



by Hydropolitics Association

Hydro Politics

Newsletter

September 2022 Issue:38

Why is water at the core of sustainable development ?

Sustainable development was explicitly popularized and contextualized by the Brundtland Commission in the document "**Our Common Future**" where it was defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (UN, 1987). The Brundtland Commission focused on three pillars of human well being: economic, socio-political and ecological/environmental conditions. The basic concept endorses putting in place strong measures to spur economic and social development, particularly for people in developing countries, while ensuring that environmental integrity is sustained for future generations.

- Over **1.7 billion** people are currently living in river basins where water use exceeds recharge, leading to the desiccation of rivers, depletion of groundwater and the degradation of ecosystems and the services they provide.
- As countries develop and populations grow, global water demand (in terms of withdrawals) is projected to increase by **55% by 2050**.

- According to some estimates, over **80% of wastewater** is discharged without treatment.

Water is at the core of sustainable development and is critical for socio-economic development, healthy ecosystems and for human survival itself. It is vital for reducing the global burden of disease and improving the health, welfare and productivity of populations. It is central to the production and preservation of a host of benefits and services for people. Water is also at the heart of adaptation to climate change, serving as the crucial link between the climate system, human society and the environment.

Water is a finite and irreplaceable resource



that is fundamental to human well-being. It is only renewable if well managed. Today, more than 1.7 billion people live in river basins where depletion through use exceeds natural recharge,

a trend that will see two-thirds of the world's population living in water-stressed countries by 2025. Water can pose a serious challenge to sustainable development but managed efficiently and equitably, water can play a key enabling role in strengthening the resilience of social, economic and environmental systems in the light of rapid and unpredictable changes.

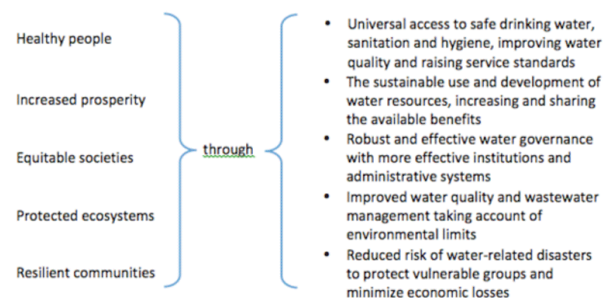


Agriculture is by far the thirstiest consumer of water globally, accounting for 70% of water withdrawals worldwide,. By 2050, world agriculture will need to produce 60% more food globally, and 100% more in developing countries. **Industry and energy** together account for 20% of water demand. More-developed countries have a much larger proportion of freshwater withdrawals for industry than less-developed countries, where agriculture dominates. **Domestic sector** accounts for 10% of total water use. And yet, worldwide, an estimated 748 million people remain without access to an improved source of water and 2.5 billion remain without access to improved sanitation.

More than half the world already lives in urban areas and by 2050, it is expected that more than two-thirds of the global population of 9 billion will be living in cities. Furthermore, most of this growth will happen in developing countries, which have limited capacity to deal with this rapid change, and the growth will also lead to increase in the number of people living in slums, which often have very poor living conditions, including inadequate water and sanitation facilities. Therefore, the development of water resources for economic growth, social equity and environmental sustainability will be closely linked with the sustainable development of cities.



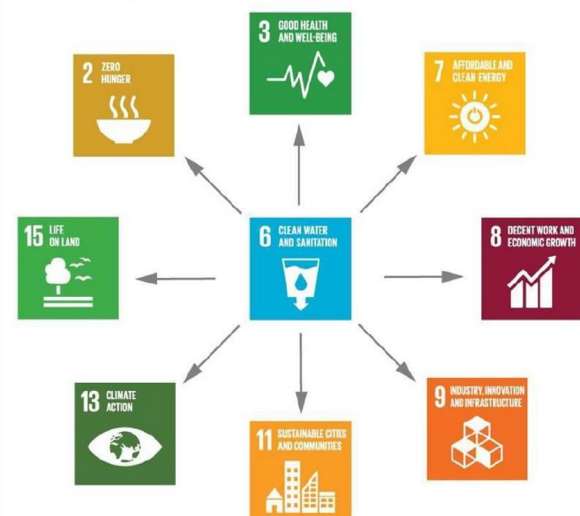
Ecosystems are the most important challenge to sustainable development to have arisen in the last decades is the unfolding global ecological crisis that is becoming a barrier to further human development. From an ecological perspective, the sustainable development efforts have not been successful. Global environmental degradation has reached a critical level with major ecosystems approaching thresholds that could trigger massive collapse. The



growing understanding of global planetary boundaries, which must be respected to protect Earth's life support systems, needs to be the very basis of the future sustainable development framework.



Water is at the core of sustainable development
Clean water and sanitation (SDG6) is linked to environmental, economic and social dimensions of Sustainable Development Goals



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit

Lessons and Perspectives on Water Cooperation for Africa



One hundred and fifty-three countries share transboundary waters, which account for more than 60% of the world's freshwater flow. In Africa, 90% of the water is located in sixty-three transboundary basins on the continent. International cooperation in the management of shared water resources, whether surface or groundwater, is therefore essential to ensure the economic and social development of the countries bordering the region's shared basins and to help prevent conflicts.

