

20-22 September, Hamilton, Canada

Minutes

Day 1: Tuesday, 20 September 2016

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks (9.00 – 9:15)

Vladimir Smakhtin, Director, UNU-INWEH & Ickhoon Choi, Director, Department of Sewerage, Korean Environment Corporation (K ECO)

- UNU-INWEH and K ECO were introduced as institutions.
- It was emphasised that 2015 was a watershed year for international agreements, from climate change to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and that this project, “Water in the World We Want” will seek to improve SDG processes in order to accelerate water-related SDG success.

2. Unpacking SDG 6 and “Water in the World We Want” Vladimir Smakhtin (9.45 - 10.15)

- The presentation outlined the Sustainable Development Goals under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It was emphasised that water underpins the majority of the SDGs.
- SDG 6- *Ensure Availability and Sustainable Management of Water and Sanitation for All* – was described and targets 6.1 to 6.6 were outlined.
- In discussion, it was noted that every UN Member State is signatory to the 2030 Agenda, which is a change in approach from the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) era.
- Key international initiatives were discussed, including the Integrated Monitoring initiative and the High Level Panel on Water. Related and relevant initiatives are listed in Annex 1. It was emphasised that this project will align with the aims and outcomes of other UN and high-level SDG initiatives.

3. Introduction to the Project Lisa Guppy, UNU-INWEH (10:15 – 10.30)

- A key problem to achieving water-related SDG success is that Government actors commonly do not have comprehensive and accurate evidence on which to base policy and decision making. It is also commonly understood that when data are available, decision makers often do not use it.
- Plans to advocate for this approach and for this project led to suggestions for project partners and champions to attend a number of international fora, listed in Annex 1.
- In discussion, participants made clear that policy making is complex, politically driven; it can be challenging as a water expert to provide useable and clear evidence, and it can be difficult as a policy maker to understand and utilise complex or contradicting knowledge.

4. Evidence-based Policy and Planning for Water-related SDGs Lisa Guppy (11.15 – 11.45)

- “Evidence-based policy making’ was introduced as an effective approach harnessed by the project.

- The presentation outlined how existing data and data collection initiatives would be drawn on by an Evidence Framework that can be used to collate multi-sector data and synthesise it into fit-for policy, reliable evidence.
- The Evidence Framework is the first product created under this project and, after being rolled out into five champion countries, the framework will be freely available online for use by government actors and their partners globally.
- In discussion, participants gave examples from their own experience when evidence was disputed, difficult to understand, concealed or disregarded by policy makers. Promoting evidence-based policy making needs better and better defined or regulated engagement between scientists, researchers, policy makers and decision makers in the water sector. It also needs adequate capacity and resourcing as a process, as well as an agreement around priorities and evidence needs amongst all stakeholders.

5. The Evidence Framework Lisa Guppy (11.45 – 12.15)

- The Evidence Framework, as a key product of this project, was described as a mechanisms and platform that could support collaborative evidence-based policy making at a national level.

6. Key components of SDG policy making and their inclusion in the evidence Framework

Financing the water-related SDGs, Ryan Schweitzer, Aguaconsult (13.15 – 14.00)

- Different aspects of financing SDG 6 and issues that Governments would have to consider when planning and policy making were discussed.
- In terms of WASH, Ryan and participants highlighted the complexity involved in servicing the hardest-to-reach communities and in planning ahead not just for the costs of new services but in maintaining existing services.
- In further discussion, it was made clear that clear prioritisation early in the SDG planning process will be critical in many countries, such that all stakeholders will recognise what can be achieved with available resources across 17 goals.

Gender, capacity, resilience and policy and institutional strength Lisa Guppy (14.20 – 14.50)

- The importance of mainstreaming gender and resilience into policy making for water-related SDGs was discussed. Also addressed was the importance of assessing capacity and the policy and institutional strength of a Government before committing to certain policy paths or making decisions on how to progress SDG 6.
- Participant discussion emphasised that collecting age and gender disaggregated data will be important in national SDG processes.

Monitoring and evaluating the water-related SDGs Maria Schade, UN-Water (14.20 – 14.50)

- In a virtual presentation, UN-Water outlined current progress in creating an integrated monitoring initiative for SDG 6.
- Pilot testing in selected countries will be finished by the end of 2016.

7. Republic of Korea: Processes and further steps by Water Works Korea to achieving water-related SDGs, Ickhoon Choi: Director, Department of Sewerage, K ECO and Minho Song, Deputy Director, DoS, K ECO (15.20 – 16.20)

- Korean challenges included very low levels of post-war water and sanitation services in the 50's and 60's; and an urbanising and dense population. Areas to highlight included good governance of water and sanitation, increasingly open data and smart technology.
- Discussion centred on governance, where the dual roles of K ECO and the Ministry of Environment and the involvement of private partners were described; the fast pace of development that Korea has achieved; and green technology.

Day 2: Wednesday, 21 September 2016

8. Pakistan: *Water-related SDGs: Progress and Challenges for Pakistan* Naseer Gillani: National Project Director, Chief (Water Resources), Planning Commission (Planning & Development Division) (9.30 – 10.00)

- Challenges and highlights for Pakistan included the decision to align national economic and development framework with the SDGs, and the intense competition between sectors – including the highly prioritised security sector- for limited national resources.
- Discussion touched on the Pakistani priority to localise all WASH policy and practice, and the aim of bringing areas experiencing the worst services to a minimum standard.

