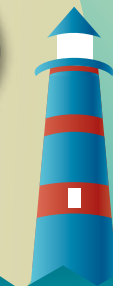


# UNSGAB + 5

Follow-up of major recommendations made  
by **UNSGAB** in Nov. 2015



RESILIENCE  
WATER CULTURE  
INDEPENDENT VOICE  
CLIMATE CHANGE  
SCIENCE  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL



In this paper, “Former UNSGAB” refers to former members of the the UN Secretary General’s Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation (UNSGAB). When UNSGAB’s mandate concluded in 2015, they nonetheless kept in contact. In 2021, 5 years on, they felt compelled to reconvene, and met several times to review global progress and lags in water management. This paper was prepared by a handful, and discussed by the whole group.

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**Follow-up of major recommendations made by UNSGAB in Nov. 2015  
in pages 14 and 15 of the “UNSGAB Journey”<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Reference: “The UNSGAB Journey” : <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/water/ungab/finalreport>

## Subject of this document:

UNSGAB closed its activities in 2015 by issuing a set of recommendations to governments and the UN in a report entitled "[The UNSGAB Journey](#)". This document analyses what happened since 2015 in relationship with the **general recommendations** presented on the two last pages of this report. It also presents actions and recommendations decided by "Former UNSGAB" (the group of former members of UNSGAB) in 2021 on these matters.

The important UNSGAB recommendations on thematic areas such as drinking water, sanitation, financial flows, wastewater management and pollution prevention, water resources management, water operators partnerships or water-related risks are not discussed in this document. However, the vast majority of them are still valid. In particular, financing is still deserving much more attention and efforts than today. These **thematic recommendations** are detailed in pages 6 to 12 of "[The UNSGAB Journey](#)".

## Summary of main actions and recommendations resulting from this review

### 1. Global water organisation

- In 2018, the High-Level Panel on Water endorsed the UNSGAB recommendations of establishing a *UN Intergovernmental Committee on Water and Sanitation (ICWS)* and having it informed by an independent *Scientific and practice panel on water and sanitation (SPPWS)*, which would contribute to strengthening UN-Water. These recommendations were formulated again in Feb 2021 in a letter to the UN Secretary general. He replied by writing that these "*concrete recommendations to improve the United Nations architecture on water and sanitation are indeed welcome*". In view of ICWS and SPPWS being set up around the March 2023 UN water conference, governments should act and organize progress on the matter in the 2021 and 2022 numerous UN preparatory meetings to this Conference. Former UNSGAB members to lobby their respective governments accordingly and to advocate collectively in the UN preparatory process.
- In addition, Former UNSGAB still believes that an independent voice that has a view over all water-related challenges should be set up at the global level by the UNSG and made this recommendation to Mr Antonio Guterres in February 2021.

### 2. UN action

- As written in Former UNSGAB letter to the UNSG in Feb 2021, "*sustainable and resilient recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic requires that the UN work and all UN summits or conferences dedicated to specific Sustainable Development Goals include systematically a component on water*". Former UNSGAB notes that the UN system has made some steps into this direction.
- Former UNSGAB will advocate for an enhanced SDG6 acceleration framework that does not only focus on financing, data, capacity, innovation and governance but highlights the need for national water policies and action plans that aim at achieving the SDG targets in a specific timeframe.
- The UN system and, more particularly UN-Water and UN-Habitat, should work seriously on the urban growth issue and stimulate intergovernmental work to tackle the growing urban water and sanitation crisis as the number of urban dwellers lacking access to safe water or sanitation is fastly increasing.
- More efforts on adapting water use to climate change should be driven by the UNFCCC
- WHO should prepare the UN to future pandemics and water-related epidemics in their post-corona review.

### 3. Other recommendations

- Monitoring efforts should be continued at the global and national levels in order to get more complete datasets.
- Leverage the UN and UNECE Water Conventions and use the Ramsar Convention as a bridge to Multilateral Environmental Agreements and between development and environment.
- The many private initiatives on resilience, water stewardship, water footprint monitoring and WASH in the workplace should be known and encouraged
- Former UNSGAB encourages the High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP) and suggests a more close cooperation with the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR).
- Many recommendations that were articulated by UNSGAB in 2015 are unfortunately still valid and require more attention. These are in particular UNSGAB recommendations on:
  - Governments to tackle the growing urban water and sanitation crisis
  - considering extraordinary measures on water financing, such as the creation of well-embedded water units within ministries of finance, in order to strengthen water financing at national and local levels
  - increasing action on water scarcity hotspots in both North and South.
  - taking action to reduce disaster risks and to invest in resiliency in high risk urban delta areas
  - accelerating coverage of safe water, toilets and handwashing in school
  - following Unicef guidance to de-taboo and take action on menstrual hygiene management
  - raising public awareness and take action towards sustainable management of groundwater
  - prioritizing water management in post-conflict and fragile contexts post-conflict and fragile contexts
  - anchoring water and sanitation as a core concern in sustainable urban development

