



# 8<sup>TH</sup> WORLD WATER FORUM HIGHLIGHTS

WORLD WATER COUNCIL REPORT





The World Water Council is an international multi-stakeholder platform organization, the founder and co-organizer of the World Water Forum. The Council's mission is to mobilize action on critical water issues at all levels, including the highest decision-making level, by engaging people in debate and challenging conventional thinking. The World Water Council, headquartered in Marseille, France, was created in 1996. It brings together over 300 member organizations from more than 50 different countries.

[www.worldwatercouncil.org](http://www.worldwatercouncil.org)



The World Water Forum is the world's largest water-related event and is co-organized every three years by the World Water Council in close collaboration with the host city and country. The Forum brings together the international community with the aim to promote awareness, build political commitment and trigger action on critical water issues at all levels. The 8<sup>th</sup> edition was held in Brasília, Brazil from 18-23 March 2018, under the overarching theme 'Sharing Water'. The Brazilian partners are the Ministry of Environment of Brazil, represented by the National Water Agency (ANA), the Government of the Federal District, represented by the Regulatory Agency of Water, Energy and Sanitation (ADASA) and the Brazilian Association of Infrastructure and Base Industry (ABDIB).

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# 8<sup>TH</sup> WORLD WATER FORUM HIGHLIGHTS

Held in the city of Brasilia from 18 to 23 March 2018, the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum marked the largest edition in history of the event, bringing water to the top of both the political and societal agendas. It served to stimulate thought-provoking discussions at different levels on a broad range of topics, resulting in the concretization of collective efforts through the establishment of several joint commitments and other positive outcomes.

## The 8<sup>th</sup> Forum in numbers



Over **10,600** participants registered in the main conference



**109,581** registered visitors to the Citizens Village, including **37,829** children, **20,410** youth and **3,585** teachers



**172** countries represented • **12** heads of state  
**56** government ministers and over **100** delegations



**134** parliamentarians • **180** local authorities  
**83** judges and prosecutors



Nearly **2,000** press professionals; the Forum was featured more than **15,000** times in the media during the Forum week



Over **350** sessions and events in the main conference.  
More than **350** activities in the Citizens Village and the Expo



**97** exhibitors from **19** countries in the Fair and Expo area



**846** volunteers



**2,500** direct jobs and **5,500** indirect jobs were created by the Forum

## Political Process

### Heads of state make every drop count



President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, Michel Temer (front row, center) welcomes Heads of State during the Opening Session of the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum at Itamaraty Palace in Brasília, Brazil, 19 March. Back row, from left to right: Danilo Turk, former President of the Republic of Slovenia; Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO; Serge Telle, Prime Minister of the Principality of Monaco; Nak-Yon Lee, Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea; Mahammed Dionne, Prime Minister of the Republic of Senegal; Teodoro Obiang Mangue, Vice-President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea; Sarney Filho, Minister of State for the Environment of Brazil; Maria do Carmo Silveira, Executive Secretary of the CPLP. Front row, from left to right: Evaristo Espirito Santo Carvalho, President of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe; David A. Granger, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana; Jorge Carlos de Almeida Fonseca, President of the Republic of Cape Verde; Rodrigo Rollemberg, Governor of the Federal District; President Temer; Benedito Braga, President of the World Water Council; János Áder, President of Hungary; His Imperial Highness Naruhito, Crown Prince of Japan; Saad Dine El Otomani, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Twelve heads of state actively contributed to the debates and resolutions at the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum. Their participation in the Forum helped galvanize attention for the outcomes of the High Level Panel on Water (HLPW) whose concerted efforts over the past two years are reflected in the report “Make Every Drop Count”.

The report, launched days before the Forum, reassesses how we manage and value water. In view of ensuring the continuity and uptake of its insightful recommendations to achieve the water-related goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by catalyzing change and building partnerships, it was endorsed by numerous organizations during the Forum.



## Ministerial Declaration



Participants gather for discussions at the Ministerial Roundtable on Climate, moderated by Minister of Environment of Brazil, José Sarney Filho.

The Ministerial Declaration, entitled “An Urgent Call for Decisive Action on Water”, was the result of several months of deliberations in the lead-up to the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum. While calling on all countries to take urgent action to tackle water- and sanitation-related challenges, the Ministerial Declaration denotes specific areas in need of constructive changes. These areas include:

- Fighting water scarcity
- Accountability of institutional water arrangements
- Financing water and water management
- Nature-based solutions
- Encouraging transboundary cooperation

The declaration also points out the importance of partnerships formed during the 8<sup>th</sup> Forum in ensuring that measures stated in the declaration are implemented. In view of ensuring continuity and smooth transitions, the declaration showcases the importance of contributing to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. In its review of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 6, the panel should be invited to consider the outcomes of the Political, Thematic, Regional, Sustainability and Citizens Processes of the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum.



World Water Council President Benedito Braga addresses ministers from across the world during the Opening Ceremony of the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum Ministerial Conference, 19 March.

The Ministerial Conference also included the organization of six Ministerial Roundtables. These roundtables provided an opportunity for in-depth discussion by high authorities on the themes of Climate, People, Development, Urban, Ecosystems and Finance, in line with the thematic priorities of the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum.

