation.

In summarizing, Caponi underlined the need to mainstream water into future COPs and not just into all of its pavilions, with a focus on the negotiations and financing mechanisms.

### **Information Session on the UN 2023 Water Conference**

Carolina Tornesi Mackinnon, World Youth Parliament for Water (WYPW), moderated this discussion, which was attended by UN-Water Members and Partners as well as individuals from Geneva-based missions to the UN.

WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas noted that his organization is applying a systems approach to addressing global challenges and has been invited by the UN Secretary-General to present an action plan for ensuring universal coverage of early warning systems within the next five years.

Recalling that 2023 has been named the year of water ambition, UN-Water Chair Hougbo encouraged participants to consider how the UN is organized and prepared to support countries in meeting their water and sanitation objectives while avoiding fragmentation. He noted that the UN 2023 Water Conference will be the most important water meeting in a generation.

Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and Secretary-General for the UN 2023 Water Conference, stressed the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration and cooperation to address water-related challenges. He reviewed proposals for the event's themes, noting that most proposals fall into one of five themes:

- water, climate, and disaster risk reduction;
- water and peace and security;
- water for agriculture and food security;
- nature and water quality; and
- universal access to water and sanitation.

Liu said among the proposals for organizing the meeting's themes are suggestions to organize them around the themes of the Global Acceleration Framework, or SDG 6 and other water-related targets in the 2030 Agenda.

Liu noted that Tajikistan and the Netherlands will be co-hosting the UN 2023 Water Conference. Paul Bekkers, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the UN Office at Geneva, stressed the need for the conference to focus on action and to adopt a cross-sectoral approach that engages everyone. He said the Netherlands, Tajikistan, and Egypt will organize a Geneva Water Dialogue on 22 June 2022. Jamshed Khamidov, Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the UN Office at Geneva, highlighted the need to address the scarcity of water resources and invited participants to take part in the Second International High-Level Conference on the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development," 2018-2028, which is taking place in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, from 6-9 June 2022.

The co-hosts briefed participants on planning for the Conference. Sulton Rahimzoda, Special Envoy of the President of Tajikistan

to the Water and Climate Coalition Leaders, and Henk Ovink, Special Envoy for International Water Affairs for the Netherlands, emphasized that the meeting should not "stop" the day after the conference, but should instead focus on partnerships that will work beyond the March 2023 event. They noted that water is both a dealbreaker for achieving the internationally agreed water-related goals and targets as well as an opportunity and dealmaker, through which a green economy can be leveraged, and a more sustainable and inclusive world achieved. They said the fragmentation of water policy and action across the world undermines the ability to address water challenges and stressed that the Conference should be: inclusive in terms of the process and results; action-oriented; cross-sectoral; and able to mobilize other sectors and improve the way they manage and address water resources together.

The co-hosts said the conference will involve: six plenaries during which Member States have space to make their statements; five dialogues, the themes for which will be agreed later in 2022; three to five special events; side events; and cultural elements such as exhibitions and marathons that will lead to a global focus on water during the week of the meeting. They noted the conference will not result in a negotiated outcome, but will deliver: a summary of the conference proceedings; a set of voluntary commitments in the form of a Global Water Pact; and a roadmap towards the second half of the International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development, which will conclude in 2028, and the SDGs, which are set to be achieved by 2030.

Ziad Khayat, UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, reported on the regional preparatory meetings for the UN 2023 Water Conference, noting that these virtual events are already underway.

Naiara Costa, DESA, highlighted UN-wide efforts on raising awareness among stakeholders and creating space and providing opportunities for them to participate in preparatory meetings and the Conference itself. She drew attention to a water information mailing list and work on a Conference accreditation process.

In the ensuing discussion, participants debated which outcomes would make the Conference successful. Participants felt success would be if the Conference:

- is inclusive, action-oriented, open, transparent, and participatory;
- increases synergies to ensure water can be a catalyst for peace and sustainable development;
- helps bridge the gaps between innovation, pilots, and scale-up;
- recognizes the disappearance of snow and ice as an urgent focus;
- feeds directly into high-level processes like the HLPF and the UN General Assembly;
- highlights water as a common good and a human right; and
- strengthens the UN architecture to ensure that water has "more voice and better coordination."

### **Panel Discussion: UN 2023 Water Conference**

This session was co-chaired by Avneil Dhot, AquaFed, and Danielle Kamtié, WYPW. Kamtié drew attention to the Youth Statement adopted at the 9th World Water Forum, held in Dakar, Senegal, in March 2022, which called for youth action to be implemented in all sectors and youth inclusion being the norm, rather than the exception.