## A. Recommendations on global water organization of page 15 of the 2015 “UNSGAB Journey”

Recommendations by the 2015 “UNSGAB Journey” Page 15	Progress made by 2020	Findings & drawbacks by COVID-19 in 2020-2021	Recommendations for action by Former UNSGAB in 2021
<p><b>1. Establish a UN Intergovernmental Committee on Water and Sanitation (ICWS)</b></p> <p>Formed after appropriate consultation among UN Member States and before the first thematic review of water by the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the Committee enables countries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to discuss all freshwater and sanitation challenges regularly,</li> <li>- to review progress towards water-related SDG targets,</li> <li>- to guide UN actions and to make further political decisions on these matters.</li> </ul> <p>This Committee should work in close interaction with a structured representation of major stakeholders.</p>	<p>2016: a leaflet describing a “<a href="#">UN Intergovernmental body on water</a>” is circulated and promoted by 6 governments (Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands and Switzerland)</p> <p>22 March 2017: informal dialogue on water governance organized by the UNGA President (PGA). Several governments as well as NGOs and private sector representatives support ICWS.</p> <p>3 Dec 2017: the UNEP Assembly adopts a <a href="#">resolution</a> on pollution and wastewater management that “stresses the need to continue the dialogue at UN level to discuss improving the integration and coordination of the work of the United Nations on the water-related goals and targets under its Sustainable Development pillar”</p> <p>March 2018: The High-Level Panel on Water (HLPW, Heads of States supported by the UNSG and the World Bank) formulated 11 recommendations. <a href="#">Recommendation 10</a> included “consider the creation of an intergovernmental multi-stakeholder platform”, and “an annual or biannual Global Water Conference”</p> <p>March 2018, 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum: the Ministerial declaration does not mention global water architecture but the Sustainability declaration adopted by participants calls “for the development at the highest level of a political dialogue and regular UN meetings on water. This should be supported by the reinforcement of multi-actor platforms including scientists, public and private practitioners, national partnerships, civil society, donors and decision makers.”</p> <p>July 2018: UN HLPF reviewed SDG6 and discussed water policy; review resulted in a very weak resolution that only repeated the water-related SDG targets;</p> <p>Nov 2018: UNGA resolution on water decade decided:</p> <p>a) to organize a one-day High-level water meeting in 2021, meaning to be an informal intergovernmental event, organized by the PGA</p>	<p>Despite COVID-19, UNGA discussion on intergovernmental process on water meetings made progress. Substantial discussion on the review process has not been made.</p>	<p>Former UNSGAB transmitted 3 messages to the UNSG on Feb 18, 2021. One message is “to recommend that the 2023 UN Water Conference is used to decide to establish a UN Intergovernmental Committee on Water and Sanitation”. This letter was copied to the UN PGA and to the UN-Water Chair. The UNSG replied by writing that these “concrete recommendations to improve the United Nations architecture on water and sanitation are indeed welcome”</p> <p>Discussion sequence of conferences in 2021, 2022, and 2023 should be suggested by UNSGAB+5 in 2021 in view of ICWS being set up in March 2023</p> <p>Invite Government of the Netherlands and Tajikistan to establish as soon as possible preparatory process of 2021/2022</p>

b) to organize Water Decade Review, turned into a UN Water Conference in March 2023, co-hosted by the Netherlands and Tajikistan.

Oct 2019: despite evidence on needs, [HLPF Summit resolution on SDGs](#) expressed satisfaction on water by stating “*we have achieved progress in improving access to safe drinking water*” and seems not to have included water in its “call for acceleration”. Such positive appreciation had been fueled by an excessively-positive [special SG report on SDGs](#) that only mentioned progresses without mentioning any regress or insufficient trend.

ICWS is recommended by the German Development Institute (DIE), a think tank of BMZ. See research paper “[Fresh water as a global commons](#)”, Bonn 2019.

Feb. 2020: the [France’s International Strategy for Water and Sanitation \(2020-2030\)](#) explicitly mentions its support to ICWS.

On Nov 25, 2020: UNGA adopted a [resolution](#) that organises the March 2023 UN Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “*Water for Sustainable Development*”, 2018–2028. This Conference will be co-chaired and co-hosted by Tajikistan and the Netherlands.

This resolution announces also several preparatory events organized by Germany (June 2021), Senegal (March 2022), Portugal (April 2022), Japan (April 2022), Tajikistan (August 2022) as well as two UN one-day meetings organized in NY by the PGA (March 2021 and Nov 2022)

18 March 2021: all governments convened in NY for a one-day meeting on water chaired by the PGA. Before the meeting, 161 governments issued a [joint statement](#) in which they “*value the recommendations of the 2018 High Level Panel on Water Report*”, they announce their commitment to advance “*all water related aspects of the 2030 Agenda*” and “*urge the adoption of a UN system-wide approach that integrates the UN activities related to water*”. However, the few countries that are usually slowing down intergovernmental processes on many water issues because of transboundary matters did not sign this statement. During the meeting, the UN Deputy Secretary General announced the new finding of UN-Water: “*To achieve universal access to water and sanitation, the current rate of progress would need to quadruple*”, thus being more alarmist than before.

1 July 2021: The [Bonn Water Conference](#) convened by Germany as a step forward to the 2023 UN Water Conference adopted [key messages](#) including the two following requests to the UN system:

negotiation process towards 2023 Water Conference.

Governments supporting ICWS should act and organize progress on the matter in 2021 and 2022 numerous UN preparatory meetings of 2023 Conference in order that ICWS creation is decided in 2023

Establishment of ICWS by UNGA should be recommended in Water Conferences in 2021 or 2023 as happened for Ocean Conference

UNSGAB members to lobby their respective governments to recommend the creation of ICWS.

