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A GUIDE TO UN-WATER

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A Guide to

UN WATER



This is UN-Water

UN-Water strengthens coordination and coherence among UN entities dealing with issues related to all aspects of freshwater and sanitation. This includes surface and groundwater resources, the interface between freshwater and seawater and water-related disasters.

A coherent, coordinated approach is clearly required as these issues represent some of the most urgent development challenges of our time. We must manage freshwater sustainably so that everyone has enough water to drink and stay clean and healthy; food producers have enough water to satisfy the demands of growing populations; industries have enough water to meet their needs; and countries have opportunities to secure a reliable supply of energy. In addition, as our world changes, we need to adapt to changes in the availability of freshwater and prepare ourselves for changes in weather patterns and an increase in both the number and severity of water-related disasters. All of these issues must be addressed in ways that safeguard the health of our environment and protect ecosystems.

These issues are interconnected. The United Nations recognizes that it needs to mobilize its resources in an efficient and integrated manner to tackle global water challenges and meet the ambitious development and environment targets set by the international community. UN-Water was established in response to this need.

UN-Water: Strengthening the UN System

UN-Water, an inter-agency mechanism formally established in 2003 by the United Nations High Level Committee on Programmes, has evolved out of a history of close collaboration among UN agencies. It was created to add value to UN initiatives by fostering greater co-operation and information-sharing among existing UN agencies and outside partners. UN-Water focuses on:



- **Providing information**, policy briefs and other communication materials for policy-makers and managers who work directly with water issues, other decision-makers that have an influence on how water is used, as well as the general public.
- **Building the knowledge base** on water issues through efficient monitoring and reporting systems and facilitating easy access to this knowledge through regular reports and the Internet.
- **Providing a platform** for system-wide discussions to identify challenges in global water management, analyse options for meeting these challenges and ensuring that reliable information and sound analysis informs the global policy debate on water.

How UN-Water Operates

Regional UN-Water Initiatives

UN-Water has a mandate to promote the effective exchange of information, facilitating mutual support between global and regional activities and developments, and encouraging regional inter-agency networking arrangements. Currently, one such initiative, UN-Water Africa, is operational.

UN-Water Reporting

One of UN-Water's key responsibilities is to monitor and report on the progress being made toward reaching internationally agreed upon water and sanitation targets, with particular focus on the targets set by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development.

World Water Development Report (WWDR)

The triennial World Water Development Report (WWDR), a comprehensive review of the state of the world's freshwater resources, is the United Nations System flagship report on water. The Reports provide a mechanism for monitoring changes in freshwater resources and their management, and reporting on progress towards achieving targets, particularly those set by the MDGs and the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Coordinated by the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP), the development of the WWDR is a joint effort of the 26 UN agencies and entities that make up UN-Water and is carried out in collaboration with UN-Water partners, governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders.

The World Health Organization (WHO)/United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Joint Monitoring Programme on Water Supply and Sanitation reports

The JMP reports assess the progress being made toward reaching the MDG water and sanitation targets. JMP produces drinking-water and sanitation coverage reports biennially, as well as reports on specific aspects of drinking-water and sanitation. The reports utilize data principally from nationally-representative household surveys and censuses and provide an overview of populations using different forms of drinking-water and sanitation.



The Global Annual Assessment on Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS)

The Global Annual Assessment on Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) reports on the capacity of countries to make progress towards the MDG water and sanitation targets and on the effectiveness of external support agencies to facilitate this process. UN-Water GLAAS has been designed in response to the need to reduce the reporting burden and harmonize different reporting mechanisms of UN Member States. The UN-Water GLAAS initiative is technically coordinated by the World Health Organization (WHO).

