7th World Water Forum

Thematic Framework

(Version 8 as of Nov. 5, 2013)

Action Goal & Tool		Theme(18 + α)	Descriptions (tentative)
ACTION GOALS: The Future we want	1. Water Security for All	1.1 Enough Safe Water for All	Since recognition of the Human Right to Water and Sanitation by the UN in 2010, focus has been placed on implementation measures to make that right a reality on the ground, as measured by quality, quantity, affordability and equity. Moreover, effective access to water means little if the source is not safe to drink. In many cases, including through alternative solutions such as rainwater harvesting, access to water enables, not only public health improvement, but also development in many other domains and is crucial to poverty reduction.
		1.2 Integrated sanitation for all	Access to basic and gender-sensitive sanitation, and its implementation remains at the core of public health. It has immediate impacts on water resource quality and is fundamental to reducing poverty. We need to go beyond collecting municipal effluents if we would like to have healthy urban rivers and creeks. Wastewater treatment must be an integral part of providing sanitation for all.
		1.3 Adapting to Change: Managing Risk and Uncertainty for Resilience and Disaster Preparedness	Managing risks and uncertainties of extreme water-related events is central in societies adapting to climate change and variability. It is also a key to improving preparedness and response to associated extreme water-related disasters. Managing risks and uncertainty is necessary to achieve socioeconomic growth and sustainable development. It is central to rehabilitation and development after humanitarian crises occur, including man-made disasters, such as conflict and post-conflict situations. How can the water sector assess and evaluate probabilities of extreme events and respond to their risks to provide more social stability and security?

		1.4 Infrastructure for sustainable water resources management and services	Historically, appropriate water infrastructure has increased social resilience, created conditions for economic growth, reduced hunger and malnutrition, transformed rural economies and created employment. Water infrastructure that includes social and environmental dimensions and the natural water infrastructure play a vital role in strengthening water security in the face of changing patterns of climate variability and population growth.
	2. Water for Development and Prosperity	2.1 Water for Food	Where 70% of the world's water withdrawals are already used for agriculture, an increase in cereal production of 70 - 100% will be required over the next 25-30 years to meet the needs of a growing global population. Achieving the required increase will necessitate improvements along the entire chain, from field to fork.
		2.2 Water and Energy	Ensuring water security while managing the world's rapidly growing demand for energy is a major challenge. Better integration of water and energy policies can help to balance these competing demands, in addition to increased efficiency and better supply and demand management and harmonization between sectors.
		2.3 Water and Cities	The world's population is rapidly urbanizing, increasing demand for sustainable water solutions for cities and significantly increasing risks and vulnerability to water related disasters. Better management of urban water services will reduce poverty in cities, while better protection of water sources will make cities more resilient. Deployment of new technologies, for example water re-use, wastewater treatment technologies and desalination has potential to make future cities more water and energy efficient, as well as cleaner environments. Cities of the future will need integrated urban water management including not only water supply, wastewater and storm water but also the management of solid waste, housing and transportation.

	3. Water for Sustainability: Harmonizing Humans and Nature	3.1 Green Growth, Water Stewardship and Industry	Water is integral to the environmental and social stability that underpin the global economy and efforts to reduce poverty. Yet, sustainable and equitable management of water is too often overlooked, and its benefits underestimated in economic development decisions. Sustainable growth can be encouraged by bridging the economic, social and environmental dimensions of water, and reinforcing them through new and innovative technologies and infrastructures. Moreover, business, industries, governments, NGOs, communities and others can all become part of solving shared water challenges, for example by joining efforts to reduce industrial water footprints, thus reducing costs and improving efficiency. Just as there are different cultures there will be different green economies within both developing and industrialized countries. Green economies will feature both new and old technologies and tools.
		3.2 Managing and Restoring Ecosystems for Water Services and Biodiversity	The water cycle is at the center of our ecological support system for life and offers critical benefits from water storage, filtration and risk reduction. Degrading ecosystems damage the delivery of water services to people. There are vital opportunities to improve both the sustainability of water services and the conservation of biodiversity by restoring watersheds, wetlands or rivers, as well as by using nature in engineering designs. Their implementation could be enhanced by incorporating the socio-economic value of natural systems and ecological flow needs into water resources management. New accounting for natural capital in cost-benefit assessments also has potential to help create explicit criteria for ecosystems health in the design of water investments.