	<p>a) <i>“providing regular opportunities for Member States to discuss global water challenges at a high-level.”</i></p> <p>b) <i>“appointing a Special Envoy on Water to the UN to strengthen the international water voice and cross-sectoral connections”</i></p> <p><b>Comments:</b></p> <p>a) Despite the very favourable new political environment created by the 2030 Agenda - that raised Water and Sanitation at the level of the 17 top priorities for mankind - and the adoption of numerous global water targets, water-related action has not changed significantly since 2015. The need for more regular intergovernmental work on water has been confirmed again by the absence of any serious review of water-related SDG targets by governments and of any reaction to information on the world being off track with respect to achieving the SDG6 targets. Would ICWS have existed, it is likely that UN Member States would not have satisfied themselves with their progress on access to water in Nov 2019.</p> <p>b) Contrary to most SDGs, no UN intergovernmental body focus on the SDG6 dedicated to Water and Sanitation. A consequence of this absence is that global water targets are very poorly followed and efforts are still scattered and insufficient.</p> <p>c) As the 2023 Conference is due to be a one-shot intergovernmental meeting and not a regular event, it is not likely to change the water governance unless Member States decide there to set up ICWS with regular meetings; The only UN place where such decision may happen seems to be this 2023 Water conference.</p> <p>d) Bonn message proposing regular meetings of UN Member States is pretty close to the UNSGAB recommendation to establish ICWS</p> <p>e) A UN Special Envoy on Water would be useful to strengthen UN coordination on Water if it reinforces UN-Water</p>		
<p><b>2. Form a UN Scientific and Practice Panel on Water and Sanitation (SPPWS)</b></p> <p>Mandated to gather global evidence on major challenges, water uses, their mutual impact, and water management, and to stimulate external research to close knowledge gaps, this global independent panel of scientists and</p>	<p>March 2018: The High-Level Panel on Water (HLPW, Heads of States) formulated 11 recommendations. <a href="#">Recommendation 10</a> included a call for creation of SPPWS</p> <p>May 2018: <a href="#">HELP</a> called for establishment of SPPWS</p> <p>No specific member states seem to promote this recommendation with a few exceptions.</p> <p>July 2018: The German research programme GRoW involving more than 300 researchers and practitioners in more than 40 case studies worldwide called for a science platform as proposed by UNSGAB and</p>	<p>Inertia continues due to reduced communication among parties by COVID-19</p>	<p>Restart promotional actions in combination with ICWS by:</p> <p>Advocacy at UN preparatory process towards 2023 Conference</p> <p>Set-up promotional action body within, e.g., HELP</p>



practitioners regularly provides balanced, fact-based, transparent and comprehensive information, enabling Member States and the UN to make the right decisions on water and sanitation.

lobbied at HLPF 2018 in New York for SPPWS (GRoW position paper on SDG6 "[Strengthening the evidence base for the SDG process](#)").

July 2018: HLPF was informed on SDG6 issues by the [UN-Water Synthesis report](#), a good report to set the 2015 baseline of SDG indicators but not stamped by an independent panel. As most SDG indicators were new, this report did not provide much information and comments on the rates of progress towards the SDG targets.

2019: an independent panel of scientists commissioned by the UNSG released the first [Global Sustainable Development Report](#) (GSDR), a report that reviews all SDGs and related challenges including SDG6. Water is everywhere in this report but in a dispersed way without deep diving. Practitioners were not involved.

SSPWS is also recommended by the German Development Institute (DIE), a think tank of BMZ. See research paper "[Fresh water as a global commons](#)", Bonn 2019

Interestingly the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is regularly taking advantage of its structured network of scientists to publish global and substantiated reports gathering knowledge on all water areas connected to climate change, i.e. on rainfalls, water scarcity, floods, droughts, sea level rise, etc. By doing so, they respond partly to the need for SSPWS but only partly since many water issues such as access to services or pollution management are quite far from climate change.

Under the umbrella of HELP, an Alliance of Alliances was established to promote scientific cooperation in the field of Water and Disasters.

#### Comments:

The independent status of this scientific and practice panel is an important part of the UNSGAB recommendation. Reports of UN agencies and other international institutions tend to present information in ways that are aligned with their priorities. For example, this resulted in HLPF satisfaction on progress on access to safe water in Nov 2019 although lack of access decreases very slowly and access is worsening in Sub-Saharan Africa and in the urban half of the world.

It is hard to imagine regular reporting of a SSPWS in absence of a political body to which this SSPWS would report.

and Panel on Water and Peace

Interaction with Unesco might be contemplated

### 3. Strengthen UN-Water

UN-Water should be strengthened and support the Intergovernmental Committee on Water and Sanitation (see Recommendation 1a) and the UN Scientific and Practice Panel on Water and Sanitation (see rec 1b)

In 2012, Chairs of UN-Water were upgraded to principals of UN agencies as recommended by UNSGAB.

UN-Water Technical Advisory Unit was strengthened with more resources provided by member states

Since 2015, the number of actions implemented by UN agencies that are coordinated by UN-Water is steadily increasing.

Many global UN reports issued by UN agencies on Water are now stamped with the UN-Water logo or, even better, presented as UN-Water reports. For example:

- Most statistical reports on SDG 6 water and sanitation indicators
- The annual World Water Development Reports “published by UNESCO on behalf of UN-Water”.

UN reports on Water to HLPF are now issued by UN-Water.

March 2018, World Water Forum 8: [Ministers of all governments declared](#) *“Invite the UN system to strengthen its support to countries in water matters and to improve the integration and coordination of the work of the United Nations on the water related goals and targets.”*

July 2018: the HLPF spent 3 hours on SDG6. It was informed by a [synthesis report](#) issued by UN-Water

Strengthening UN-Water has become a trendy motto that is supported by more and more governments and non-government actors. For example, it is part of the [France’s International Strategy for Water and Sanitation \(2020-2030\)](#). It is also recommended by the German Development Institute (DIE), a think tank of BMZ. See research paper [“Fresh water as a global commons”](#), Bonn 2019

In July 2020, UN-Water launched its [SDG6 Global Acceleration Framework](#), i.e. an initiative to enhance the UN system support to countries in their efforts towards SDG6, including action on five “accelerators” (financing, data, capacity, innovation and governance).

In March 2021, the [UN-Water SDG 6 Summary Progress Update 2021 report](#) was able to present new findings from UN water statistics thus stimulating additional action by governments on water and sanitation.

