

A Blueprint for Acceleration: SDG 6 Synthesis Report 2023

Summary note

Context

Water and sanitation run across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with impacts across all sectors of society. As the world approaches the midway point of Agenda 2030, Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) – *to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all*, is widely established as alarmingly “off-track” from meeting the targets. Furthermore, there is increasing recognition that progress made on managing water and sanitation will be a critical factor in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as tackling major pressing global challenges like climate change, food insecurity, disease pandemics, biodiversity loss, extreme poverty, and inequalities.

To bring greater global attention and mobilize action on the management of water, the UN General Assembly proclaimed the period from 2018-2028 as the International Decade of Action, “Water for Sustainable Development” ([A/RES/71/222](#)). The [UN Secretary-General’s Plan: Water Action Decade 2018-2028](#) provided a framework to support Member States to implement the objectives of the Decade, and subsequent resolution [A/RES/73/226](#) established the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Water Action Decade, which includes a United Nations Conference convened in New York, 22 to 24 March 2023. As part of the UN Secretary General’s Decade of Action on Sustainable Development, the UN system and its partners launched the [SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework](#) at the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2020 to deliver fast results at an increased scale, and further unify the international community’s support to countries for SDG 6

The [UN 2023 Water Conference](#) was the first UN-convened conference on water in nearly half a century and has been framed as, “*Our Watershed moment: uniting the world for water.*” The Conference will be followed by an in-depth review of SDG 6 at the HLPF on Sustainable Development in July and the 2023 SDG Summit convened during the 78th Session of the UN General Assembly High-level week in September. This series of high-level UN-led events throughout 2023, alongside others like the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework and UNFCCC COP28, will provide the international community with a prime opportunity to put water at the top of the UN development agenda and galvanize action across sectors to truly “change the game” on how water is managed and meet commitments to leave no one behind.

To support this process, UN-Water will prepare a “SDG 6 Synthesis Report 2023”, which will be published after the UN 2023 Water Conference as an input to the HLPF in-depth review of SDG 6 in July 2023. This Report will be the second “SDG 6 synthesis report” prepared by UN-Water. The first “[SDG 6 Synthesis Report 2018 on Water and Sanitation](#)” was published in June 2018 to inform the discussions among Member States during the 2018 HLPF on Sustainable Development. Subsequently, in March 2021, the UN-Water Integrated Monitoring Initiative on SDG 6 (IMI-SDG6) produced the “[Summary Progress Update 2021: SDG 6 — water and sanitation for all](#)” as an input to the one-day meeting on water convened by the President of the General Assembly on 18 March 2021. The “SDG 6 Synthesis Report 2023” builds on and complements these preceding UN-Water “SDG6-wide” reports and other related reports published by UN-Water Members and Partners.

Purpose and Scope of the Report

The UN-Water SDG 6 Synthesis Report 2023 aims to provide a strategic response to the outcomes of the UN 2023 Water Conference, including the Water Action Agenda, and contribute to the discussions of Member States and relevant stakeholders at the 2023 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and SDG Summit during the UNGA 78th Session.

The report will be forward-looking and include UN-Water's vision for the second part of the 2030 Agenda. It will provide "sharp and focused" policy recommendations to Member States on how to achieve SDG 6 by 2030, including how water policy and governance can interact with other SDGs for greater impact, and communicate a vision of how the UN system can support the implementation of the second half of the "Decade" and the Water Action Agenda. The report will also be a call to improve coordination and cooperation between all relevant stakeholders, including Member States.

The report will inform decisions and actions taken by Member States and relevant stakeholders on SDG 6 by:

- Increasing understanding of the criticality of water and sanitation as a "dealmaker" or "dealbreaker" for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030;
- Increasing awareness on the progress made on achieving SDG 6 targets, and the challenges that remain;
- Calling on Member States and relevant stakeholders to rise to these challenges within the context of the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework and Water Action Agenda;
- Offering a compelling vision and clear, actionable policy recommendations and transformative pathways that can be deployed across sectors and actors to further strengthen global action on water and sanitation;
- Inspiring Member States and relevant stakeholders to turn the political commitment and momentum generated from the UN 2023 Water Conference into tangible implementation and ambitious action to achieve SDG 6.

The following areas will be covered in the report:

- A concise overview of the global situation of water and sanitation, and the main challenges and opportunities at the halfway point of Agenda 2030;
- A brief "stock-take" of progress on SDG 6 targets since last HLPF in-depth review in 2018 and building on 2021 progress report data and trends;
- An analytical summary of the main outcomes from the UN 2023 Water Conference and Water Action Agenda commitments;
- UN-Water's vision for the second part of the 2030 Agenda;
- Policy recommendations to Member States, UN entities and relevant stakeholders on how to "do differently" and "do more" to achieve SDG 6 by 2030, using the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework, and including transformative pathways and Water Action Agenda commitments;
- A vision for how the UN system can be strengthened to support the implementation of commitments made during the UN 2023 Water Conference; and
- Insights on how water policy can interact with other SDGs and UN inter-governmental processes for a comprehensive, inclusive, and cross-sectoral approach to achieving Agenda 2030 locally and globally.