Over 100 delegations,  
led by 56 ministers and  
14 deputy ministers

## Mayors support developing local action agendas



Participants gather at the closing ceremony of the International Conference of Local and Regional Authorities, 21 March.

Following a two-year preparatory process supported by a number of international partners, such as UN-Habitat through its Global Water Operators’ Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA); Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI); the Secretariat for Federative Affairs (SAF) of the Presidency of the Federative Republic of Brazil; United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG); and Confederação Nacional de Municípios (CNM), over 300 participants gathered at the Conference of Local and Regional Authorities held during the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum. Aiming to showcase and catalyze the major role that local and regional authorities (LRAs) play in achieving a sustainable future, the participants released a Call for Action of Local and Regional Governments on Water and Sanitation underscoring the important role LRAs play in managing water on the ground and providing water and sanitation solutions to communities.

### 180 city mayors, governors and state legislators

With the Call, five recommendations were promoted as a result of the conference. Firstly, it is recommended that integrated water practices must be made a priority while taking into account not only basic human needs but also gender approaches. Secondly, legislation is valued as a tool for prioritizing water quality and sanitation. Thirdly, decentralized funding and innovative finance

mechanisms are targeted as key solutions to increase the efficiency of water and sanitation projects. Fourthly, promoting urban resilience through risk and climate change mitigation and adaptation projects is strongly endorsed. Lastly, consolidating the capacity of local governments and citizens in water-sensitive governance is listed as essential for the design and implementation of water-related policies, programs and initiatives at local and regional levels.

In addition, a guide for LRAs entitled “Start with Water: Putting Water on Local Action Agendas to Support Global Change” was launched by the World Water Council and its partners during the LRA conference. To better understand the role LRAs can play in moving forward on water-related targets within global agendas, such as the SDGs, the New Urban Agenda or the Sendai Framework, the guide examines equity, planning, legislation, governance, finance, resilience, capacity, efficiency and sanitation through the LRA lens. Building on the commitments already made by LRAs to the Daegu Water Action for Sustainable Cities and Regions, and the Istanbul Water Consensus, this guide provides recommendations, concrete actions and case studies that government and other stakeholders can learn from and implement.



World Water Council Honorary President Loïc Fauchon and Undersecretary for Federal Affairs of the Presidency of the Federative Republic of Brazil Paulo Câmara launch the ‘Start with Water’ guide during the Opening Ceremony of the LRA Conference, 20 March.

## Parliamentarians commit to furthering the right to water and sanitation



Parliamentarian Conference, 20 March.

The Parliamentarian Manifesto, the main outcome of the Parliamentarian Conference, re-emphasized the essential role of water in transforming the SDGs from visions to tangible realities. It highlights the need for multilateral collaboration and partnership at national and global levels. It also showcases the need for participatory and democratic processes to achieve good water governance.

### 134 parliamentarians representing 20 nations

The Parliamentarian Conference concentrated its efforts, in particular, on the right to water. Commitments were made to encourage priority for water security and sanitation, especially in the allocation of budgetary and non-budgetary resources at both the national and international levels, and especially to benefit the most vulnerable populations. The parliamentarians also emphasized environmental concerns such as deforestation, climate change and pollution. Finally, the Parliamentarian Conference fostered commitment towards ensuring regular parliamentary debates on the human rights to drinking water and sanitation in the future, with the objective of enshrining these human rights within national legislation. To this end, cooperation was encouraged by strengthening the International Network of Parliamentarians for Water.

## Water on trial

For the first time in a World Water Forum, a segment was dedicated in Brazil to the participation of judges and prosecutors – the highest authorities in administering water justice and adjudicating cases. In addition to a declaration in Portuguese of prosecutors on the right to water, a 10-principle Declaration of Judges on Water Justice was developed as a result of discussions during the various sessions. This Declaration highlights the intrinsic role played by judges in achieving water justice by listing different means at their disposal and how their decisions affect various social groups.



Panelists take part in the First International Water Justice Moot Court, an innovative feature at the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum, 21 March.

The Judges and Prosecutors sessions also included an innovative mock court event, attended by judges from six different countries and six students from various parts of the world. The students were asked to present pleas before the court, as a means of instigating debates on water justice and legislation with the participants of the World Water Forum and with high-level legal experts. The complex questions included issues such as whether international law should recognize the rights of rivers as legal entities or whether international law encompasses an adequate legal framework to respond to water crises caused by climate change.

