

35th UN-Water Meeting

Item 6 Breakout sessions: Exploring options for the interactive dialogues

5 October 2021

Summary of discussions

Group 1: Water Action Decade Work Streams + 1

Name of moderator: Vladimir Smakhtin (UNU)

Name of rapporteur: Lesley Pories (Water.org)

Highlights of discussions:

1. What would be the desired outcome from the five dialogues in this option?

- Roadmap (borrowing from the High-level Dialogue on Energy).
- Concrete actions for new and existing initiatives. Don't need to reinvent the wheel.
- How to proceed with the next 5 years of the Decade?
 - Some reports are good but insufficient.
- A lot of the action we need is from non-water sectors – energy, housing, etc. Could an outcome be to get commitments from other sectors?
- Hard to make progress on other elements when it is unclear who is accountable for its achievement. Can we sort out who is mandated to achieve what?
- UN to declare that water is a Global Priority.
 - Translates to country level as creating (or strengthening) a macro-body that makes all water decisions, supported by national government.
- Hope: this conference should be meaningful for those who currently lack water and/or sanitation.
- These themes should be seen as "enablers" so the dialogues could focus on why / how these enablers are critical to achieve SDG 6.

2. How would the dialogues be structured/designed to achieve this outcome?

- Bring in actors from outside the immediate water sector.
- Moderator(s) will play a crucial role; need to identify these.
- Do not focus on SDG framework, be more cross-cutting in design.
- Themes should be seen as "enablers" so the dialogues could focus on why / how these enablers are critical to achieve SDG6.
- Given the structure of the Conference and the apparent risk of a "blah, blah" outcome it will be imperative that we prepare as many actionable inputs as possible.

- Focus on the “do”, not the “talk”.
- Look at different scales at which different actions can take place.

3. How would key cross-cutting themes be incorporated?

- There are many silos. Less about having cross-cutting themes with all silos but having all topics be cross-cutting themes – be innovative. Look at the dialogues from this untraditional perspective in order to actually make progress.
- FAO Land and Water Division highlighted the need to make agriculture/irrigation/water scarcity/SDG 6.4 central to approaches/cross cutting themes; along with Risk Management, New Finance, Reporting/Monitoring, coherence between water and climate goals.
- Including other sectors is crucial. UNECE colleagues are cooperating with their own energy division (e.g. expert meeting on renewable energy and water) and can share information/lessons.

4. In general, is anything missing or needs to be added or edited in your assigned option?

- Governance
 - It is often the main challenge and is often missing from the conversation; perhaps make that the “additional theme” includes transboundary water.
 - Perhaps this is included in Workstream 3 (Pursuing Advocacy)?
 - Additional support for seeing Governance more prominently featured.
 - Although there is no shortage of policy recommendations, why are they not always followed? Is there a way to question politicians as to why they are not following through on commitments?
- UNESCO idea mentioned at the Decade Workshop, which is very innovative, largely missing from Zero Draft.
- Gender notably absent.
- Connection to human rights and social justice.

What is the root cause that is preventing us from achieving SDG 6 and how can we use this event to identify it and overcome it? Is there a stocktaking exercise that can lead to solutions?

From Energy Conference conversation yesterday – critical to pre-determine intended outcome(s) and work towards that.

How can we design the interactive dialogues to support the objective/outcome? Is the outcome ‘national governments making commitments to scaling efforts to achieve SDG 6’?

Group 2: SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework

Name of moderator: Madhushree Chatterjee (UN DESA, co-coordinator of the TF on Water Action Decade Implementation)

Name of rapporteur: Daniel Tsegai (UNCCD)

Highlights of discussions:

1. What would be the desired outcome from the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework in this option?

- Dialogue should lead us to a roadmap to 2030 (following the example of energy conference).
- Outcomes should fit into HLPF 2023.
- Concrete recommendation/actions for negotiation of ministerial declaration for HLPF 2023.
- Input into Report on the decade & HLPF synthesis report.
- Inclusiveness: bring civil society, NGOs and other stakeholders into the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework.
- Beyond SDG 6, identify interlinkage options with other SDGs.
- Bring into the dialogue stakeholders from the water space.
- The 5 areas of acceleration are excellent (financing, innovation, capacity, data, governance).

