

Leaders Taking Action
Joint Statement of the High Level Panel on Water
For World Water Day 2017

March 21st, 2017

In September 2016, we alerted the world to the combined effects of growing and changing populations, new patterns of intensive water use, increasing rainfall variability and pollution on the risks to poverty eradication and sustainable development. Floods and droughts are already imposing huge social and economic costs around the world, and climate variability will make water extremes worse. If the world continues on its current path, projections suggest that the world may face a 40% shortfall in water availability by 2030, affecting at least 1.8 billion people.

Six months on from our Call to Action we, the twelve Leaders who make up the High Level Panel on Water, are demonstrating by our own engagements the importance of national action and regional and global cooperation for changing the way the world looks at water, and how we manage it.

Our Call for Action and Action Plan, released during the United Nations General Assembly on 21 September, sets out a transformative agenda putting water at the center of the global agenda to deliver urgent change and foster synergies. This change requires increased political will and commitment to tackle water challenges at local, national and international levels, under the frame of SDG6 and related goals.

To this end, we are proud to announce today the following actions, as key early steps on the road to a sustainable and safe water world for our future generations:

We are very pleased that following an initiative led by H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon, President of Tajikistan, the UN has adopted resolution No. [A/RES/71/222](#) calling for a new International Decade for Action on "Water for Sustainable Development" 2018-2028. Discussion at the UN will continue to raise awareness and mobilize support for the implementation of SDG6.



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Recognizing that water is life, but also a cause of 90% of disasters, Panel Co-Chair, H.E. Mr. Enrique Pena Nieto, President of Mexico, is convening a meeting of the Panel in Cancun on 25 May, to promote through Mexican leadership and best practices new initiatives on water and disaster risk reduction. The Panel will meet Leaders of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction to agree on shared lessons and ways forward to prevent the loss of life and property due to water-related disasters.

To address the goal of 10 billion people with access to water and sanitation by 2030, H.E. Mr. Jacob Zuma, President of South Africa is launching the World Water Development Report in Durban, South Africa tomorrow, focused on the theme “Wastewater: the untapped resource”.

Keeping in mind that transformation to a water secure world is a huge task, requiring reconsideration of investment models and efficiency of operation of the water sector, H.E. Mr. János Áder, President of Hungary has initiated a dialogue with multilateral development banks and other stakeholders to renew cooperation aimed at significantly increasing investment in the sector.

Panel members, including, H.E. Mrs. Ameenah Gurib, President of Mauritius, H.E. Mr. Macky Sall, President of Senegal and H.E. Mr. Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, President of Peru, are taking action in their own countries to accelerate the achievement of universal access through new service delivery and sector financing models.

Recognizing the importance of data in Water Management, H.E. Mr. Malcolm Turnbull, Prime Minister of Australia, is announcing the Panel’s Water Data initiative – with a focus on policy, innovation and harmonisation to improve access to water-related data. Australia is also announcing the opening of a challenge to innovators to enable communities to have access to and make use of affordable and up to date water data.

To strengthen sustainable water management and water use H.E. Mr. Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of The Netherlands, recently started a multi-stakeholder dialogue on the approach and principles for valuing water. This dialogue aims at developing a set of shared principles (supported by good examples and existing tools) to motivate and encourage governments, business and civil society to consider water’s multiple values and to guide the transparent incorporation of these values into their decision-making. The dialogue will become global in early April with a web based consultation and



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discussion on the draft principles. Regional multi-stakeholder meetings in several countries will be organized in the period May till July 2017.

For her part, H.E. Ms. Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, will host a meeting of South and East Asian leaders in Dhaka on 28/29 July, to discuss ways and means of strengthening cross-border collaboration and boosting access to safe drinking water and sanitation in Asia.

Special Adviser to the Panel Dr. Han Seung-soo, former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea, is hosting a dialogue tomorrow in the United Nations Headquarters in New York on priority actions for water and disasters in the new water decade. He will co-chair a Special Thematic Session on Water and Disasters at the UNHQs in June/July, 2017. He will further launch a flagship document on investing to mitigate water-related disasters later this year.

On this World Water Day 2017, we also recognise and salute the many people and organisations – government, private sector, civil society and academic – who are working already hard, thinking differently and innovating to make sure that people have access to clean water and sanitation, and ensure that our most precious natural resource – fresh water – is sustainably managed.

The Panel pledges to work closely and collaboratively with all these stakeholders to ensure that the water related targets of the 2030 Agenda and beyond are achieved and we urge world Leaders to support us in whatever way they can to this end.

21 March 2017

High Level Panel on Water



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The High Level Panel on Water, co-convened by UN Secretary-General and President of the World Bank Group, was launched in April 2016. Its current membership is as follows:

- 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 Al-Mulki, Prime Minister of Jordan
- H.E. Mr. Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of The Netherlands
- H.E. Mr. Pedro Pablo Kuczynski Godard, President of Peru
- H.E. Mr. Jacob Zuma, President of South Africa
- H.E. Mr. Macky Sall, President of Senegal
- H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon, President of Tajikistan
- H.E. Special Adviser, Dr. Han Seung-soo, Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea

More information on the Action Plan of the Panel is available at:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/HLPWater>