

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS FOR WATER REQUIRE PROTECTION FROM CORRUPTION

**WATER IS CENTRAL TO THE SDGS.
SO IS WATER INTEGRITY.**

By Peter McIntyre

Integrity in water governance is a prerequisite to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) – not only the water goals but also those to end hunger, to promote sustainable agriculture, to achieve gender equality and to develop reliable sustainable energy sources. Integrity is essential for protecting the environment and ecosystems and for building safe and sustainable cities.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent a global ambition to transform the world by the year 2030 and include 17 major commitments ranging from ending poverty and hunger to promoting gender equality and economic growth. The SDGs recognize the importance of water related issues in their own right and as a requirement for meeting many of the other goals. However, amongst the major obstacles to achieving these goals, corruption and lack of integrity are two of the most intractable.

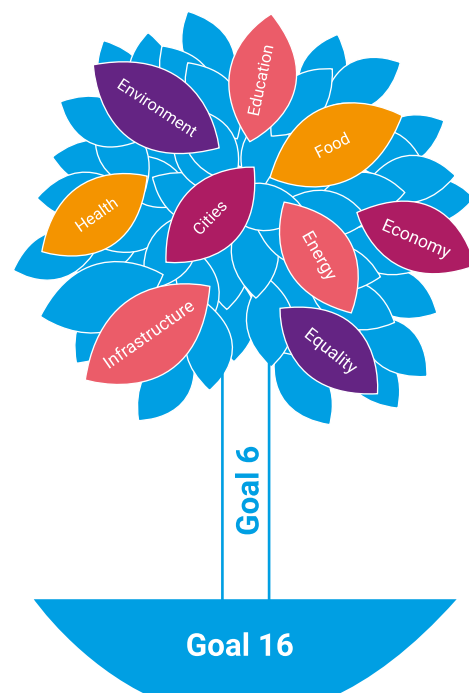
The SDGs differ from the preceding Millennium Development Goals in being more specific, better targeted and better monitored. They are also much more ambitious, aiming to secure the benefits of development, including safe water and improved sanitation, 'for all' and to end poverty 'in all its forms everywhere'.

The 2030 Agenda also recognizes the importance of ensuring the accountability of governments to their citizens, and has made a commitment to systematic follow-up and review.

The SDGs point to a future in which people meet their basic needs with livelihoods that bring them out of poverty within a sustainable and safe environment. However, corruption in the water sector pollutes life-giving resources such as rivers, lakes, wetlands and aquifers, wastes investments and leads to a loss of trust and engagement, as well as poor public health. The outcome document adopted by the UN General

Assembly cites inequality, corruption, poor governance and illicit financial flows as factors that give rise to violence, insecurity and injustice.

Putting an end to the corruption that undermines progress requires an agenda for integrity that makes governments, businesses and NGOs accountable for keeping their promises.



WATER, SANITATION AND THE SDG GOALS

SDG Goal 6 to 'ensure access to water and sanitation for all' goes beyond drinking water and sanitation and encompasses hygiene, river basin management with an emphasis on integrated water resources management (IWRM), and environmental concerns.

The needs of women and girls to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene are explicitly mentioned in Target 6.2. The need for greater integrity is acknowledged with the inclusion of a sub-target (6b) to 'support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management'.

The SDGs are interrelated and many are especially dependent on effective water governance and management to provide water for food, to protect the environment and to control faecal-spread and water-borne diseases

- Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture depends on adequate supplies of water and an unpolluted environment.
- Goal 3 (ensure healthy live) includes in Target 3.3 the need to combat waterborne diseases.
- Goal 5 (gender equality) aims to ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making.
- Goal 7 (affordable, reliable, sustainable and

modern energy) and Goal 9 (infrastructure) are highly relevant to the construction of dams (for hydropower). Goal 11 (safe cities) makes reference to protecting against water-related disasters.

- Goal 12 (sustainable consumption) calls for 'public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities'.
- Goal 13 (resilience and adaptive capacity to climate change) includes an aim for transparency in implementation, vital in view of a potential budget of US\$ 100 billion a year to address the needs of developing countries.
- Goal 15 (ecosystems) calls for 'the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services'.
- Goal 16 has a special relevance for anti-corruption work in its call for effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. The targets aim to substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms (16.5); reduce illicit financial flows (16.4); promote effective, accountable and transparent institutions (16.6); and promote inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making (16.7).

We believe that these goals can only be met by a water sector that functions well and is free of corruption. sanitation management'.

THE CENTRALITY OF WATER ISSUES TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The centrality of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in human development and stability is recognized in Goal 6 – to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. It is also recognized that a successful and sustainable water sector is vital for many of the other goals and targets.

MONITORING PROGRESS

Goals need to be underpinned by a follow-up and review structure that is able to institutionalize transparency and governmental accountability. The final report of the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation (UNSGAB) recommended the establishment of a UN Intergovernmental Committee on Water and Sanitation to take on this role to link the sector to the international political level. This will need strong representation from stakeholders, including civil society groups.