Dhot invited participants to reflect on the question: is the current international governance structure equipped to deliver on SDG 6? Many participants suggested stopping treating water as a "sector," and instead adopting an approach that treats water as an underpinning theme for all sectors. Some expressed optimism,

noting that “we are doing our best with what we have,” and “fragmentation” can also be framed more positively, namely as an opportunity for reinforcement of messages across sectors. Participants cautioned against “preaching to the converted,” with one advocating using UN-Water as a platform to achieve a whole-of-society approach and another identifying water as a “mode to build bridges.” One participant suggested integration with the climate adaptation agenda.

Several participants called for better communication and the use of more accessible language that is relevant to all stakeholders, notably youth and local and Indigenous peoples, and that underlines the importance of water as an underpinning theme.

One participant urged “creating a consistent drumbeat” to draw attention to water-related issues and seek connections. He recommended reaching out to the business sector, highlighting their water risks and opportunities to take action. Another stressed that water commitments should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART), calling for guidance to be developed. She said if commitments are not government-owned and -planned, and embedded in already existing programmes, they are not likely to be achieved.

One participant reported on efforts to insert into the UN 2023 Water Conference agenda a discourse on how water risks cascade across multiple agendas, and on addressing underlying systems, such as ecological systems. Another suggested learning from other sectors how they approach cross-sector collaboration.

### Global Campaigns

**2022 Events:** Neno Kukurić, International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre, chaired this discussion as the co-coordinator of the UN-Water Task Force on World Water Day and World Toilet Day 2022. He noted that World Water Day 2022 and the World Water Development Report (WWDR) were focused on the theme, “Groundwater – Making the Invisible Visible.” He said the campaign will continue during World Toilet Day, in November, and during the first-ever UN-Water Summit on Groundwater, which is taking place from 6-8 December 2022.

Engin Koncagul, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), noted that the number of contributors to the 2022 WWDR was higher than ever.

UN-Water Members and Partners agreed to the suggestion for a joint UN-Water statement to be prepared by the Task Force and issued as an outcome of the UN-Water Summit on Groundwater. The statement will also contribute to the preparation of the mid-term review of the Water Action Decade in 2023.

**UN World Water Development Report 2023:** Koncagul reported on the process and timeline of this report, noting its theme “Accelerating change through partnerships and cooperation.” He said lead agencies began writing their chapters in March 2022, first drafts are due in April 2022, and the final report will be launched in March 2023 during the UN 2023 Water Conference.

**Creation of the Task Force for World Water Day and World Toilet Day 2023:** UN-Water Chief Technical Advisor Federico Properzi introduced this agenda item. Several participants expressed an interest in being part of the Task Force. The meeting established the Task Force and requested the Task Force to present its work plan for approval at the 37th UN-Water Meeting.

**Theme of water-related international observances 2024 and 2025:** Properzi introduced this agenda item. Koncagul presented options for the themes of the World Water Days and WWDRs 2024 and 2025. Based on an earlier call for options, participants

considered focusing on “water and”: a sustainable economy; coastal zones; human health; gender; a new world order; and small islands. Koncagul listed advantages and disadvantages of each theme, and then participants expressed their preferences. Speakers: objected to themes focusing on particular regions or groups of society; suggested extending “health” to include the health-and-environment nexus; and suggested avoiding a focus on “a new world order,” favoring instead “water as leverage for peace,” with some adding “justice” as well.

During the closed session at the end of the meeting, the Senior Programme Managers decided the themes would be as follows: 2024, leveraging water for peace; 2025, water and gender; 2026, water and health. They noted that, if UN Member States declare 2025 the international year on glaciers preservation, the themes for 2025 and 2026 would move to 2026 and 2027, respectively.

### Monitoring and Reporting

**Integrated Monitoring Initiative for SDG 6:** William Reidhead, UN-Water Global Monitoring Officer, briefed participants on the recent work of the Integrated Monitoring Initiative for SDG 6 (IMI-SDG 6), including its work to contextualize gender data.

Reidhead reported that 30 countries have assembled their SDG 6 data monitoring teams based on the work of this Initiative, and its SDG 6 Data Portal, SDG 6 website, and baseline and progress report updates have provided a solid basis on which to build. Reidhead noted that participation in webinars hosted by IMI SDG 6 had increased substantially during the pandemic and said the Initiative would continue to use virtual meeting options. He also reported that, based on work on gender contextualization of SDG 6 data, IMI-SDG 6 is piloting gender contextualization tools.

