

HIGH LEVEL PANEL ON WATER



12 World Leaders Issue Clarion Call for Accelerated Action on Water *A Fundamental Shift is Needed to Avert Devastating Consequences, Says High Level Panel on Water*

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 11:45AM EDT WEDS 03/14/18

New York, 14 March— A High Level Panel on Water consisting of 11 Heads of State and a Special Advisor has issued a New Agenda for Water Action calling for a fundamental shift in the way the world manages water so that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in particular SDG6, can be achieved. This follows a 2-year mandate to find ways to accelerate solutions to the urgent water crisis.

“Making Every Drop Count: An Agenda for Water Action” presents many recommendations as part of an Outcome Report from the Panel, which was convened in January 2016 by the United Nations Secretary-General and the World Bank Group President.

“World leaders now recognize that we face a global water crisis and that we need to reassess how we value and manage water,” said UN Secretary-General António Guterres. “The panel’s recommendations can help to safeguard water resources and make access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation a reality for all.”

The Panel’s report found that the water crisis has many dimensions. Today, 40 percent of the world’s people are affected by water scarcity, with as many as 700 million people at risk of being displaced by intense water scarcity by 2030. More than two billion people are compelled to drink unsafe water and more than 4.5 billion people do not have safely managed sanitation services.

Women and girls suffer disproportionately when water and sanitation are lacking, affecting health and often restricting work and education opportunities. 80 percent of wastewater is discharged untreated into the environment and water-related disasters account for 90 percent of the 1,000 most devastating natural disasters since 1990.

*“The ecosystems on which life itself is based – our food security, energy sustainability, public health, jobs, cities – are all at risk because of how water is managed today,” World Bank Group President **Jim Yong Kim** said. “The work of this panel took place at the level of heads of state and government because the world can no longer afford to take water for granted.”*



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As part of the recommendations to address these challenges, the Panel is advocating for evidence-based policies and innovative approaches at the global, national and local level to make water management and water and sanitation services attractive for investment and more disaster-resilient. The Panel also calls for policies that will allow for at least a doubling of water infrastructure investment in the next five years.

The Panel's report sets forth a new approach to catalyze change and build partnerships and cooperation, outlining why an integrated and inclusive approach that draws in sectors like agriculture, and other stakeholders, such as city mayors, is needed. The report makes the case that ways of working between, for example, governments, communities, the private sector and researchers, are essential.

In an Open Letter, the members of the panel conclude: "Whoever you are, whatever you do, wherever you live, we urge you get involved, and contribute to meeting this great challenge: safe water and sanitation for all, and our water resources managed sustainably. Make every drop count. It's time for action."

Members of the High Level Panel on Water:

Mauritius (Co-Chair)	President, H.E. Mrs. Ameenah Gurib-Fakim
Mexico (Co-Chair)	President, H.E. Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto
Australia	Prime Minister, H.E. Mr. Malcolm Turnbull
Bangladesh	Prime Minister, H.E. Mrs. Sheikh Hasina
Hungary	President, H.E. Mr. János Áder
Jordan	Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, H.E. Dr. Hani Al-Mulki
Netherlands	Prime Minister, H.E. Mr. Mark Rutte
Peru	President, H.E. Pedro Pablo Kuczynski Godard
South Africa	President, H. E. Mr. Jacob Zuma*
Senegal	President, H.E. Mr. Macky Sall
Tajikistan	President, H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon
Special Advisor Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea,	Dr. Han Seung-soo

**Membership until 14 February 2018*

Annex:

Quotes from Member Leaders

Mauritius (Co-Chair):

President, H.E. Mrs. Ameenah Gurib-Fakim

"Access to clean water and sanitation must be the goal of every responsible leader in an effort to leave no one behind. Let us act in solidarity to ensure the wise and sustainable management of this precious resource".

Mexico (Co-Chair):

President, H.E. Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto

For Mexico, the High Level Panel on Water represents a historical and unprecedented opportunity to promote the recognition of water as an essential transversal element and the basis for the development and welfare of all our Nations. This multilateral initiative stands for the commitment of worldwide leaders to foster existing efforts and generate new dynamics, promoting the water and sanitation's SDG within the 2030 agenda."

