

World Leaders Call for Action on Water

New York, 21 September, 2016 — The High Level Panel on Water, consisting of 11 sitting Heads of State and Government and one Special Adviser, today issued a Call to Action for a fundamental shift in the way the world looks at water.

The Panel aims to mobilize effective action and advocate on financing and implementation to increase access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation for all, and to improve the sustainable management of water and sanitation (Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 6)), as well as to contribute to the achievement of the other SDGs that rely on the development and management of water resources.

In a Joint Statement (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/HLPWater>), the Panel, which is jointly convened by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim, recognized both the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, and the need for all to take responsibility for managing water better. The need for a comprehensive and coordinated approach to water, as well as increased attention and investment in water-related services, are at the heart of the Call.

The Panel presented the Action Plan which outlines new initiatives and investments that can put the world on the path to meet the SDG6 and related targets. The Panel Members committed to lead the way and encouraged other Heads of State and Government to do the same.

Currently, more than two billion people are affected by water stress, a figure that is expected to rise in coming decades due to growing demands on water supplies and the increasing effects of climate change.

While 6.6 billion or 91 percent of the world's people used an improved drinking water source in 2015—up from 82 percent in 2000—an estimated 663 million people were still using unimproved sources or surface water. Moreover, not all improved sources are safe. For instance, in 2012 an estimated 1.8 billion people were exposed to drinking water sources contaminated with fecal matter. As of 2015, 2.4 billion people lack access to improved sanitation—with 946 million people still practicing open defecation.

“The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development promises to leave no one behind in access to basic services, including water and sanitation. Realizing this vision requires a comprehensive approach based on human rights principles,” said UN Secretary-General **Ban Ki-moon**.

“The consequences of water shortage are costly today, but will be exponentially more expensive in the future,” said World Bank Group President **Jim Yong Kim**. *“Economic growth in some regions could be cut by as much as 6 percent because of water scarcity alone. The High Level Panel on Water is critically important because the world needs leadership at the highest political level to usher in policies that support a more sustainable use of water.”*

To access the High Level Panel on Water's Call to Action and related materials, visit

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/HLPWater> or follow #HLPWater on Twitter.

The Panel members, who serve for two years, are:

H.E. Mrs. Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, President of Mauritius (Co-Chair)

H.E. Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto, President of Mexico (Co-Chair)

H.E. Mr. Malcolm Turnbull, Prime Minister of Australia

H.E. Ms. Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh

H.E. Mr. János Áder, President of Hungary

H.E. Mr. Hani Mulki, Prime Minister Jordan

H.E. Mr. Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of The Netherlands

H.E. Mr. Pedro Pablo Kuczynski Godard, President of Peru

H.E. Mr. Macky Sall, President of Senegal

H. E. Mr. Jacob Zuma, President of South Africa

H. E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon, President of Tajikistan

Special Adviser

H.E. Dr. Han Seung-soo, Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea

Quotes of the Members of the High Level Panel on Water:

President Ameenah Gurib-Fakim of Mauritius (co-chair)

"SDG6- Watering today the seeds of a sustainable and water secure world."

President Enrique Peña Nieto of Mexico (co-chair)

"The High Level Panel on Water is progressively moving forward. For Mexico's co-chairmanship, adopting the Panel Action Plan mirrors the will and commitment of Member States towards establishing a programme of concrete actions focused on achieving the sustainable development goal 6 SDG6 regarding global access to water and sanitation, thereby contributing in a strategic and fundamental manner to reducing poverty and inequality. Today with the construction of this renewed perspective, water, being essential for life, is beginning to be understood as the most important resource for humanity."

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull of Australia



Australia knows how important effective and sustainable water management is to our communities and economy. We are very pleased to make a practical contribution to this global initiative, to share our water management expertise to help unlock food production, improve health outcomes, strengthen economies and reduce poverty.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh

Water is life. It is absolutely essential for our survival. The future of the world also depends on water. Indeed, we cannot dream of a peaceful and prosperous world without water. But we must not forget that water is a finite resource. If we fail to manage this resource properly, it can cause a lot of human sufferings. Let us all work together for a world where everybody would have equal rights and access to safe water.