1 July 2023: The [Bonn Water Conference](#) convened by Germany as a step forward to the 2023 UN Water Conference adopted [key messages](#) including the wish *“to ensure the coherence of UN efforts in the water sector: through early-stage coordination in programming of all UN-Water members; by linking the UN-Water SDG 6+ Special Event with*

In 2020, despite the pandemic, UN-Water launched the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework, coordinated the World Water Day and campaign on Water and Climate, and the World Toilet Day campaign on Sanitation and Climate,

Advocate for UN-Water serving as Secretariat of the future ICWS and its regular meetings, including the 2023 Water Conference

	<p><i>other sectors under HLPF review; by appointing a Special Envoy on Water to the UN to strengthen the international water voice and cross-sectoral connections”</i></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> All this gives more visibility to UN-Water. Governments know now that UN-Water exists and global debates on water-related SDG targets are often informed by a coordinated UN-Water voice. However, agencies keep most of their power and operational independence since they refer in priority to their own governance structure.</p> <p>In particular, UNESCO is still trying to be at the forefront, acting independently from UN-Water and willing to be perceived as the main UN agency on water.</p> <p>UN-Water is still too weak and lacks a mandate to overcome silos and unify UN agencies efficiently enough. A political support from ICWS would help a lot.</p> <p>A UN Special Envoy on Water would be useful to strengthen UN coordination on Water if it reinforces UN-Water</p>		
<p><b>4. Set up a comprehensive and independently reviewed global monitoring framework</b></p> <p>Governments support UN-Water efforts to set up all the global monitoring mechanisms that are necessary to review progress on the water-related SDG targets and ensure that these mechanisms are independently reviewed on a regular basis.</p>	<p>UN Agencies worked on producing detailed indicators to monitor water-related SDG targets. They are coordinated by UN-Water under the UN-Water Global Monitoring Initiative with the support of several governments. This initiative is presented on <a href="http://sdg6monitoring.org">sdg6monitoring.org</a>.</p> <p>In 2019 they were able to release global reports on each of the 12 SDG6 indicators with global numbers for those with the most-advanced development. New reports on all these indicators will be released in August 2021.</p> <p>In 2019, UN-Water launched the <a href="http://sdg6data.org">sdg6data.org</a> portal where all country, regional and global statistical values of SDG6 indicators are easily available.</p> <p>UN agencies that are co-custodian of SDG indicators have two distinct roles: they build global statistical data and they analyze these data to present conclusions for action. The selection of these conclusions seem to be made internally without external review.</p> <p>In March 2021, the <a href="#">UN-Water SDG 6 Summary Progress Update 2021 report</a> was able to present new findings from UN water statistics thus stimulating additional action by governments on water and sanitation.</p> <p>On July 1, 2021, the Bonn Water Conference promoted data-based decision making in its message #2 highlighting that “<i>water-related data</i></p>		<p>UN Agencies need to do self assessment to review current status and propose ways to place water-related SDG targets and monitoring process back on track after COVID-19.</p> <p>UN agencies to be encouraged to not only publish water statistical data but also to publish all conclusions that are necessary for addressing the global challenges. An external review of the selection of these findings before publication would increase external trust in their reports</p>

	<p><i>and information are critical to understand to understand the social, economic and environmental demands and complexity of water challenges and to effectively target measures and funding.”</i></p> <p><b>Comments:</b></p> <p>A comprehensive global monitoring framework now exists with satisfactory methodologies on most indicators. Some are still needing methodological improvements. As most indicators are new, not all countries are already able to produce national values on all of them but their number is steadily increasing.</p> <p><u>Still missing:</u> many national data, independent reviews on a regular basis and disaggregated data, in particular gender-disaggregated data on toilets use</p>		
<p><b>5. Make sure there is an independent voice</b></p>	<p>To accelerate the necessary water transformation UNSG Ban Ki-moon and WB President Kim established a High Level Panel on Water (HLPW), to motivate effective action and to advocate Financing and Implementation. Members included the Netherlands and UNSGAB member dr Han Seung-soo. HLPW presented an outcome document in 2018 with recommendations for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a foundation for action (understanding water, valuing water, managing water)</li> <li>- an integrated agenda</li> <li>- catalyzing change, building partnerships</li> </ul> <p>The HLPW mandate ended in 2018</p> <p>In 2021, there is no independent voice with a view on all water matters in capacity to provide assessments, to stimulate progress on a regular basis and to follow-up decisions and progresses.</p> <p><b>Comments:</b></p> <p>A neutral voice with a view on all water matters and not defending any particular interest group is missing since the closure of the HLPW in 2018.</p> <p>This absence may explain why 5 years after having adopted ambitious global water targets, governments have not yet worked on any related action plan. It may result into weakening the results of the 2023 UN Water Conference despite its exceptional opportunity to move the world on water matters.</p>	<p><i>WHO made a good job in disseminating guidance documents regularly</i></p>	<p>Former UNSGAB transmitted 3 messages to the UNSG on Feb 18, 2021. One message is to recommend that an independent voice that has a view over all water-related challenges is set up at the global level by the UNSG “</p> <p>This letter was copied to the UN PGA and to the UN-Water Chair</p>