### 83 judges and prosecutors from 57 countries



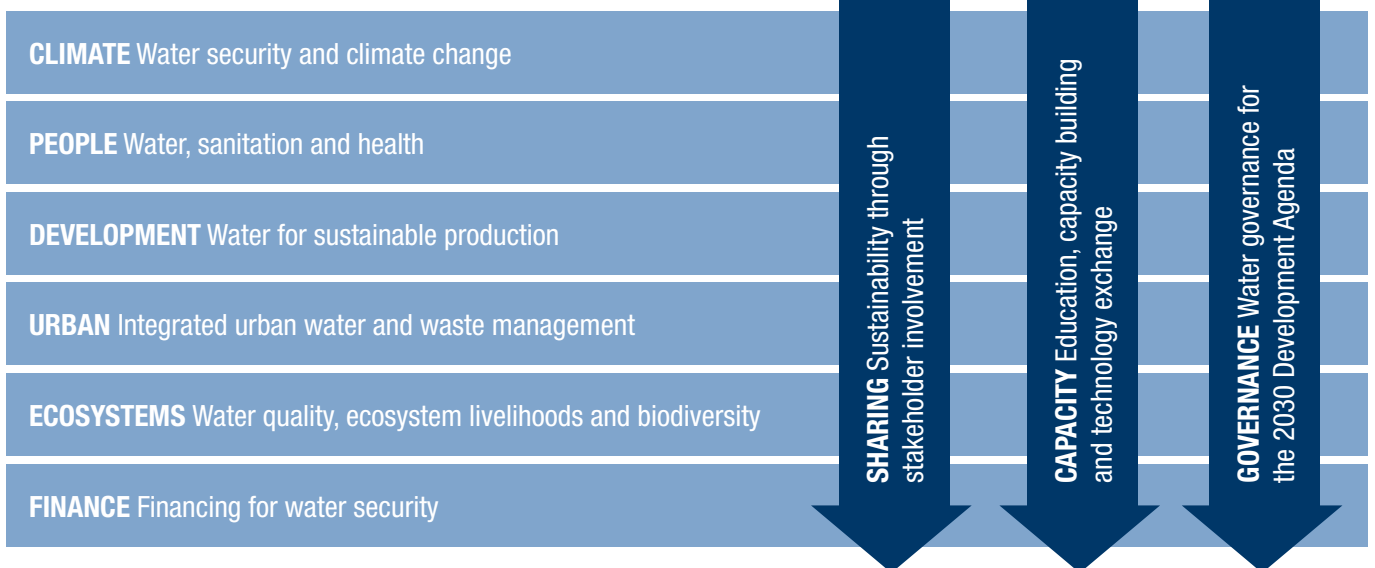
## Thematic Process



Corridors at the Ulysses Guimarães Convention Center packed with Forum participants attending various sessions.

As one of the core processes of the World Water Forum, the Thematic Process consisted of six main themes – climate, people, development, urban, ecosystems and finance – and three cross-cutting issues – sharing, capacity and governance. Across these nine themes and issues, 32 topics were identified, comprising 95 sessions coordinated by a total of 430 organizations.

### Thematic Framework of the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum



The Thematic Process aimed to contribute to the 8th World Water Forum outcomes by producing key political and strategic messages for each of its six main themes. Additionally, each theme identified short-term goals, indicating the two next Forums as stepping stones, and a long-term goal to be reached by 2030.

In line with the objective of achieving coherency and effectiveness of the overall program of the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum, the Thematic Process outcomes aimed to integrate the messages coming from other processes, in particular the Political Process and the Ministerial Declaration, with the purpose of directing political action at all levels, as well as guiding collective action to support practical implementation of the water-related aspects of the 2030 Development Agenda and other international frameworks. In particular, the outcomes will be potentially submitted for consideration to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development to integrate into its review of SDG 6.

Key thematic issues such as multipurpose infrastructure, investment, innovation, water security and human rights emerged from the thematic messages.

The Thematic Commission also invited coordinators and participants supporting the Thematic Process to mobilize a network of organizations “for action”, in order to create a multi-stakeholder platforms and multi-track partnerships to scale up collaboration for implementing the SDGs and to reinforce linkages between editions of the World Water Forum to ensure greater continuity.



## Regional Process

Bringing a wealth of information on regional perspectives on various themes, the Regional Process represents a cornerstone of the World Water Forum. During these discussions, six regions promoted the sharing of knowledge among regions, the decentralization of actions and the expansion of consultations with a wide range of stakeholders in each region across the world. The Regional Process yielded a message at the closing of the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum and presented reports for each region. Both outcomes stress that the rate at which progress is being made on water-related challenges is insufficient in many regions.

