

High Level Panel on Water

Joint Statement on the Launching of the Panel

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the world's aspirations for a better future. Water connects public health, food security, livable cities, energy for all, environmental wellbeing, and climate action. Water and sanitation are necessary for human dignity and economic growth. Yet, as the SDGs make clear, the world needs to transform the way it manages its water resources, as well as improve water and sanitation related services for billions of people.

Pressure on water is rising, and action is urgent. Growing populations, more water-intensive patterns of growth, increasing rainfall variability, and pollution are combining in many places to make water one of the greatest risks to poverty eradication and sustainable development. Floods and droughts already impose 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. The consequences of such stress are local, transboundary and global in today's interconnected world.

Achieving the SDGs will require governments, societies, and the private sector to change the way they use and manage water. To accelerate this transformation the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and World Bank Group President Jim Kim have convened a High Level Panel on Water. The Panel, at the Heads of State and Government level, will provide the leadership required to champion a comprehensive, inclusive and collaborative way of developing and managing water resources, and improving water and sanitation related services.

The panel will develop an improved and comprehensive narrative on water; shine a light on examples of policies and institutions that could help the world onto a more sustainable pathway; and – in line with the commitments made in Addis Ababa – advocate approaches to financing and implementation that would help change reality on the ground. Since change requires the participation of all stakeholders, the Panel welcomes an open and growing 'friends of the water panel' network that encourages a voice for all and seeks to learn from the knowledge that already exists.