**B. Recommendations of page 14 of the 2015 “UNSGAB Journey”**

Recommendation in The UNSGAB Journey Page 14	Progress made by 2020	Findings & drawbacks by COVID-19 in 2020-2021	Recommendations for action by former UNSGAB in 2021
<p><b>1.Promote a global approach to water</b> Call for greater awareness about water on the part of politicians and in the climate community, promoting action on water within national and global climate change policies. Businesses, and national and local governments have to translate their growing awareness about water risks into comprehensive strategies for action.</p>	<p>Climate change. Before 2015, the UN work on climate change focused on mitigation. Since 2015, it more seriously addresses adaptation issues, which is closer to climate-related water challenges. Water action is part of the majority of Nationally determined contributions (NDCs) submitted by developing countries. Besides, IPCC gathers more and more scientific knowledge on water issues. However, the intergovernmental work on adaptation of water management to climate change is not very visible.</p> <p>The 2030 Agenda created the required global approach of all water issues. With its 20 water-related SDG Targets that go beyond SDG6, this Agenda addresses all major water challenges and their interactions with the other challenges of mankind</p> <p>However, this promise has still to be translated into action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the international community has still to incorporate better water-related issues in its non-water works. For example, will water experts be involved in the 2021 UN Food systems Summit? Will this Summit consider water scarcity as a key challenge for agriculture or will it ignore water constraints as it is frequent in food summits?</li> <li>- The UN international community meets only very rarely to discuss all water issues in a comprehensive way. Most global meetings focus on sub-sectoral matters. Since 2015, a holistic discussion only happened during 3 hours. This took place in the 2018 HLPF! In this context, the 2023 UN Water Conference will be an exceptional opportunity to</li> </ul>	<p>Although UN decision on water conference made progress, it has not led to accelerated actions for water in countries and fields.</p> <p>It is likely that progress towards water-related SDG targets was slowed down</p> <p>Although Covid-19 focused attention on health and diseases transmissible by air, no alarm call was heard on risks of future water-related epidemics</p>	<p>Former UNSGAB transmitted 3 messages to the UNSG on Feb 18, 2021. One message is that a <i>“sustainable and resilient recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic requires that the UN work and all UN summits or conferences dedicated to specific Sustainable Development Goals include systematically a component on water”</i>. This letter was copied to the UN PGA and to the UN-Water Chair. The UNSG indicated to Former UNSGAB that several steps are implemented in this direction. This is the case of the Global Adaptation Summit (January 2021) and the High-level Global Dialogue on Water organized to prepare the 2021 Fodd Systems Summit</p> <p>The acceleration mentioned in the Nov <a href="#">2020 UNGA water resolution</a> is still needed. Substantive decisions and</p>

	<p>reverse this absence of serious intergovernmental work on all water challenges and targets.</p> <p>The UNGA made decision to organize 2023 UN Mid-term review Conference on Water Decade. The objective of the Conference includes review of Water-related SDGs according to the <a href="#">UNGA water resolution</a> adopted in December 2020. It will: <i>“Contribute to the follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by providing an input to the high-level political forum on sustainable development”</i>.</p>		<p>concrete commitment to accelerate actions in countries and at the global level should be made in 2023 Conference at the latest.</p> <p>Former UNSGAB will advocate for an enhanced SDG6 acceleration framework that does not only focus on financing, data, capacity, innovation and governance but highlights the need for national water policies and action plans that aim at achieving the SDG targets in a specific timeframe</p>
<p><b>2. Make better use of existing international legal instruments within the water sector</b></p> <p>Leverage the UN and UNECE Water Conventions and use the Ramsar Convention as a bridge to Multilateral Environmental Agreements and between development and environment.</p> <p>Use the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation as a compass for the management of water services.</p>	<p>The 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (UNECE- Water Convention) was originally negotiated as a regional framework for the pan-European region. Following an amendment procedure, since March 2016 all UN Member States can accede to it. Chad and Senegal have become the first African Parties in 2018 and Ghana acceded in 2020. As of 1 December 2020, there are 44 parties to this Water Convention.</p> <p>The UN Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses (UN Watercourses Convention) entered into force in August 2014. As of 1 December 2020, 37 States are Parties to the Watercourses Convention</p> <p>The criteria and principles of the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation have been used to define the new SDG indicators 6.1.1 and 6.2.1 on access to drinking water and sanitation as well as the indicator 6.b.1 on people’s participation to decisions on water management. By consequence, progress on these indicators means</p>	<p>Many vulnerable people experienced increased difficulties to fetch safe water during lockdowns. This stimulated rights-based action in favour of them.</p> <p>In Dec 2020, UN-Water published a brief entitled <a href="#">“The United Nations global water conventions: Fostering sustainable development and peace”</a>, which was led by UNECE.</p>	<p>The UNSGAB recommendation on transboundary watercourses formulated in 2015 is still valid in 2021.</p> <p>The management of water services is now monitored by indicators that include respect of several normative criteria of the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation. However, their affordability criterion is still to be embedded in global monitoring.</p>