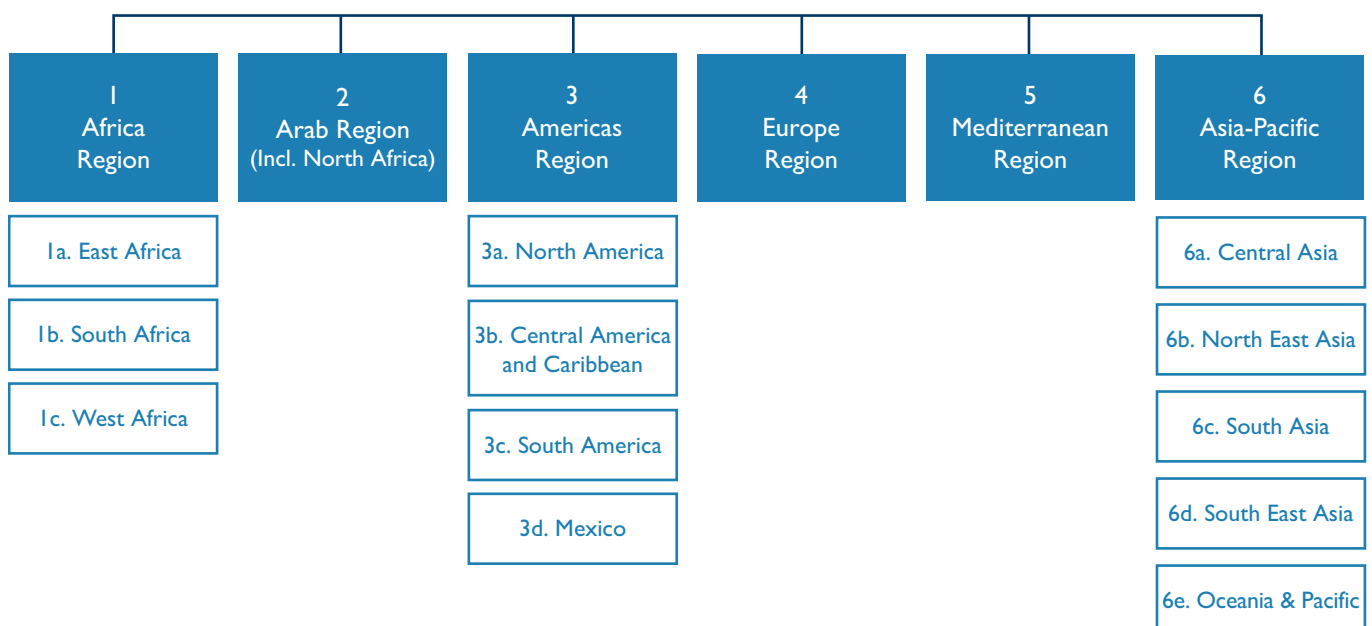
In particular, it was noted that expanding investments in sustainable water management is required in all regions of the world, especially in areas most heavily hit by climate change impacts. Although the challenges linked to climate change vary, they are experienced by all and will increase the difficulty of making the 2030 Agenda a reality. Tailored regional approaches to achieving water security, taking into account climate variability, are thus essential. The message from the Regional Process underlines that the development and implementation of solutions should consider regional contexts and variations. Enhancing regional cooperation also contributes to better development and implementation.

This process was based on six large geographic areas, and in some cases these main regions were divided into sub-regions.



The Vice-Chair of the Regional Process Commission, Irani Braga Ramos, leading the closing Ceremony of the Regional Process, 22 March.

## Structure of the regional process of the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum



## Sustainability Declaration



Youth Delegates present the Sustainability Declaration during the Forum Closing Ceremony, 23 March.

As a novel outcome of the World Water Forum, the Sustainability Declaration, read out during the closing ceremony of the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum, called for the urgent mobilization of all parties to ensure a future in harmony with the environment. To do so, the declaration advocates that the UN, governments and societies should consider water as a core element in achieving sustainability. It also requests that the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development helps build cooperative alliances, water reforms and financial innovations.

The Sustainability Declaration contains 12 major recommendations ranging from policy-oriented changes to substantial changes in high-level political dialogues. It also tackles the urban–rural divide by accentuating the need for holistic policies to be developed, encompassing both cases, in order to avoid a fragmented approach. The recommendations also include reference to the development of innovative financial tools; finding win-win solutions through international treaties; building resilience to climate change; and the consideration of the broader water cycle as a whole.

## Business and water at the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum

The need for engagement and collaboration of the private sector was highlighted in a number of events at the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum, and especially during the Business Day. The event brought together experts and representatives from industry to establish a Brazilian Business Commitment to Water Security, demonstrating environmental accountability from businesses. Creating constructive relationships and maintaining trust between the private sector, civil society and government was highlighted as the way forward during the Business Day. These messages were reiterated during other events such as the High-Level Panel on Business, Water and Sustainable Development, attended by CEOs and representatives of large global corporations such as Electricité de France, Unilever and Nestlé.



World Water Council Honorary President Loïc Fauchon addresses participants of the high-level panel on Business, Water and Sustainable development, 20 March.

The World Water Council coordinated a number of high-level panels and sessions during the Forum, that are presented in this report.

The full program of the main Conference included over **350** sessions and events involving more than **1,000** organizations.

The results of all sessions will be published in the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum Final Report.

## Implementation Roadmaps catalyze collective action from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> Forum



DGIC Champions and Core Group members gather at the 8th World Water Forum after three years of Implementation Roadmaps, 21 March.

A special session organized by the World Water Council, in collaboration with the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport of South Korea and Korea Water Forum (KWF), shared the achievements of the Daegu-Gyeongbuk Implementation Commitment Champions and their core groups over the past three years. Implementation Roadmaps (IRs), as a voluntary tracking mechanism to monitor progress on various water-related challenges, aimed to catalyze long-term collective action for water based on objectives identified at the 7<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum. The IR Synthesis Report was presented during the session and contained both a quantitative and a qualitative analysis of the progress made in each of the 16 IRs. It estimates that 61% of the objectives were completed since the 7<sup>th</sup> Forum and that 36% are still in progress, totaling a progress of 97%. In addition, 14 policy recommendations were formulated, destined for transmission to the High-Level Political Forum's review of SDG 6.



World Water Council Governor Soontak Lee speaks during the special session on Implementation Roadmaps, 21 March.



## Improving water security around the world



Panelists of the special session on Water Security and the SDGs, and World Water Council Honorary President Loïc Fauchon (fifth from left) gather for the launch of the book 'Global Water Security', 19 March.