Australia:

Prime Minister, H.E. Mr. Malcolm Turnbull

"To achieve the global goal of all people having access to safe water and sanitation by 2030 – just 12 years from now - requires leadership at all levels. Australia will continue to share internationally our experience of managing water scarcity and support poorer communities in our region to access safe water and sanitation, with a focus on women and girls."

Bangladesh:

Prime Minister, H.E. Mrs. Sheikh Hasina

"Access to safe water improves the quality of our life and more positive behavior brings immense opportunity with this finite resource. I urge the leaders around the globe to count our call for urgent actions to understand, value, manage, and invest the best in water for the posterity to whom we owe our present."

Hungary:

President, H.E. Mr. János Áder

"Today the world faces an approaching global water crisis, which it has yet to take seriously – despite daily warning signs generated by an ever growing number of local water supply problems. We are sleepwalking towards the point at which local and regional water crises trigger a chain reaction which could have incalculable consequences for our societies and economies. The bad news is that we have ever less time to take action. The good news is that there are solutions. The outcome document of the HLPW seeks to assist in this. Let us take action before it is too late – and let us thereby make it possible for us to look our children and grandchildren in the eye."

Jordan

Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, H.E. Mr. Hani Al-Mulki

"Water scarcity is a critical issue that must be addressed at the international level. And we need to work together on national and regional plans to coordinate financial support and initiatives to address drought, displaced people's impact on water security and resilience. Setting up local and large-scale projects to realize the human right to water is vital in a region suffering from instability and political conflicts. Much more emphasis is needed on the value of water and its contribution to socio-economic development and sustainability."

Netherlands

Prime Minister, H.E. Mr. Mark Rutte

"We must work to tackle global water crises now. There is no other option. The innovative solutions of today's creative minds can safeguard the future of generations to come. The UN High Level Panel on Water initiated the Valuing Water Leadership Coalition, to bring together global experience and leadership from the public and private sectors to change the way the world values water. Join us, and together let us build a global coalition for a water-secure world."

Peru

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

"Billions of people still do not have clean running water and sewerage in their homes. This is a huge challenge for human health and arguably the greatest development challenge for the next decade. Climate change and global warming are making the water challenge much more complex: desertification, melting glaciers, floods and unpredictable weather. That is why we must fight for a sustainable environment. In order to implement the sustainable development goal N° 6 on clean water and sanitation, we need worldwide cooperation and partnerships. It is a very urgent task."

South Africa

President, H. E. Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa

"We have a single opportunity, to change the narrative on water, by acting timeously in pursuit of a more promising future, in a better world, which should never face the scenario of the last single drop of water, in our lifetime and for generations to come."

Senegal

President, H.E. Mr. Macky Sall

"With regard to the rather average performances recorded by Africa within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals, our biggest challenge today will consist in accelerating access to safely managed water, hygiene and sanitation services towards the 2030 targets. Therefore, as we are actually doing in Senegal and consistently with the call for action of the HLPW, our states have to pay more attention to allocating more financial resources to the WASH sector accordingly to its high potential impact to promote good health and eradicate poverty. We also need to better anchor our regional and national strategies in promoting IWRM to strengthen hydro-diplomacy and resilience."

Tajikistan

President, H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon

"For the past two decades, Tajikistan has been implementing many initiatives to advance water issues in the Global Development Agenda and advocating for the further acceleration of actions in this field. In our view, the initiatives and recommendations of the High-Level Panel on Water and International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018-2028 provide solid basis in this regard. Therefore, we call upon all stakeholders to join collective efforts in this direction."

Special Advisor

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

"Water-related disasters wipe out hundreds of thousands of lives and the years of nation's development efforts in a few hours or even minutes. International community has to work together to prevent the recurrence of these tragedies by working closely to enhance preparedness and resilience."

Links:

- **The High Level Panel for Water:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/HLPWater>
 - High Level Panel on Water Outcome Report "**Make Every Drop Count: An Agenda for Water Action**"
 - High Level Panel on Water Open Letter
 - High Level Panel on Water Video: *Water's Promise: Making Every Drop Count*
 - Video Testimonials from Member Leaders
- **The International Decade of Action on Water for Sustainable Development 2018-2028**
<https://www.un.org/pga/72/event-latest/launch-of-the-international-decade-of-water-for-sustainable-development-2018-2028/>
- **World Water Day 2018:** <http://worldwaterday.org/>

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