However, the majority of transboundary basins are not covered by an operational water cooperation arrangement. The 2020 monitoring exercise for SDG indicator 6.5.2, carried out by UNECE and UNESCO as the lead agencies, shows **that only 24 of the 153 countries** sharing transboundary waters have all their transboundary basins covered by operational arrangements.

The fundamental role of transboundary water cooperation for peace and sustainable development has been reaffirmed both at global and regional level, including in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), by the UN Security Council, in the African Ministers' Council on Water Strategy 2018-2030, and in the EU Council Conclusions on Water in EU External Action adopted in 2021.



The 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) provides a unique intergovernmental framework under the United Nations to support cooperative development and prevent conflicts over shared waters. Since the global opening of the Water Convention in 2016, five African countries including Chad, Senegal, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau and Togo have joined the Water Convention. Several other states have officially expressed their interest in becoming members and are engaged in the process. The EU fully supports such an extension of the Water Convention.

The momentum towards accession to the Water Convention in Africa is a very promising step towards the UN Water Conference in 2023. Indeed, the UN Water Conference will provide an opportunity to mobilise all relevant actors to accelerate actions for the implementation of sustainable development goals in the field of integrated water resources management, particularly in the area of transboundary cooperation. However, the role of transboundary cooperation in the 2023 Conference still needs clarification. Moreover, cooperation was one of the four priorities of the ninth World Water Forum, which was held from 21 to 26 March 2022 in Dakar. Organised for the first time in sub-Saharan Africa, the World Water Forum was recognised by the UN General Assembly as a preparatory stage for the UN Water Conference in 2023. The Dakar Declaration reaffirmed the urgency of stepping up water diplomacy efforts to promote cooperation and achieve SDG 6.

2022 marks the 30th anniversary of the Water Convention.



In March 1992, governments gathered in Helsinki with a vision in mind: to manage shared waters in a collaborative and sustainable way, mitigating risks and preventing possible conflicts over a common resource. By the end of the meeting, the Water Convention was born. The impact of the agreement that was put on paper in Helsinki continues to resonate around the world. 30 years after its adoption, the Convention remains more relevant than ever, providing both a holistic legal framework and an intergovernmental platform on how to better manage shared watercourses while contributing to the achievement of SDG6 and the 2030 Agenda. Estonia hosted an event in June to mark the anniversary.

The Protocol on Water and Health, born after the Convention in 1999, will celebrate on 16-18 November 2022 its 6th session of the Meeting of the Parties, a UN high-level meeting on advancing water, sanitation and hygiene for better health in the pan-European region.

The Protocol on Water and Health supports countries in ensuring affordability of drinking water and sanitation services

A new Policy Brief on **policy options and good practices to ensure the affordability of safe drinking water and sanitation services** in the pan-European region was launched at the regional workshop on equitable access to water and sanitation under the Protocol on Water and Health organized on 13 and 14 June 2022 by UNECE in collaboration with France and Hungary. The policy brief unpacks the concept of affordability of water and sanitation services, identifies and analyses different policy options to address affordability concerns, and describes 12 good practices around the pan-European region.

September 2022

News Coordinator: Assoc Prof. Dr. Nuran YILDIZ
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Doğan YILDIZ
Content : HPA Technical Unit – www.hidropolitikakademi.org
Editor: Dursun Yıldız
Design : ada Strateji Turkey

The contents of the articles in this document is the sole responsibility of writers and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the HPA

<http://hidropolitikakademi.org>



The **regional workshop** provided an opportunity to representatives from national governments, water and sanitation service providers, civil society organisations, and international agencies active in the pan-European region to reflect on the lessons learned from the impacts of COVID-19 on access to water and sanitation. Participants also discussed how to update the Equitable Access Score-Card, one of the key Protocol's analytical tool to address inequities, in order to include new parameters such as hygiene-based response or an enhanced accountability framework.

Progress in activities to support equitable access to water and sanitation will also be reviewed during the upcoming 6th session of the Meeting of the Parties of the Protocol on Water and Health (Geneva and online, 16-18 November 2022).



Nigeria's defines a roadmap to accede to the Water Convention

On 27-29 July 2022, a **national workshop related to Nigeria's accession to the Water Convention** took place in Abuja.

The main objectives of the event - jointly convened by the Federal Ministry of Water Resources of Nigeria and the Water Convention Secretariat - were to inform relevant stakeholders about the Water Convention, to share information about the processes initiated by Government of Nigeria to become party to the Water Convention and to discuss the next steps in the accession process.

The workshop brought together over 200 participants from different ministries, regional and local authorities, basin organisations, the United Nations, the EU, International Financial Institutions (World Bank, African Development Bank), and civil society and resulted in a roadmap for the accession. On 27-29 July 2022, a **national workshop related to Nigeria's accession to the Water Convention** took place in Abuja.

The workshop brought together over 200 participants from different ministries, regional and local authorities, basin organisations, the United Nations, the EU, International Financial Institutions (World Bank, African Development Bank), and civil society and resulted in a roadmap for the accession.

We need to build a future,
Where people live in harmony with nature

HPA

Think Forward . Lead Forward