The theme of water security was discussed extensively throughout the Forum in many different forms, but particular attention was given to it during the special session on 'Water Security and the SDGs', where diverse perspectives, challenges and alternatives around water security were proposed.

The first point brought forward involved understanding that water security is not determined by how much water is available in an area, but rather by the robustness of institutions, the efficiency of legal and regulatory frameworks, the ways in which policy instruments are enforced and applied and the financial resources available. Innovative forms of management and policy solutions are necessary, but so are local approaches and dialogues. It should not be forgotten that traditional use and management of water can broaden the scope of solutions for water security. If water security is a pathway leading to the achievement of the SDGs, it is important to recognize the interconnectedness of public policies in different domains and the need to involve all water users in governance. It was also pointed out that implementation through strengthened capacity of country-level institutions is crucial.

This theme was also highlighted by the launch of an innovative book called "Global Water Security: Lessons Learnt and Long-Term Implications" by the World Water Council in collaboration

with the Ministry of Water Resources of the People's Republic of China. By showcasing the diversity of issues plaguing countries in different regions, the book reflects the spatial, temporal and cultural variability of water security.



World Water Council President Benedito Braga during a signing session for the book 'Global Water Security', 19 March.

## President of Hungary participates in the High-Level Panel on Financing Water Infrastructure



President of Hungary János Áder addressed the high-level panel on Financing Water Infrastructure, 20 March.

To address challenges, it is essential that the key solutions are transmitted from the very top level of the political hierarchy, accompanied by national commitment to work with various stakeholders in order to access additional finance. The Forum was able to do this through the presence of President János Áder of the Republic of Hungary during the High-Level Panel on Financing Water Infrastructure (Roundtable on Financing Water). In addition, greater traction for financing issues was made through the outcomes of the High Level Panel on Water, which comprised 11 sitting heads of state. Another member of the body represented at this session was The Netherlands, whose Special Envoy for Water Affairs, Henk Ovink, highlighted the importance of valuing water. The High Level Panel on Water launched its conclusions in an outcome document named “Making Every Drop Count” just prior to the 8th World Water Forum, which focused on valuing, providing financial means and identifying priorities to scale up financing for water and sustainable growth.

Currently, the World Bank estimates that only 20% of the funding needed to meet SDG 6 is being invested each year. The message of the High-Level Panel on Financing Water Infrastructure was clear. To attract investors, policy makers must build and maintain

enabling environments, including effective governance. Setting up long-term policies for infrastructure provides an incentive for investors and results in higher prospects. To close the financing gap, existing and innovative models involving a range of private actors should be identified and scaled up according to context.

The panel was convened by the members of the ongoing Roundtable on Financing Water, namely the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), The Netherlands and the World Water Council. The Council contributed to this discussion through the publication of its most recent report on financing, entitled “Ten Actions for Financing Water Infrastructure”. Also presented were two working documents by the Council, “A Typology of Water Infrastructure Projects” and “A Typology of Water Infrastructure Investors”; and an OECD publication, “Policy Perspectives: Financing Water – Investing in Sustainable Growth”.

Other panelists included representatives from the governments of the USA and Cabo Verde, the European Commission, the World Bank and CAF – Development Bank of Latin America.



High-level panel on Financing Water Infrastructure. From left to right: Joanna Drake from the European Commission, Guangzhe Chen from the World Bank, and José Carrera from CAF (Latin American Development Bank), 20 March.

## Stepping up sanitation



The audience of the high-level panel on Increasing Financial Flows for Sanitation and Wastewater Management, 20 March.

During the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum, an effort to bring more attention to sanitation issues was made through regular and special sessions such as ‘Sanitation Services in Small Towns’, ‘Whole Sanitation Approach, Sanitation Chain, Innovation’ and the session on ‘Addressing the Sanitation Gap.’ It was also discussed during the High-Level Panel on Increasing Financial Flows for Sanitation and Waste Water Management.

This High-Level Panel proposed two main ideas:

- 1) In order to reach full coverage in urban and peri-urban areas, policy and decision makers need to consider a broader set of means of providing urban sanitation beyond sewerage only, including on-site and container-based sanitation.
- 2) Financial flows towards sanitation must be increased. To do so, a broad range of financial mechanisms should be used. Moreover, policy makers and decision makers must be willing to set the tone.

To set the groundwork for this discussion, the World Water Council published an analysis of case studies and policy recommendations from eight cities around the world, entitled “Increasing Financial Flows for Urban Sanitation”. To finance such projects, a broader range of financing mechanisms need to be put in place, without neglecting the fundamental idea that the poor will always need help in the form of subsidies and loans.

The concepts proposed also rely on the improvement of performance, efficiency and governance. Better regulatory and legislative frameworks will attract finance for sanitation purposes from a wide range of investors. These will also increase the bankability of projects and help draw more attention to them. Throughout the discussion, the idea of a societal shift in perception and behavior was brought up by several members of the panel.



Panelists of the high-level panel on Increasing Financial Flows for Sanitation and Wastewater Management engage in discussions, 20 March.



## Multilateral cooperation formed for water and climate change



The high-level panel 'Bridging Water and Climate' drew a full room of participants, 19 March.