9. Costa Rica: *Current status and planning for water related SDGs* Yamileth Astorga: President, Instituto Costarricense de Acueductos y Alcantarillados (AyA) and Vivian González Jiménez: Dirección de Agua, Ministerio de Ambiente y Energía (10.45 – 11.45)

- Participants outlined challenges, including the number of agencies involved in the sector (more than 50) and the complexity of the governance structure; the challenges of drought and water scarcity management; and low level of resources in the sector. Highlights included improving environmental regulation and water quality monitoring.
- Discussion touched on the lack of a legal framework for IWRM; and the early stage of engagement Costa Rica has with the SDGs.

10. Ghana: *Current status and planning for water related SDGs* Joseph Addo Ampofo: Chief Research Scientist and Director, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research -Water Research Institute and Felix Addo-Yobo: Deputy Director (Environmental Policy), National Development Planning Commission (11.45 – 12.45)

- Participants showed that current national development plans largely overlap with SDG targets and indicators, and discussed how future planning cycles will be brought into further alignment. Also outlined were the limitations of a user pays system in a low resource setting; the need for better data; and moves towards a more holistic management of water.
- Discussion touched on how WASH is prioritised against other development sectors, and how the sanitation sector may be improving with improvements in governance.

11. Tunisia: *Water-related SDGs: Progress and challenges for Tunisia* Mr. Ouasli Abderrahman: Ingénieur en Chef, Office of Planning and Hydraulic Balances, Ministry of Agriculture and Olfa Mahjoub: Associate Professor in Water Quality and Reuse, National Research Institute for Rural Engineering, Water and Forestry (13.45 – 14.45)

- Participants outlined that water demand was increasing in Tunisia, while resources were shrinking in some contexts; that political instability was affecting governance; and that plans and initiatives, including ‘MDG +’ and ‘Water 2050’, aim to balance economic, environmental and energy needs .
- Discussion touched on the ambitious water re-use goals of the national government, and on incentives for water savings that operate in the agricultural sector.

12. The Evidence Framework in strategic use Lisa Guppy

Day 3: Thursday, 22 September 2016

13. The Evidence Framework in detail Praem Mehta, UNU-INWEH (9.15 – 10.15)

- The Evidence Framework was demonstrated.
- Discussion touched on what kind of data could be input into the Framework, and how it will draw on data from tools that already exist. The Evidence Framework will be placed online, free for use; however, any data added to the Framework will not be made public – it will be secure and private, in order to promote national collaboration and planning.

14. Reflections and the Evidence Framework Ryan Schweitzer (10.15 – 10.30)

- It was emphasised that the Evidence Framework builds on systems and tools that are already in place or are now being developed for the SDGs; and that challenges will include how to use the framework in different policy and governance paths adopted by different countries around SDGs.

15. Reflections on shared learning and lessons for the project Manzoor Qadir, UNU-INWEH (10.45 – 11.15)

- A short SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) exercise was undertaken. Anonymised results are shown in Annex 2.

16. Wrap-up Session: *The way forward: next steps and expectations* Lisa Guppy (11.15 – 12.00)

- Future strategies and key steps for meeting participants were outlined, and discussed in more detail in bilateral meetings- the minutes of which have already been circulated.
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Annex 1

Relevant International Fora

- World Science Forum 2017, Jordan - <http://www.sciforum.hu/>
- 7th Africa Water Week 2018
- Stockholm World Water Week 27 August – 1 September 2017
- IWA Congress 2017, Cancun - <http://www.iwa-network.org/all-events/>
- Budapest Water Summit 2016 - <http://www.budapestwatersummit.hu/budapest-water-summit/news/>
- Biosphere programme of UNESCO, IHP programme

Related International Initiatives

- Integrated Monitoring Initiative for SDG 6 - <http://www.unwater.org/sdgs/indicators-and-monitoring/en/>
- Biosphere programme of UNESCO, and the International Hydrological Programme (IHP)- <http://en.unesco.org/themes/water-security/hydrology>
- High Level Panel on Water - <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/HLPWater>
- High Level Political Forum on SDGs - <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>
- Inter-Agency and Expert Group for SDG indicators - <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/>

Annex 2: SWOT exercise

Strengths

- All countries identified that SDGs have high level of national ownership;
- Three countries reported that, post-MDGs, there are already significant institutional frameworks, processes, strategies and mechanisms in place in the water sector;
- One country reported that there are well defined regulatory and legislative frameworks and mechanisms;
- Two countries reported that there are existing monitoring and evaluations frameworks and platforms for WASH information collection and exchange;
- One country reported that there are sufficient experts in water sector who can constitute a national think-tank for water-related SDGs.

Weaknesses

- All countries identified weaknesses in the quality, coverage (comprehensiveness) or type of data and information available; inadequate funding for monitoring and evaluation was also highlighted.
- Two countries identified that the water and sanitation sector suffered from less resource allocation and less political support than other development sectors;
- Two countries noted the importance of a participatory approach and the involvement of wider stakeholders, but these were identified as a challenge to implement;
- An inability to bring many relevant agencies together was seen as a weakness in one country.

Opportunities

- Two countries noted an opportunity to improve data and the right to access data, as Government partners will be seeking to establish baselines against SDG 6 and water-related SDGs;
- One country suggested that SDG processes may strengthen democratic processes;
- One country noted that development partners stood ready to assist SDGs overall;
- One country noted an opportunity to strengthen participatory approaches.

Threats

- Two countries noted competing interests for resources from other sectors and initiatives;
- One country reported that water sector staff and experts were becoming overburdened;
- Three countries noted that political instability and unpredictable changes in Government priorities were threats;
- Two countries reported a lack of real stakeholder engagement and a lack of commitment by different institutions.