Reidhead further reported that challenges for the Initiative included building national ownership and capacity for intersectoral monitoring, coordination, and data analysis for decision making. He said a continued focus on the breadth of SDG 6 data at the expense of the depth of data could undermine the credibility of IMI-SDG 6.

He said the next stage will seek to make global indicator data more useful for policy making, including through: disaggregation and contextualization; national target setting; and strengthening country integration and collaboration across ministries. He also noted the need for more sophisticated analyses, including on interlinkages among the SDGs.

During the discussion, a participant suggested providing Application Programming Interface (API) access, to allow better interoperability between data portals.

**Planning for the SDG 6 Synthesis Report 2023:** Participants discussed the content, structure, and production modalities of the SDG 6 Synthesis Report 2023, noting timing challenges due to the fact that the UN 2023 Water Conference will take place in March and the HLPF will review SDG 6 in July. Participants also called for the messages in other 2023 reports, including the WWDR, to be consistent.

During the discussion, one speaker noted that an additional challenge for best positioning the Synthesis Report is that the themes of the UN 2023 Water Conference will only be agreed in October or November 2022. Some speakers suggested bringing on co-authors for the report, such as the World Bank, to help broaden the report’s perspective and “break down silos.”

Participants reconfirmed the intention to publish the next UN-Water SDG 6 Synthesis Report to inform the SDG 6 in-depth review at the HLPF in 2023 with a short document that would inform and build on the outcomes of the UN 2023 Water Conference. The report

should be organized around the five accelerators as outlined in the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework and will be coordinated by the UN-Water Expert Group on the 2030 Agenda, with the help of a technical editor.

**UN-Water gender work:** Ginette Azcona, UN Women, presented work on an upcoming paper that will include indicators that are relevant to tell the SDG 6 gender story. The paper will provide input to the UN 2023 Water Conference.

Reidhead commented that the indicator working group looking at opportunities to contextualize data for gender has identified the need to be careful about which data are used. For example, he noted that some data points, such as the share of women in committees and public hearings, are hard to link directly to meaningful changes in water policy. He also noted challenges with linking small-scale data sets to a larger scale and said focus groups can answer some questions better than surveys.

Reidhead also noted the recommendations to consider smaller data sets and alternative statistics. He highlighted that such “citizen science” might be hard to standardize across a country but can be useful to answer some questions.

### Closing

Bruce Gordon, WHO, in his role as chair of the afternoon discussions, thanked UN-Water’s Partners and Observers for their participation, noting that it was the first in-person meeting many had attended since the global pandemic was declared in March 2020. Gordon closed the open session of the 36th meeting of UN-Water at 2:46 pm on Friday, 8 April.

## Upcoming Meetings

**4th Asia-Pacific Water Summit:** At this Summit, high-level delegates, including heads of states and representatives of international organizations from the Asia-Pacific region, will discuss water-related issues. The Summit is organized by the Asia-Pacific Water Forum and the Kumamoto City Administration, Japan. **dates:** 23-24 April 2022 **location:** Kumamoto, Japan **www:** [apwf.org](http://apwf.org)

**UNCCD COP 15:** UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) negotiations will focus on work of the fifth session of the Committee on Science and Technology, the twentieth session of the Committee for Review of the Implementation of the Convention, and other major issues, including land tenure, land degradation neutrality, and drought. **dates:** 9-20 May 2022 **location:** Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire **www:** [unccd.int/cop15](http://unccd.int/cop15)

**Stockholm+50:** “Stockholm+50: a healthy planet for the prosperity of all – our responsibility, our opportunity” will take place five decades after the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. The event will provide leaders with an opportunity to draw on 50 years of multilateral environmental action to achieve the bold and urgent action needed to secure a better future on a healthy planet. **dates:** 2-3 June 2022 **location:** Stockholm, Sweden **www:** [www.stockholm50.global/](http://www.stockholm50.global/)

**World Environment Day:** The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) annually organizes events for World Environment Day, which encourages worldwide awareness and action for the protection of the environment. It is celebrated on 5 June in over 100 countries. **date:** 5 June 2022 **location:** worldwide **www:** [worldenvironmentday.global](http://worldenvironmentday.global)

**Second International High-Level Conference on the International Decade for Action on “Water for Sustainable Development,” 2018-2028:** Tajikistan has committed to providing

a platform for policy dialogue, partnership and action at the global, regional and national level. In this context, Tajikistan is organizing high-level international conferences throughout the Water Action Decade. This series of events constitutes the so-called “Dushanbe Water Process.” **dates:** 6-9 June 2022 **location:** Dushanbe, Tajikistan **www:** [dushanbewaterprocess.org](http://dushanbewaterprocess.org)