	<p>progress towards the satisfaction of these human rights. However, it is hard to find mention of these human rights in UN-Water reports on SDG Targets and it is hard to find use of these indicators in the work of the UN Human Rights Council. The water and human rights silos are still living far from each other.</p>		
<p><b>3. Tackle the growing urban water and sanitation crisis</b></p> <p>The data reported by the UN at global level more accurately reflects water-related urban trends. Establish the water sustainability risks associated with urbanization, to create awareness about them, and to take relevant action, including mitigating water-related pressures from growing urban areas on the peri-urban and rural environment.</p> <p>UN-Habitat should take up these challenges in its priorities for action, also with a view to the Habitat III Conference.</p>	<p>2016: Habitat III Conference in Quito adopts a New Urban Agenda (NUA).</p> <p>This NUA mentions all urban challenges that are related to the many water-related SDG challenges. However, it is mostly a repetition of Agenda 2030 except for water infrastructure and water management where it includes more details on means of action. However, this Urban Agenda includes no sense of a growing urban crisis, no alarm call on the global increase of city-dwellers lacking safe water or sanitation.</p> <p>Reminder: the <a href="#">UNSG had announced publicly</a> the evidence of such increase as soon as on the World Water Day 2011: <i>“Over the past decade, the number of urban dwellers who lack access to a water tap in their home or immediate vicinity has risen by an estimated 114 million, and the number of those who lack access to the most basic sanitation facilities has risen by 134 million. This 20 per cent increase has had a hugely detrimental impact on human health and on economic productivity: people are sick and unable to work.”</i></p> <p>Despite this UNSG announcement suggested by UNSGAB, no WHO-UNICEF report of access to drinking water and sanitation ever alerted on it although the related numbers are publicly available on their <a href="#">washdata.org</a> database.</p> <p>Ten years later, in March 2021, the <a href="#">UN-Water SDG 6 Summary Progress Update 2021 report</a> was able to present new findings from UN water statistics. In particular, it made visible that “The number of city inhabitants lacking safely-managed drinking water has increased by more than 50 per cent since 2000”. This is more a global regress than a global progress.</p>	<p>Covid-19 aggravated transmission risks on urban, overpopulated areas, especially where there is no water for regular basic hygiene at household level.</p> <p>Public health measures like lockdowns conflicted with density of population in slums, refugee camps, etc.</p> <p>Viruses detection in urban wastewater more and more used to monitor epidemic growth.</p> <p>Recovery policies aiming at restoring economies may reduce funding of water and sanitation needs in territories where they are not perceived as priorities.</p> <p>UN-Habitat and Unicef issued a <a href="#">technical note on WASH for Covid-19 in slums</a></p> <p>UN-Habitat <a href="#">reported</a> on its actions in response to Covid-19</p>	<p>As there is no evidence of significant progress at the global level, the 2015 UNSGAB recommendation detailed in column 1 is still valid.</p> <p>The UN system and, more particularly UN-Water and UN-Habitat, should work seriously on this urban growth issue and stimulate intergovernmental work on this issue.</p>

	<p>This finding is new in UN documents and is an alarm call. So far, no public reaction by governments or UN officials. <u>Significant action is required.</u></p>		
<p><b>4. Involve the private sector more strongly in dealing with growing water-related risks.</b></p> <p>Innovative approaches, such as the water stewardship concept, have to be developed here, while also involving non-classical water stakeholders. Global Compact and specifically its water component, the CEO Water Mandate, should support this effort.</p> <p>Governments should consider leveraging the water footprint concept by making water-use reporting mandatory for listed companies and large cities.</p>	<p>More and more private companies release annual Sustainability Reports that include a water chapter and/or water indicators</p> <p>Following the Overseas Development Institute Report '<a href="#">Private sector and water supply, sanitation and hygiene</a>', published in October 2015 and commissioned by UNICEF and the UN Foundation, the <a href="#">WASH4Work initiative</a> chaired by UNICEF was established in 2016 by 11 expert organizations in the WASH field, including the CEO Water Mandate. This initiative aims at mobilizing businesses around the world to improve access to WASH in the workplace, in communities where workers live, and across supply chains.</p> <p>In March 2020, the Water Resilience Coalition led by the CEO Water Mandate was created by some of the biggest companies in the world to help preserve the world's freshwater resources. Coalition members commits to having a net positive impact in water-stressed basins, to develop and implement resilient practices across the value chain of their industry, and to provide leadership and advocacy in the field of water resilience.</p> <p>The research programme GRoW has developed and demonstrated enhanced approaches to assess the water footprint of industries, production sites and in international supply chains that help raise the private sector's awareness of water risks, incl to initiate water stewardship joint action. <a href="#">GRoW experts recommend the private sector to make use of the water footprint</a> to guide decisions on where investment in more sustainable water use is most efficient.</p>	<p>Public and private water supply operators managed to ensure continuity of water supply and even in some cases to improve its outreach to poorly-served people.</p> <p>Some private companies contribute to research on presence and activity of SARS-Cov2 in wastewater.</p> <p>In 2020, the <a href="#">WASH4Work</a> initiative had to focus on Covid-19 impacts.</p> <p>Many public and private wastewater services operators have detected coronaviruses genetic content in wastewater and have set up monitoring mechanisms to use it as epidemic marker.</p>	<p>The many private initiatives on resilience, water stewardship, water footprint monitoring and WASH in the workplace should be known and encouraged</p>



Recommendation in UNSGAB Journey Page 14	Progress made by 2020	Findings & drawbacks by COVID-19 in 2020-2021	Potential recommendations by UNSGAB in 2021
<p><b>5. Governments must take proactive and preventive action on growing water-related risks</b></p> <p>Governments still lagging behind must fast-track institutional reforms for better management and enhanced accountability. They must boost funding and strengthen capacities, especially in water-related statistics and administrative monitoring.</p> <p>Extraordinary measures need to be considered, such as the creation of well-embedded water units within ministries of finance, in order to strengthen water financing at national and local levels, asking for water impact plans for investments to help promote funding for wastewater, and fostering inclusive multi-stakeholder partnerships to support implementation and ensure follow-up and review also from outside the government.</p>	<p>The UNSGAB call on strengthening capacities, increasing funding and adopting dedicated units has been reinforced in 2020 by the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework.</p> <p>The 2030 Agenda includes many new indicators and requires additional statistical efforts. Many countries are trying to adapt to this new statistical needs. However, most SDG6 indicators suffer from absence of data in many countries.</p> <p><u>Germany</u>: there is no SDG6 report.</p> <p>Ministry of Education and Research Funding of a research alliance with 12 research programs with actors from science and practitioners in 20 countries (see <a href="https://bmbf-grow.de/en">https://bmbf-grow.de/en</a>)</p> <p>Ministry of Environment (BMU): participant World Water Quality Alliance; Bonn conference 1 July 2021; National Water Dialogue, started March 2019, will end mid 2021 with formulating a "National Water Strategy 2050"</p> <p>Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ): established dedicated Water division as part of 'One Health' department and doubled staff; Core strategy on preserving our livelihoods and natural resources including "Action Field on Water".</p> <p>The research programme GRoW, and its project <a href="#">STEER</a> in particular, has developed a diagnostic approach that allows identifying appropriate governance approaches for increased coordination and cooperation across different stakeholders and administrative levels.</p>	<p>Discuss in UNSGAB+5 if COVID-19 increased risks related to water and sanitation.</p>	<p>Former UNSGAB will advocate for an enhanced SDG6 acceleration framework that does not only focus on financing, data, capacity, innovation and governance but highlights the need for national water policies and action plans that aim at achieving the SDG targets in a specific timeframe</p> <p>As there is no evidence of significant progress on water financing at the global level, The recommendations on financing water that UNSGAB articulated in 2015 are still valid.</p>