Climate was one of the nine main themes of the 8th World Water Forum. In addition, a High-Level Panel on Climate highlighted that “water is a common denominator in both the challenges and solutions to design resilient systems.”

However, while water is not prominently recognized in the Paris Agreement, it is still considered a central issue in meeting underlying national climate adaptation and mitigation targets, representing a strong key political message and an opportunity for the international water community involved in climate issues. This point was voiced during the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum by the governments of Portugal, Germany, South Africa, Morocco and El Salvador, as well as representatives from the European Commission, the NDC Partnership, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the Green Climate Fund.

To address this issue, a Working Group on Water and Climate was established, aiming to support the interested parties in their efforts to integrate water into UN Framework Convention on Climate Change processes. This working group represents a new cooperation mechanism for the water community and the climate community. The objective is to work on technical aspects to make water a priority within climate action.

Meeting national climate adaptation and mitigation targets cannot be done without considering water within national, regional and international planning. Hence, interested parties are encouraged to work towards integrating water as a strong component of mechanisms such as the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). As a long-term goal, it is hoped that water issues will be integrated and addressed in all political and technical levels and discussions.



Vice-President of the World Water Council Doğan Altınbilek during a special evening reception on the Council booth, 21 March.

## Integrated water resource management: A shift in paradigm



Governor of the World Water Council and Chair of the Thematic Commission for the 8th World Water Forum Torkil Jøneh Clausen opens the high-level panel 'Revitalizing IWRM for the 2030 Agenda', 20 March.

The ways in which integrated water resource management (IWRM) can lead to solutions for practical water management problems was discussed during the 8th Forum, especially during the High-Level Panel on Revitalizing IWRM for the 2030 Agenda. The third high-level panel in a series organized over the course of one year, it reiterated that the 2030 Agenda demands IWRM to be transformational, and that IWRM needs to be adaptive and respond to demands from other sectors, while working within the constraints of political realities. The key messages were included in a Challenge Paper published by the World Water Council, entitled "Revitalizing IWRM for the 2030 Agenda".

There is still a need to communicate information better around IWRM and water use, in particular through education towards younger generations. To enhance behavioral change, community engagement and bottom-up solutions must also be promoted. During the High-Level Panel, it was highlighted that the next step requires IWRM to be made more global. To do so, it is necessary for stakeholders currently involved to bring in business partners for IWRM. It was also proposed that IWRM requires not only active participation of all parts of governance, but also across other interdependent sectors such as agriculture and energy.

## Where rivers meet the sea

According to the UN World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP), globally over 80% of all wastewater is discharged without treatment. This causes irreversible ecological damage, health risks and significant economic loss to water-related ecosystems present from the source to the sea. Also, flows from rivers are so heavily diverted that water barely reaches the sea, and this deprives the existing ecosystems of natural flows, sediments and nutrients. This form of degradation affects the whole ecosystem, from freshwater to marine environments. With this backdrop, a High-Level Panel on Source-to-Sea Management was organized during the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum, in the presence of the Special Envoy of the UN General Secretariat for the Oceans, Peter Thomson of Fiji.

Often fragmented, the management of the source-to-sea continuum is crucial in ensuring both SDG 14 – concerning life below water – and SDG 6 – regarding water management targets. The High-Level Panel on Source-to-Sea Management also provided the participants with the opportunity to solidify the connections between freshwater and ocean communities and engage in discussions with both, especially in view of the link between the SDGs. Panelists discussed which commitments are necessary to decrease upstream action impacts on deltas, coasts and oceans.

Strengthening source-to-sea projects and opportunities was also widely discussed. The event marked a new step in creating joint initiatives between freshwater and seawater communities. It also helped carry forward the momentum gained between the two communities since the Ocean Conference held in New York in June 2017.

## Improving disaster risk readiness



Crown Prince of Japan Naruhito delivers his keynote address during the high-level panel 'Improving Disaster Risk Readiness', 19 March.

High-level political leaders gathered at the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum to raise awareness, discuss improvements in science and technology and encourage the mobilization of sufficient financial needs to tackle water-related disasters and their consequences. Among the political leaders were the President of Hungary, the Crown Prince of Japan and the Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation of Myanmar.

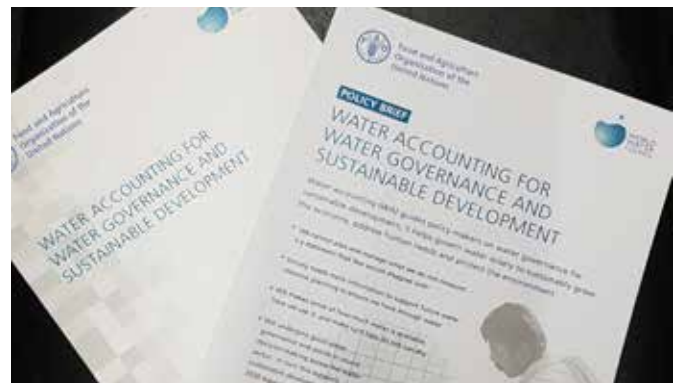
In his opening remarks, Dr. Han Seung-soo, former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea, spoke about the ground-breaking work being carried out by the High-Level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP). As Dr. Han underlined, the three key areas in need of urgent action are:

- (i) Raising political awareness globally
- (ii) Doubling financing for disaster risk reduction (DRR)
- (iii) Integrating science, technology and policy in decision making relating to disasters

In line with the main recommendations mentioned in the outcome document of the HELP, released just prior to the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum, four global actions on water and disasters were launched during the session. Among these were an initiative led by the Global Water Partnership on investment and financing for water-related DRR, presented in its perspective paper, and the creation of an alliance on water and disaster research and education called the Review and Recommend Initiative.