There is a need for monitoring to cover all aspects of water related targets. Being able to measure how many people have clean drinking water, how much money is being allocated for sanitation and what are the most effective irrigation schemes is central to achieving targets and to combating corruption (OECD, 2014). The UN-Water initiative 'Integrated monitoring of water- and sanitation-related SDG targets' (GEMI) proposes a set of indicators to address critical issues in wastewater, water quality, water efficiency, water resources management and water-related ecosystems, to complement existing drinking water and sanitation monitoring (UN-Water, 2015a, b).

The 2014 World Water Development Report (UN-Water, 2014) complements these efforts with the aim of providing a global strategic outlook on the state of freshwater resources and its implications for decision-making. Such a global monitoring system in principle provides a reference point for watchdogs and citizens to flag shortfalls with regard to governmental commitments to enhance water management.

Monitoring has to take place at the local as well as the global level, and this requires strong capacity and arrangements for community and civil society monitoring.

TRACKING FINANCIAL FLOWS

Achieving the SDGs requires very large increases in spending from governments and international agencies. Just on its own, the international fund to address the needs of developing countries to meet the challenges of climate change could climb to US\$ 100 billion a year, on top of what individual governments spend. The World Bank estimates that the global capital cost of meeting the WASH targets for the SDG on water will be \$ 114 billion each year from 2015 to 2030 (Hutton and Varughese, 2016). Extending safely managed water supply and sanitation services to all will require three times current annual expenditure levels, much of the investment required to extend services to those who have least resources.

There is currently no overall approach to financing the sector, or even an agreed methodology for understanding how much is being spent on various aspects of the sector or for estimating the size of the financial gap. A 2015 UNEP report says that efforts to identify financing needs are hampered by 'a confusing picture based on overlapping and incomparable approaches and definitions and compounded by patchy data' (UNEP, 2015). There is a need to improve data

collection and to increase transparency in these areas.

It is unlikely that these financial sums can be met by the public sector alone, and will require mobilizing greater financing from the private sector. This creates challenges for the capacity of both the private and public sectors to manage the process with integrity, especially in the areas with the highest capacity for corruption, such as large-scale infrastructure projects, including dams and hydropower. Investment designed to meet targets for drinking water and sanitation also requires protection. Decision-making on awarding water supply and sanitation service contracts needs to be fully transparent, with clear objectives and measurable performance indicators, and backed by effective monitoring, a vigilant regulator, and the involvement of civil society and water consumers.

The Water Integrity Global Outlook points out that there are hardly any assessments of the costs of corruption and that data on financial flows in the water sector is scarce. There is a need to strengthen the public finance capacity of water institutions and to improve their communication with the finance ministry within countries.

At global level, there is a need for stringent, harmonized and nationally relevant monitoring and reporting mechanisms, to ensure the fulfilment of the SDG pledges.

ADVISORY BOARD MAKES FINAL PLEA TO ELIMINATE CORRUPTION

In its final report the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation said that in order to achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water, governments must fast-track institutional reforms, boost funding, eliminate corruption and strengthen capacities in their water services sectors.

The UNSGAB made seven recommendations for action:

1. Promote a global approach to water
2. Make better use of the existing international legal instruments within the water sector
3. Tackle the growing urban water and sanitation crisis
4. Involve the private sector more strongly in dealing with growing water-related risks
5. Governments must take proactive and preventive

action on growing water-related risks

6. The UN must adapt in order to better support Member States in addressing water-related risks
7. Form high level alliances to tackle priority water-related challenges that are ripe for action

and five structural recommendations:

1. Establish an UN Intergovernmental Committee on Water and Sanitation
2. Form an UN Scientific and Practice Panel on Water and Sanitation
3. Strengthen UN Water by mandating it to serve as the Secretariat of these entities
4. Set up a comprehensive and independently reviewed global monitoring system
5. Set up a comprehensive and independently reviewed global monitoring framework

(UNSGAB, 2015)

REFERENCES

Hutton, G., and Varughese, M. 2016. The Cost of Meeting the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal Targets on Drinking Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene. Washington, DC: World Bank.

OECD. 2014. 'Water Integrity: Promoting Accountability, Transparency and Participation'. In Toolkit for Integrity . Paris: OECD.

UN-Water. 2014. The United Nations World Water Development Report 2014, vol. I, Water and Energy. Paris: UNESCO.

UN-Water. 2015a. 'GEMI: Integrated Monitoring of Water and Sanitation Related SDG Targets'. New York: UN.

UN-Water. 2015b. Monitoring Waste Water, Water Quality and Water Resources Management: Options for Indicators and Monitoring Mechanisms for the Post-2015 Period. New York: UN.

UNEP. 2015. Aligning the Financial System with Sustainable Development: Pathways to Scale. Geneva: UNEP.

UNSGAB. 2015. The UNSGAB Journey. New York: UNSGAB.

More information:

<http://www.waterintegritynetwork.net>

Contact:

info@win-s.org
@WaterIntegrityN

© WIN, 2017

Water Integrity Network e.V.

Alt Moabit 91b, 10559 Berlin, Germany

The views expressed in this brief have been compiled from various contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of WIN. Though every effort was made to verify the accuracy of the information in this brief, WIN cannot guarantee its accuracy and completeness, nor can it accept responsibility for the consequences of its use for other purposes or in other contexts.