Netherlands

is one of the main initiators for the Global Commission on Adaptation and the Global Center on Adaptation, together with Ban Ki-moon, Bill Gates, and Kristalina Georgieva. NL organized a (virtual) Climate Adaptation Summit on January 25<sup>th</sup> 2021.

Japan (Kenzo Hiroki) and NL and Dr Han are leading in HELP actions on reducing water disaster risks (floods, droughts, COVID). HELP position is still getting stronger with broad participation of i.a. OECD, WB, AsDB, GWP, UNDESA, UNESCO, USACE, Indonesia.

In March 2021, the [UN-Water SDG 6 Summary Progress Update 2021 report](#) was able to present new findings from UN water statistics. For example, it made visible that:

- Achieving universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation by 2030 will require a four-fold increase in the current rate of progress
- Since 2000, the number of people without safely managed drinking water in SubSaharan Africa has increased from 531 to 747 million
- The number of city inhabitants lacking safely-managed drinking water has increased by more than 50 per cent since 2000.

So far, no reaction by governments

In July 2021, WHO and Unicef issued their 2021 update of WASH statistics. This [2021 JMP report](#) confirms the three above findings (with numbers of people lacking access to safe drinking water having increased by 46% in Sub-Saharan Africa and by 42% in the urban half of the world between 2000 and 2020).\_

Comments:

For finance, there is nowhere mentioning the lack of capacity to reach SDG6.

	<p>Have units dedicated to water been created in ministries for finance?</p> <p>There is urgent need of women in the decision making processes and need of new professionals, especially qualified women</p>		
<p><b>6.The UN must adapt in order to better support Member States in addressing water-related risks</b></p> <p>Considering that a lot of UN organizations deal with water but only as a marginal issue, nothing less than a full-scale water-cultural revolution within the UN is needed.</p> <p>Relevant UN organizations need to allocate (more) core funding to water and need to review their policies. It is, for example, high time that WHO endorsed water, sanitation and hygiene as primary prevention.</p> <p>Water-related data management within the UN needs to be improved and the respective role of UN-Water strengthened in order to address persistent and serious data inconsistencies in water-related UN communications. Efforts should be made to cooperate more closely with the OECD regarding its work on the economic, financial and governance aspects of water.</p>	<p>The water-cultural revolution has been sparked by the 2030 Agenda that addresses all major water challenges and suggest not to work anymore in silos. UN-Water made a lot to concretize this new holistic approach. However, the UN intergovernmental work is still scattered and not very effective on water.</p> <p>Through the <a href="#">UN-Water Integrated Monitoring Initiative</a> for SDG 6 (IMI-SDG6), the United Nations seeks to support countries in monitoring water- and sanitation-related issues within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in compiling country data to report on global progress towards SDG 6. Data are available on <a href="http://sdg6data.org">sdg6data.org</a>.</p> <p>The SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework is another example of UN efforts to support Member States.</p> <p>The UN went through an entire reform in the last years in order to better support MS in implementing the SDGs. As of 1 January 2019, a reinvigorated, empowered and independent resident coordinator (RC) system was created to coordinate the development activities of UN entities at the national and local levels.</p> <p>.</p> <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>Global data monitoring has significantly improved since 2015. However, some water indicators are still not fully operational and many suffer from absence of data in several countries.</p> <p>Adaptation to Climate change is mostly action in water management. However, UNFCCC COPs have spent far more energy on reducing emissions than on actions for adaptation.</p>		<p>WHO should prepare the UN to future pandemics and water-related epidemics in their post-corona review, including through allocating post-Covid-19 funds to its water and sanitation activities.</p> <p>More efforts on adapting water use to climate change should be driven by the UNFCCC</p> <p>Monitoring efforts should be continued at the global and national levels in order to get more complete datasets.</p>

	<p>Fortunately, the current Covid-19 pandemic is not transmitted by water. But the next pandemic might be. More attention should be paid to SDG target 3.4 on fighting “hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases”.</p> <p>This is why, in the post-Covid-19 context, more funding should be secured to the water team of WHO in order that they can do more to facilitate the global prevention of water-borne diseases</p>		
<b>7. Form high-level alliances to tackle priority water-related challenges that are ripe for action:</b>			
Convene a Heads of State Panel on Water for global advocacy around water resilience and adaptation	<p>The High Level Panel on Water was established in March, 2016 and launched its outcome document “<a href="#">Making every drop count</a>” in March, 2018. Many of the recommendations of The UNSGAB Journey were included in the document.</p> <p>This important Panel stopped its activities in 2018. No similar high-level advocacy group was created from that time.</p> <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>A key UNSGAB recommendation (n°5 on page 7 above) is: “Make sure there is an independent voice on water and sanitation”. After the closure of UNSGAB, the High-Level Panel was able to be a strong advocacy voice but without long-term continuity. Please remind that UNSGAB took years to effectively impact the global water community.</p>	<p>The impact of HLPW fades out as political attention is riveted to COVID-19. Mechanism to keep political attention to water is necessary.</p>	<p>See item A.5 above</p>

