



## **Agenda 2130: Securing the SDGs through Water Resilience**

### **#ClimateIsWater HLPF 2018 Collaborative Blog Entry**

At their highest level, Agenda 2030 and the SDGs are about sustainable and equitable pathways to human growth and development. Climate change presents two distinct challenges to meeting these goals: decarbonization and addressing climate impacts. Decarbonizing economies is a significant issue but with relatively straightforward indicators (decreased greenhouse emissions) and difficult but clear implementation mechanisms (clean energy, increased carbon sequestration).

Addressing climate impacts is a far more difficult challenge. While the SDGs are intended to be achieved by 2030, meeting these goals involves making investments in governance, infrastructure, and resource management that will resonate for decades and potentially centuries. Building a dam for agricultural and urban water storage or to generate hydropower, for instance, is a decision with profound long-term consequences since that investment will be exposed to very significant and uncertain climate impacts over its lifetime. Can we ensure that these investments are able to function over their full operational lifetime? Will we regret tradeoffs that did not consider other options and the need to be flexible? Given the massive investments necessary to achieve Agenda 2030's goals, can we implement so the benefits are not lost by 2040 — and are still with us in 2130?

Based on experiences from a broad set of institutions, regions, and methodologies, we suggest that water may be both the greatest threat and most powerful solution to securing robust and flexible SDGs. Freshwater resources in particular are the essential connector between these targets, transcending the existing sectoral, political, geographical and temporal boundaries governing our institutions. For these reasons, resilient water management approaches can serve as a model for how to link, coordinate, and implement the goals of Agenda 2030.

The interlinkage of SDG activities is currently rare, so how can we change this? One of the most critical aspects of these policy agendas is finance. Because of water's central role in delivering on the objectives of the SDGs, finance mechanisms should make assessment, accounting, and integration of water resources an explicit requirement for investment relating to sustainable development. In effect, we are suggesting that climate adaptation be shifted from an environmental concern to a sound investment issue.

Finance mechanisms must also become more gender inclusive. Women are central to the collection and safeguarding of water worldwide and are therefore vital to laying the foundations of a resilient society.

Greater, meaningful representation of women is needed in high-level decision-making positions on both the investment and client sides of development and climate finance.

Beyond finance mechanisms, a broader set of policy instruments and processes should be implemented to advance water and climate-coherent resilience:

1. Closely link development, water and disaster risk reduction (DRR) agendas to better anticipate, plan for, respond to, and reduce the potential for crises. Rebuilding and redesign processes can serve as a mechanism for building resilience to changing conditions and result in more equitable and sustainable outcomes.
2. Combine sustainable development and climate adaptation and mitigation policy agendas with reference to urban water resilience. Water is a critical element in most energy generation systems (e.g., nuclear, coal, solar, hydropower, biofuels, biomass) while urban water delivery is often energy-intensive.
3. Encourage analysis of future water conditions and the development of indicators to track water usage across sectors so that water governance and allocation approaches can adapt and transform to accommodate changes in the water cycle.
4. Provide guidelines to properly value water for environmental, social, and emerging climate-relevant externalities. These can then be translated into pricing incentives to spur gains in efficiency, economic value, and innovation (exhibited, for instance, by the [Bellagio Principles on Valuing Water](#), 2017).
5. Integrate natural and managed systems in design and decision making for sustainable development so that the eco-hydrological landscape is included as an explicit stakeholder in allocation decision-making, such as through the application of resilient nature-based solutions, environmental flows, and climate-smart ecosystem-based management.

We believe that a new opportunity has arisen to secure the Agenda 2030 goals through resilient water resources management. Water is a powerful binding agent that can help ensure that our achievements match our aspirations. By sustaining water can we sustain and transform our societies to meet the challenges of 2030 and beyond.

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*What is #ClimateIsWater?*

[#ClimateIsWater](#) is a member based initiative which aims to elevate the visibility of water within the UNFCCC climate change discussions. It provides a platform where members of the water community can share information among themselves and beyond their networks, and collaborate to create a louder, unified voice to achieve higher impact in reaching out to the climate community at every level for better consideration of water issues.