## Water for food

Since the majority of global water use goes to supporting agriculture, the Forum recognized the need to highlight this issue through sessions and side events addressing water use in food production and processing, and in particular soil and water conservation practices; waste reduction, optimization and reuse; and agricultural resilience to natural disasters. In addition, High-Level Panels featuring international leaders in the water sector were organized to build awareness for how food security and water security are interlinked. In particular, the Panel discussed water reconditioning and reuse as a helpful tool, while underscoring that available technology now allows us to obtain water quality fit for reuse that does not compromise food quality or safety.



Documents released by the World Water Council and the FAO: "Water accounting for water governance and sustainable development" and "Policy recommendations on water accounting".

To stimulate interest at the highest political level for the subject of water accounting in agriculture, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Water Council released the white paper "Water Accounting for Water Governance and Sustainable Development" and its corresponding policy brief. These papers and the relevant sessions and panel discussions organized at the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum showcased the importance of water accounting in relation to sound water governance and presented 12 reasons for adopting water accounting. With water accounts available, policy makers are able to gauge situations with more precision than before. By creating a common language through water accounting, stakeholders can better negotiate, discuss and challenge policy makers to adopt sustainable solutions. Water accounting also helps in increasing transparency over water allocations. Hence, it is an essential tool in helping to resolve conflicting water allocations and understanding the trade-offs involved.



## Citizens at the heart of change



Opening of the Citizens Village, 17 March. Back row, from left to right: Rodrigo Cordeiro, Executive Director of the Conference Organizer MCI/Dream Factory; Lupércio Zirolto, Chair of the Citizens Forum Process; Ricardo Andrade, Executive Director of the 8th World Water Forum Secretariat; Benedito Braga, World Water Council President and 8th Forum Co-Chair; Igor Tokarski, Secretary of Environment of the Federal District; Rodrigo Rollemberg, Governor of the Federal District; Jaime Recena, Secretary of Tourism of the Federal District; Márcia Rollemberg, First Lady of the Federal District; Paulo Salles, ADASA President and 8th Forum Co-Chair.

One of the most successful components of the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum, the Citizens Village attracted more than 100,000 visitors during the Forum week and the preceding weekend. In this open, free and democratic space, the audience could engage in activities aimed at sensitizing them to the importance of water and sanitation. Proposing a mix of culture, science, education and recreation, the Citizens Village also attracted school excursions, contributing to a dynamic inter-generational exchange.

Activities ranging from workshops and debate sessions to movie screenings were organized, bringing innovative experiences to the public. They addressed issues such as water and health and water as a human right. From these debates, children wrote messages to authorities on issues important to them, hoping to grasp their attention. The same material was transformed into a Letter of Intent signed by the President of the National Health Foundation.

The Citizens Forum also produced a “10 Principles Document of the Citizens Forum”, containing not only the legacies that will remain as part of this process, but also the new narratives and ideas evidenced by the participants of the Citizens Process. This document emphasizes ideas around sharing, the integrity of ecosystems, water cultures and encouraging broader participation in decision making.



Women engage in a debate during a roundtable on indigenous communities as guardians of water, 22 March.

## Amplifying unheard voices

The Thematic Process required a balance of stakeholders in the sessions that were organized at the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum, which led overall to a higher percentage of women and youth participating in the Forum and voicing their perspectives. In addition, specific issues related to gender equality were discussed, such as a special session on 'Women: Perspectives and Challenges' which explored the prospects and hurdles faced by women in search of equality in the water sector. During the session, women's participation in decision-making bodies was defined as one of the greatest challenges. According to the panelists, to overcome this barrier, women must be empowered and educated in such a way that they understand and acknowledge their roles, responsibilities and rights.



Youth delegates gather at the 8th World Water Forum to bring to light the importance of youth in the water landscape, 22 March.

The Youth Forum, rooted within the Citizens Forum, was also vibrant, providing youth with the opportunity to mobilize, create collective action and formulate a shared vision through a Youth Call for Action. Insights provided by the Youth Forum included references to broadening the concept of the value of water beyond a strictly economic sense to include cultural and social value; supporting youth-led activities; encouraging inter-generational cooperation; and creating training and leadership programs for youth of every age and from every region.

## Water and Spirituality Declaration



Spiritual leaders discuss the link between water and spirituality during a dedicated session, moderated by the First Lady of the Federal District Márcia Rollemberg, second from right, 22 March.