<p>Document and take action on the world's 20 water scarcity hotspots in both North and South.</p>	<p>In addition to specialised agencies, IPCC works on this issue. Many scientific reports now exist. The current issue is far more about action than about knowledge.</p> <p>The research programme GRoW enhanced approaches in global modelling that can help identifying global water scarcity hotspots in the water/food and water/energy nexus.</p> <p>Water scarcity has become a priority message for the UNSG and UN-Water. Their SDG6 Summary progress update 2021 notes "Slight improvements, considerable deteriorations. Between 2000 and 2017, 3 out of 11 SDG regions slightly reduced their water stress, whereas 2 [Northern Africa and South-Eastern Asia increased their water stress considerably."</p>	<p>COVID-19 highlighted pandemic health risks in water scarce areas.</p>	<p>As there is evidence of increasing scarcity in several parts of the world, the 2015 UNSGAB recommendation is still valid.</p>
<p>Document and take action to reduce disaster risks and to invest in resiliency in high risk urban delta areas</p>	<p>The High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (<a href="#">HELP</a>) have taken continuous actions for water and disasters including co-organizing UN Special Thematic Session on Water and Disasters biennially (2013-). HELP keeps active and growing. Relations with UNDRR was strengthened through, e.g., co-organizing global events.</p> <p>On 25 June 2021, the <a href="#">Fifth UN Special Thematic Session on Water and Disasters</a> was organized by 7 governments, HELP and GRIPS. The UN Secretary General delivered a speech as well as several "Former UNSGAB members. Dr Eid, last UNSGAB chair, presented the <a href="#">2021 updated messages</a> of "Former UNSGAB"</p>	<p>HELP launched "<a href="#">Principles to Address Water-related DRR under COVID-19</a>" in May 2020.</p>	<p>As there is no evidence of increased resilience at the global level, the 2015 UNSGAB recommendation is still valid.</p> <p>In particular, UNSGAB encourages the High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP) and suggests a closer cooperation with the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR).</p>
<p>Promote and scale-up toilets in schools</p>	<p>SDG Target 4.a is monitored by the proportion of schools offering basic services, by type of service (<a href="#">indicator 4.a.1</a>). Access to single-sex basic sanitation is one of the 6 components of this indicator. Since 2018, the WHO-UNICEF JMP reports regularly on it. A global baseline report "<a href="#">Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools</a>" was issued in 2018. An <a href="#">update was issued mid-2020</a></p>	<p>The 2020 WHO-UNICEF updated report on WASH in schools focuses on Covid-19</p> <p>In March 2020, UNICEF, the World Health Organization and the International</p>	<p>The 2015 UNSGAB recommendation on toilets in schools is still valid.</p>

	Global coverage of toilets in schools made progress from 60% to 63 % in 2015-2019 period. Universal coverage of toilets in schools will be met only in 2075 if the trend continues.	Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies published an <a href="#">Interim Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools</a>	
De-taboo and take action on menstrual hygiene management	<a href="#">“Guidance on Menstrual Health and Hygiene”</a> was published by Unicef in 2020	Refer to <a href="#">“Periods in a Pandemic-Menstrual Hygiene management in COVID-19-”</a> by Plan International:	As there is no evidence of significant progress at the global level, the 2015 UNSGAB recommendation is still valid
Raise public awareness and take action towards sustainable management of groundwater	Unfortunately, despite the explicit requirement of SDG Target 6.4 that looks for sustainable withdrawals, it was not found possible to set up an SDG indicator that would monitor sustainability or overexploitation of groundwater resources. This is the weakest part of SDG6 monitoring.  In 2022, World Water Day and the World Water Development Report will be on groundwater.		The UNSGAB recommendation formulated in 2015 on groundwater is still valid in 2021 since no global progress has been noted
Prioritize water management in post-conflict and fragile contexts, contributing to combating causes for migration and flight	The <a href="#">Global High-level Panel on Water and Peace</a> was established in 2015. In its report entitled <a href="#">"A Matter of Survival"</a> issued in Sept 2017, it articulated many recommendations that aim at water becoming an asset for peace  In October 2018, UN Security Council held a <a href="#">special session on water and peace</a> .  In December 2019, le Geneva Water Hub published <a href="#">« The Geneva List of principles on the protection of water infrastructure »</a> , a reference document for the use of parties to armed conflicts, international organizations, and other practitioners working in the contexts of armed conflicts, including in pre- and post-conflict situations.  The <a href="#">Global WASH Cluster</a> Field Support Team mechanism is a multi-stakeholders project funded by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance,	The <a href="#">Global WASH Cluster</a> Issued several notes including a <a href="#">Covid-19 response guidance note</a> for	The 2015 UNSGAB recommendation is still valid

	<p>Norwegian Church Aid, UNICEF and Action Against Hunger (ACF) to provide timely, predictable and quality support to National Humanitarian WASH Coordination Platforms in view of securing time-continuity of coordination in acute crisis.</p>	<p>WASH in humanitarian assistance cases</p>	
<p>Anchor water and sanitation as a core concern in sustainable urban development</p>	<p>Urban water was positioned as core subject in UN Habitat III Conference but lack specificity and new commitment/idea.</p> <p>the <a href="#"><i>UN-Water SDG 6 Summary Progress Update 2021 report issued in March 2021</i></a> mentions that <i>“The number of city inhabitants lacking safely-managed drinking water has increased by more than 50 per cent since 2000”</i>.</p>	<p>UN-Habitat and Unicef issued a <a href="#">technical note on WASH for Covid-19 in slums</a>.</p>	<p>As there is no evidence of significant progress at the global level, the 2015 UNSGAB recommendation is still valid in 2020. Urban growth impacts access to WASH, pollution discharge, water abstraction and increases risks of flooding urban areas. All these impacts must be controlled to make urban development sustainable</p> <p>See also item B.3 above.</p>