		3.3 Ensuring Water Quality from Ridge to Reef	Poor raw water quality has major environmental and economic costs that are felt from upland watersheds to coastal zones. Better management of water quality and of the ecosystems that regulate the quality, quantity and timing of water flows have benefits for both development and ecosystems. How can implementation of these solutions be accelerated and mainstreamed in investments for water resources development and management?
		3.4 SMART implementation of IWRM	Reconciling water uses among competing social and ecological needs is a political as well as technical process. The same water is often claimed by different users, but water is the venue that connects these demands and can encourage new and productive political – technical dialogues to meet them. When we consider the multiple uses of water, be it for food and energy, industry and environment, or inland navigation and recreation, an integrated management approach is necessary to balance supply and demand. But, how is achieving that balance implemented in practice, while safeguarding the sustainability of surface and groundwater sources? How can we address the backlogs in its implementation?
ACTION TOOLS: Engines for change		4.1 Economics and Financing for innovative investments	Greater recognition is needed of the contribution of investment in water infrastructure and water resources development to creating platforms for growth and for social stability that is essential for increasing the flow of financial capital. Vendible aspects of water investment help foster solid capital markets essential for economic development. Investment in water supply and services saves millions in costs related to poor public health, low productivity and environmental damage in the long run. This message needs to be transmitted to financial decision-makers around the globe to improve financial flows and ensure financial feasibility and viability for improvements. Investment needs, for both hard measures and soft measures, are large. The needs will not be solved by ODA only. Efficient use of existing financial resources for water would significantly help us achieve our water-related goals and ease barriers to access to resources that already exist. Innovative financing mechanisms and private and public partnership are also essential.

		4.2 Effective Governance: Enhanced political decisions, stakeholder participation and technical information	The heart of water governance is the integration of political and technical institutions and dialogs. In order for governance to make a difference to realities on the ground, it must be informed by a robust science, coupled with legitimate political decision-making bodies and effective multi-stakeholder partnerships, at scale. Science and policy must therefore work more closely together for better governance to emerge as technical and financial expertise does not alone make for effective water policy and services management. Early involvement of good representation of critical stakeholders' interests and facilitation of CSO participation will be necessary to improve the decision-making process. This may include operationalizing River Basin Organizations, transparent and inclusive shared visioning processes for river basins with local authorities, industry, NGOs, civil society organizations, government. Better sharing of information systems and knowledge, public access databases and new technologies that facilitate that interface.
	4. Constructing Feasible Implementation Mechanisms	4.3 Cooperation for reducing conflict and improving transboundary water management	Water unites far more than it divides. Half of the world's population lives in transboundary river basins. Indeed, water is a potential catalyst for cooperation and peace from local to international levels. The conditions for sound and sustainable cooperation must use numerous means that include new forms of consensus building such as assisted negotiations, mediation and multi stakeholder participatory processes, legal instruments and frameworks at national and international levels, joint management practices and institutions and capacity building. Inter-governmental agreements at the global level, such as the UN Watercourses Convention and the UNECE Water Convention, may have an increasing role in facilitating more effective water cooperation in future, provided that they respond to the development needs of local communities and contribute significantly to more equitable and sustainable outcomes. Water is an important venue for second track diplomacy as it plays important roles in allowing dialogs among conflicting parties.

		4.4 Water cultures, justice and equity	Water has brought civilizations livelihood, sustenance and well-being. Water carries the collective memory of humanity. Water has been instrumental in our past development. It is equally the key to our future development as well to maintaining our life support on Earth, our home.Water debates often mirror debates of social ethics. For example, water as a common good, water and human dignity, water as facilitator of well-being, rights and responsibilities to access, water and social justice, wealth generation roles of water. In most major faith traditions, water has been a symbol of reconciliation, healing and regeneration. Water decisions have ethical dimensions. Knowledge embedded in this collective experience of humanity and gathered over generations can therefore provide important lessons for the future. Moreover, it is important to consider how different genders and different age groups each cultivate different relationships with water.
		4.5 Enhancing Education and Capacity Building	Education and training is essential to establish effective water resources management appropriate to local and regional needs. Developing and developed countries need enhanced capacity building. Education and training must be more than a one-way flow of rich to the poor. It must also include poor to poor, poor to rich as well. All require a demand/needs-based capacity development programs that enables and empowers civil society, community organizations and stakeholders to fulfill their roles in water governance and management.

*+ Special session/event on water in the SDGs, water-food-energy nexus, on-shore/off-shore linkages, climate