President János Áder of Hungary

“Our fate depends on how successfully we tackle the climate change and the water crisis that is looming large in an increasing number of countries across the world. There is a close interlinkage between these two challenges.

We have about 15 years to turn our water management sustainable before the problem would get out of control in the face of worsening climate change.

This enormous task puts every country to test. The solution requires all of us to join forces and share knowledge. For the upcoming years it will be more evident than ever that water is the source of life, cooperation and development. We shall not forget: water connects us, and water is everyone’s responsibility.”

Prime Minister Hani Mulki of Jordan

"Water security is increasingly being addressed by many countries as part of their national security strategic approaches. Jordan however, is using the water dialogue as an element for corporation rather than conflict initiation.

Jordan realizes that sustainable management of water and sanitation is the core element for life and human dignity. Jordan's Water Strategy aligns and merges SDG6 targets and indicators within its goals, objectives and programs which aim to optimize the utilization of the interlinked resources of water, energy and food guided by principles of human rights and justice.

Jordan emphasizes that SDG6 implementation requires significant mobilization of resources, effective use of financing, good governance and the rule of law at the national and international levels for sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and hunger".

Prime Minister Mark Rutte of The Netherlands

“Water is critical for development. But too much, too little or too polluted water puts a break on development. This is what ever increasing numbers of people experience all over the world. In the Netherlands, we have experienced this for centuries. But we managed to turn our challenges into opportunities. Collaboratively, we developed innovative solutions. We pioneered living below sea level, we cleaned up our rivers, for the benefit of all Dutch citizens. Now we share our knowledge

and experience with other countries facing similar challenges, learning from them in return. Government and business leaders, academics and civil society must act together. None of us can solve this alone. We need to tackle tomorrow's water challenges today. We have no time to waste!"

President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski Godard of Peru

"To end the scourge of poverty, a precondition is to cut the Gordian knot of water scarcity and inadequate sanitation, thus facilitating rapid and inclusive development and the formalization of the economy."

President Macky Sall of Senegal

"We are really committed to the SDG 6 challenge as we were in Senegal and in other African countries to achieve the water target in the MDG roadfile. I believe SDG 6 is achievable if we efficiently succeed in designing and implementing financial mechanisms to support relevant investment programs aligned to the new standards including water quality and security, equity in access and eradicating open defecation. To this end Senegal invites the international community to support the Blu Fund Initiative at the global, regional and country levels. We will thus build a very strong and joined approach, as done in the climate agenda. That is surely the most efficient way to succeed in the 2030 agenda."

"President Jacob Zuma of South Africa

"Never before in history of the multilateral platforms, did the world converge and agree on giving hope and dignity to so many across the globe in pursuit of access to clean water and sanitation, in this new era of the 2030 Agenda. We were born to unite with our fellow man, and join communities of the human race in order to create equal chances for success at all levels in our race against time to save the planet for the next generations, while seeking a positive economic and social developmental path, through water infrastructure investments, catalyzing change, building partnerships and international cooperation, creating better human settlements."

President Emomali Rahmon of Tajikistan

"Sustainable development is not feasible without an efficient use of water resources. Therefore, the priority task for the near future is to promote dissemination of knowledge and expertise and to consolidate the efforts of politicians and investors in the process."

Over the last decade Tajikistan has made an enormous contribution into pursuing the water issue on the global development agenda, and considers the establishment of the High-Level Panel on Water as an important step towards acceleration of global water issues solution. I believe that an Action Plan adopted by the Panel will create an ample opportunity in priority areas for strengthening and enhancing cooperation among different stakeholders."

Special Adviser

Dr. Han Seung-soo, Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea (Special Adviser)

"Last year saw major global commitments on sustainable development and climate change. This coming year, we must jump-start our actions. After climate change, water is to be the most

critical issue facing the humanity. I will strive to make every effort on my part in comprehensively addressing diverse water issues such as resilience against floods and droughts, closer transboundary water cooperation, and sanitation and water for all, thereby contributing to globally enhanced water security. ”

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