

CONCEPT NOTE FOR A UN 2023 WATER CONFERENCE SPECIAL SURVEY

RATIONALE

Water Policy Group offers to support the United Nations 2023 Water Conference by drawing on the collective experience and perspective of Ministers and other national water leaders as to the key challenges for the conference: maximising the benefits of the proposed Water Action Agenda and Water Action Decade, and improving alignment between water and other public policy outcomes.

The water leaders survey proposed below is intended to assist all relevant stakeholders (UN member states, inter-governmental organisations, civil society organisations and other non-state actors) to accelerate progress in achieving water objectives by informing discussions at the Conference.

In 2021, the Water Policy Group undertook a global survey of national water leaders to understand their views on the risks and challenges they faced in water management in their country and specifically their views on the difficulties of meeting SDG6 targets. This provided insight from water leaders of 88 countries into the relative importance of the five accelerators of the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework and other key issues facing governments in the achievement of SDG 6.

A number of issues revealed by the report of the survey, *2021 Global Water Policy Report: Listening to National Water Leaders*, related to how governments function, including:

- the political priority of water;
- fragmentation of government agencies with water responsibilities; and
- adequacy of laws and regulations.

These issues can be explored further to get the most beneficial outcomes from the Conference, how governments may engage with the Water Action Decade and achieve common purpose and coherence.

Water Policy Group offers to further interrogate the results of the 2021 National Water Leaders survey and conduct a further survey to better understand the thinking of national water leaders on these matters.

PROPOSED NEW HIGH-LEVEL SURVEY

A new survey, aligning with the Interactive Dialogue (ID) themes of the UN 2023 Conference, will aim to find opinions and perspectives of Water Ministers on:

- the benefits of an agreed United Nations platform for countries to make public their intended future actions in relation to water (relevant to the proposed Water Action Agenda);

- how other multilateral processes can help with achieving better water outcomes at the national level (relevant to ID theme 5), with a particular focus on science co-operation;
- alignment between them and ministers responsible for other sectors on how good water outcomes contribute to the public policy objectives for which these other ministers are responsible, revealing their perception of the reasons for any misalignment (relevant to ID themes 1-4); and
- risks and challenges that impact on their work.

PROPOSED PROCEDURE

Water Ministers of all UN member states and permanent observers will be invited to participate in the survey.

Responses will be anonymous. They will be collated and reported at the global scale, according to income category, and, if useful, SDG region or level of water stress. A response rate of at least 50% will be required for the analysis to proceed for any category.

The survey will be in virtual format on-line, with respondents asked to self-declare their role as the first question.

The survey will be available in the six UN languages and designed to take no more than 20 minutes to complete.

Survey invitations and links will be sent to Ministers following the preparatory meeting that will be convened by the President of the UN General Assembly on 25 October 2022. Results will be made progressively available well prior to the Water Conference with the intention of informing member States and the stakeholders in the run-up to the Conference. Full results will be provided in a report to be launched at the time of Conference.

Water Policy Group
October 2022

UN 2023 CONFERENCE INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE PROPOSED THEMES

ID 1: Water for Health: Access to safe drinking water, hygiene and sanitation (SDG 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 17);

ID 2: Water for Development: Valuing Water, Water-Energy-Food Nexus and Sustainable Economic and Urban Development (SDG 6.3, 6.4, 6.5 and SDGs 2, 11, 12);

ID 3: Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment: Source to Sea, Biodiversity, Climate, Resilience and DRR (SDGs 6.5, 6.6, 7, 11.5, 13, 14, 15);

ID 4: Water for Cooperation: Transboundary and International Water Cooperation, Cross Sectoral Cooperation and Water Across the 2030 Agenda (SDG 6.5, 6.b and SDG 16, 17);

ID 5: Water Action Decade: Accelerating the implementation of the objectives of the Decade including through the UN SG's Action Plan. http://www.wateractiondecade.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/UN-SG-Action-Plan_Water-Action-Decade-web.pdf.

The objectives of the United Nations 2023 Water Conference are:

- the sustainable development and integrated management of water resources for achievement of social, economic and environmental objectives;
- the implementation and promotion of related programmes and projects; and
- the furtherance of cooperation and partnerships at all levels to achieve internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.