A meeting of religious and spiritual leaders was organized on World Water Day during a session named 'Water and Spirituality: An Encounter with the Sacred'. This special session aimed to strengthen the sacred bond between water, spirituality and human life, culminating in the presentation of a Water and Spirituality Declaration. The declaration promotes a spiritual and transdisciplinary outlook on water in which the spiritual and sacred aspects of water are examined through religious, philosophical and humanistic lenses. The main idea advocated by the declaration is that water can favor peaceful coexistence by uniting people of different ethnicities, traditions, religions and cultures, while respecting and caring for the natural and spiritual cycles of water. Indeed, sustainability is not only a concept promoted by a specific group; it is an ethical commitment to the respect for life.



## Awards: King Hassan Prize, Kyoto Prize and Water System Heritage

### 6<sup>th</sup> King Hassan II Great World Water Prize



Secretary-General Ángel Gurría accepts the Hassan II Great World Water Prize on behalf of the OECD in the presence of Morocco's Minister Delegate to the Minister of Energy, Mines, Water and Environment in charge of water Charafat Afailal, 21 March.

As one of the highest distinctions in the water sector, the King Hassan II Great World Water Prize attracted significant attention at the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum. Presented in its 6<sup>th</sup> edition to recognize “cooperation and sound management in the development and use of water resources”, the prize was awarded to OECD. The King Hassan Prize and its winner OECD

were celebrated with a cocktail event at the Moroccan Pavilion. The prize was handed over by the Prime Minister of Morocco, Saad Eddine El Othmani to Secretary-General Ángel Gurría in the presents of Morocco's Minister Delegate to the Minister of Energy, Mines, Water and Environment in charge of water Charafat Afailal.



## 5<sup>th</sup> Kyoto World Water Grand Prize

The Kyoto World Water Grand Prize, a prestigious international award, aims to recognize an organization specializing in grassroots activities linked water-related issues. For its 5th edition, Japan Water Forum and the World Water Council were pleased to award the prize to Charité Chrétienne pour Personnes en Détresse (CCPD) during the closing ceremony of the 8th World Water Forum. CCPD deals with both water and sanitation issues in Agou Prefecture, Togo.

CCPD's project, for which it received an endowment of 2 million JPY (approximately 18,000 USD) to scale up activities, aims to:

- Ensure that safe drinking water is available through the construction of wells
- Promote the use of ECOSAN toilets and hand washing facilities in households, schools and health centers
- Promote the improvement of hygienic environments through the dissemination of water, sanitation and health (WaSH)-oriented education
- Enable training on operation and maintenance of facilities



Winners of the 5<sup>th</sup> Kyoto World Water Grand Prize Charité Chrétienne pour Personnes en Détresse receive their award from World Water Council President Benedito Braga, 23 March.

## World Water System Heritage Programme

Launched by the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID), the World Water System Heritage Programme values people-centered water management systems, organizations, regimes and regulations. It also encourages their preservation.

This year, the award was presented to three recipients:

- Genbegawa Irrigation Canal System, Japan
- Sekikawa Suikei Land Improvement District, Japan
- Sheikh-Bahaei Water Allocation Scroll, Iran



Winners of the World Water System Heritage Programme accept their award, 19 March.

## Nature-based solutions celebrated during World Water Day



World Water Day celebrations, 22 March. Left: José Sarney Filho, Minister of Environment of Brazil, and Rodrigo Rollemberg, Governor of Federal District, join Benedito Braga, President of the World Water Council, and Joakim Harlin, Vice-Chair of UN-Water, for the special session 'Nature for Water: World Water Day 2018', which was characterized by its diversity and inclusiveness. Right: Minister of Hydraulics and Sanitation of Senegal Mansour Faye on the World Water Council pavilion.

On 22 March, participants in the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum joined the worldwide momentum to celebrate World Water Day. The 2018 theme, “Nature for Water”, explores nature-based solutions. These are sustainable and cost-effective ways to help rebalance the water cycle, mitigate the effects of climate change and improve human health and livelihoods.

An inspiring and interactive special session, characterized by its diversity and inclusiveness, brought together indigenous representatives with high-level political representatives such as Brazil’s Minister of the Environment, Sarney Filho. A panel of experts, including representatives from UNESCO, UN Environment, OECD, and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), were invited to share their knowledge on the findings of the UN’s World Water Development Report – launched days before at the Forum. The event also served to announce the 2018 winners of the prestigious Stockholm Water Prize, and the Minister of Hydraulics of Senegal, Mansour Faye, invited participants to look forward to the 9<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum,

which is to be held around 22 March 2021 in Dakar. Celebrations continued in many ways at the Forum throughout the Day and at an evening reception which highlighted the events that were organized worldwide.



Launch of the World Water Development report, 19 March.

## Major institutions commit to work together towards the achievement of the SDGs

During the World Water Forum, five major institutions comprising the World Bank Global Practice, 2030 Water Resources Group, Global Water Partnership, World Water Council and UN Global Compact’s CEO Water Mandate released a statement reflecting their intention to work together more closely to achieve the SDGs, in the spirit of SDG 17 on creating partnerships. In particular, they committed to exploring how to more efficiently coordinate sets of actions towards increased water security in line with the SDGs.



THANK YOU FOR  
PARTICIPATING IN  
THE 8<sup>TH</sup> WORLD  
WATER FORUM  
  
SEE YOU IN 2021!

Youssou N'dour performs live at the Closing Ceremony of the 8th World Water Forum, 23 March.

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