UN-Water Governance

As UN-Water is not an implementing body, its specific activities and programmes are hosted by individual member agencies on behalf of UN-Water. Senior programme managers from UN-Water member agencies meet twice a year. An elected chair and a vice chair, which rotate among UN agencies usually every two years, represent UN-Water at international conferences, major fora and processes and oversee the implementation of the UN-Water work programme. A permanent Secretariat, hosted by the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) in New York, provides administrative, technical and logistical support. UN-Water collaborates closely with the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation (UNSGAB). UN-Water members are from the UN System while UN-Water partners represent civil society and various non-governmental organizations.



While the coordination function of UN-Water is supported through internal resources provided by UN-Water members, activities are supported through donor trust funds. However, it is the members and partners who take part in various activities implemented primarily through time-bound task forces and UN-Water programmes that represent the primary 'capital' of UN-Water.

UN-Water Task Forces and Programmes

Much of UN-Water activities are carried out through time-bound task forces established to focus on specific areas of interest or emerging issues. UN-Water also has four specific programmes, each with its own work plan, budget and an executing agency coordinating the implementation.

Task Forces

UN-Water task forces are dealing with: indicators, monitoring and reporting; gender and water; sanitation; transboundary waters; climate change and water; and country-level coordination.

The World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP)

WWAP synthesizes data and information gathered from UN-Water members and other prominent stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, universities, research centers and countries. It presents its findings through the triennial World Water Development Reports. The Programme examines the nature of water crises around the world and reviews countries' ability to address them. It aims to enhance assessment capacity at a national level; informs the decision-making process by indicating how well water policies and management strategies are working; and suggests indicators that are needed to monitor progress. WWAP is hosted and led by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The WHO / UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme on Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP)

The JMP, which operates under the aegis of UN-Water, is an autonomous programme implemented and supervised by WHO and UNICEF. Established in 1990, the JMP continues monitoring activities that WHO has been undertaking since the 1960s. It is the official mechanism of the UN System mandated to monitor global progress towards the MDGs targets for drinking-water and sanitation. The JMP's regular global reports on water and sanitation coverage facilitate sector planning and management. By supporting countries' efforts to monitor this sector, the JMP contributes to better planning and management at the national level.



UN-Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development (UNW-DPC)

Through the mapping of UN-Water capacity development activities, the assessment of capacity needs and gaps analysis, and through the development and support for the implementation of innovative capacity development methodologies, UNW-DPC strengthens UN-Water's capacity development activities. Launched in 2007, UNW-DPC is hosted by the United Nations University (UNU) at the UN Campus in Bonn, Germany.

The UN-Water Decade Programme on Advocacy and Communication (UNW-DPAC)

Using information and outputs generated by UN-Water members and partners, UNW-DPAC develops communication campaigns illustrating the benefits of sound water management for poverty reduction and advocates for actions to implement effective water policies. Launched in October 2007, UNW-DPAC is implemented by the United Nations Office to support the International Decade for Action Water for Life 2005-2015 (UNO-IDfA). It is based in Saragossa, Spain and hosted by UNDESA.

UN-Water at a Glance

Scope

The scope of UN-Water's work encompasses all aspects of freshwater and sanitation, including surface and groundwater resources and the interface between freshwater and seawater and water-related disasters.

Objective

UN-Water was established to promote coherence and coordination in UN System initiatives that are related to UN-Water's scope of work and contribute to the implementation of the agenda defined by the 2000 Millennium Declaration and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development.



Members and partners

UN-Water has 26 members from the UN System and external partners representing various organizations and civil society.

Focus areas

- Integrated water resources management
- Drinking-water, sanitation and health
- Water scarcity
- Pollution
- Transboundary waters
- Climate change and disaster risk management
- Gender and water
- Financing and valuation
- Capacity building
- Africa: a region for priority action



Programmes

- World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP)
- The WHO / UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme on Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP)
- UN-Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development (UNW-DPC)
- The UN-Water Decade Programme on Advocacy and Communication (UNW-DPAC)

Flagship Reports

- World Water Development Report
- WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme Reports
- Global Annual Assessment on Sanitation and Drinking Water

Find out more on UN-Water

Visit: www.unwater.org

or contact us: chair@unwater.org or unwater@un.org

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