**Geneva Water Dialogue:** This meeting will be organized by the governments of the Netherlands, Tajikistan, and Egypt. **date:** 22 June 2022 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland

**High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2022:** The 2022 meeting of the HLPF, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, will convene under the theme, “Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” The 2022 meeting will hold in-depth reviews of five SDGs: 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), 14 (life below water), 15 (life on land), and 17 (partnerships for the Goals). A side event will be held on SDG 6 (water and sanitation). **dates:** 5-7 and 11-15 July 2022 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** [sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf](http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf)

**World Water Week:** World Water Week 2022 will be held on the theme “Seeing the Unseen: The Value of Water,” and is built on a global need to not only see, but to understand, and—more importantly— value water. **dates:** 28 August – 1 September 2022 **location:** Stockholm, Sweden **www:** [worldwaterweek.org](http://worldwaterweek.org)

**CBD COP 15:** This Conference comprises the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the tenth Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (Cartagena Protocol COP/MOP 10), and the fourth Meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing (Nagoya Protocol COP/MOP 4). **dates:** August – September 2022 (tentative) **location:** Kunming, China **www:** [cbd.int/meetings/](http://cbd.int/meetings/)

**Cairo Water Week:** Cairo Water Week will take place just prior to the Sharm el-Sheikh Climate Change Conference, which will also be held in Egypt. **dates:** 16-19 October 2022 **location:** Cairo, Egypt **www:** [cairowaterweek.eg](http://cairowaterweek.eg)

**Sharm el-Sheikh Climate Change Conference:** The 27th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 27), the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 17), and the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 4) will convene. **dates:** 7-18 November 2022 **location:** Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt **www:** [unfccc.int/](http://unfccc.int/)

**UN-Water Summit on Groundwater:** This first-ever summit on groundwater will build on the World Water Day 2022, World Toilet Day 2022, and World Water Development Report 2022, all of which focused on the theme, “Groundwater: Making the Invisible Visible.” **dates:** 6-8 December 2022 **location:** UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France **www:** [un-igrac.org/agenda/un-water-summit-groundwater](http://un-igrac.org/agenda/un-water-summit-groundwater)

**UN 2023 Water Conference:** The UN 2023 Water Conference—formally known as the 2023 Conference for the Midterm Comprehensive Review of Implementation of the UN Decade for Action on Water and Sanitation (2018-2028)—will be co-hosted by Tajikistan and the Netherlands. **dates:** 22-24 March 2023 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** [sdgs.un.org/conferences/water2023](http://sdgs.un.org/conferences/water2023)

For additional upcoming events, see [sdg.iisd.org/](http://sdg.iisd.org/)



**UN-Water Members  
(34 as of April 2022)**

**United Nations Secretariat**

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)

United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR)

**Programmes and Funds**

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

World Food Programme (WFP)

**Regional Commissions**

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC)

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA)

**Specialized Agencies**

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

International Labour Organization (ILO)

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)

United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)

United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

The World Bank Group (WB)

World Health Organization (WHO)

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

**Other Entities**

United Nations University (UNU)

**United Nations Related Organizations**

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

**Conventions**

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

**UN-Water Partners  
(44 as of April 2022)**

AquaFed

CDP

Center for Affordable Water and Sanitation Technology (CAWST)

Conservation International

Gender and Water Alliance (GWA)

Global Water Partnership (GWP)

Green Climate Fund\*

Human Right 2 Water

IHE Delft

International Association for Hydro-Environment Engineering and Research (IAHR)

International Association for Water Law (AIDA)

International Association of Hydrogeologists (IAH)

International Association of Hydrological Sciences (IAHS)

International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID)

International Groundwater Centre (IGRAC)

International Hydropower Association (IHA)

International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA)

International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC)

International Water Association (IWA)

International Water Management Institute (IWMI)

International Water Resources Association (IWRA)

Mandate of the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Disaster Risk Reduction and Water\*

Mandate of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation\*

Public Services International (PSI)

Ramsar Convention

Sanitation and Water for All\*

Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future

Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)

Toilet Board Coalition

United Nations Global Compact\*

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)

Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC)\*

Water.org

WaterAid

WaterLex

Women for Water Partnership (WfWP)

World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)

World Council of Civil Engineers (WCCE)

World Resources Institute (WRI)

World Water Council (WWC)

World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

World Youth Parliament for Water (WYPW)

\* Partner with Special Status