2. How would the dialogues be structured/designed to achieve this outcome?

- Identify challenges, what is being done, what is going to be done.
- How to mobilize support?
- Learning from UN-energy high-level dialogue (all online).
- Dedicated consultancy who engages with online audience in an efficient way (UNITAR, etc.).
- Conference format: Hybrid, in-person? TBD
- The dialogues could build on all relevant preparatory documents, so the report on the Decade implementation to be prepared by UN-Water, the SDG 6 Synthesis Report, the Conclusions from the Bonn Conference and the Outcome documents from the other preparatory meetings.

3. How would key cross-cutting themes be incorporated?

- Should we go beyond targets of SDG 6?
- Reaching out to beyond water community (language matters).
- Go beyond SDG 6.
- Bigger perspective (inclusiveness as a major cross cutting issue, e.g. marginalized, indigenous groups, gender, youth perspectives).
- Engage with other sectors.

- Humanitarian perspective, incl. migrants and displaced people (preparedness, response, DRR, Global Compact for Migration, refugees, etc.).
- Identify other cross cutting themes, incl. finance, migration, agriculture, land, energy, climate, women/gender and others as entry points for water.

4. In general, is anything missing or needs to be added or edited in your assigned option?

- What specific actions did you implement because of the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework?

Group 3: Water-Related Global Targets

Name of moderator: Christophe Cudennec (IAHS)

Name of rapporteur: Dani Gaillard-Picher (GWP)

Highlights of discussions:

1. What would be the desired outcome from the five dialogues in this option?

- Should be related to the outcome of the Conference itself, which is a statement or report. So what does that outcome look like in order to design this outcome?
- Substantive messages related to content – **1-3 key messages** per dialogue developed ahead of time – come with the main message that you want the plenary to adopt in the final statement; linkages are necessary between dialogue and plenary.
- **New ideas and processes** under each theme using the most positive language possible, what needs to change to achieve SDG targets.
- **Identification of transformations** that are required.

2. How would the dialogues be structured/designed to achieve this outcome?

- In a way for the key prepared messages to emerge from the dialogue in a consultative way.

3. How would key cross-cutting themes be incorporated?

4. In general, is anything missing or needs to be added or edited in your assigned option?

- Agriculture (6.4).
- Five Alternative Themes – Split SDG targets differently and include others that provides a broader-systems based view:
 1. climate and DRR (clustering of former options 4+5)
 2. peace and security (6.5)
 3. social needs (health, education and economic development) (6.1, 6.2)
 4. food security/food and nutrition security/food systems (6.3, 6.4 & SDG 2)
 5. biodiversity and the environment

Other comments

- How to include the links, trade offs and synergies between the 5 dialogues and beyond (biodiversity, agriculture, peace, humanitarian action)?
- Are desirable Conference (and therefore interactive dialogue) outcomes in the form of recommendations for Governance/policy adjustments, new implementation modalities?

- Three overarching themes: 1) water for human and economic development (including water and sanitation); 2) water for peace; and 3) water for ecosystems.
- How do you see links to other SDGs being handled in this option? The alternative option is another way of expressing SDG 6 in terms of its links to other key SDGs, health, education, climate change, peace and security, no poverty, ocean, life on land, etc.
- Water as a connector to other SDGs, rather than focusing on SDG 6 as an island.
- A human rights based approach to water & sanitation and a healthy environment (water quality, biodiversity, climate etc.) could be useful in identifying the links.
- On the tweaked dialogue structure – there are many links to several SDGs:
 - climate and DRR (SDG 13 / 11.5)
 - peace and security (6.5, 6.b & SDG 16)
 - social needs (health, education and economic development) (6.1, 6.2 & SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5)
 - food security/food systems (6.3, 6.4 & SDGs 1 & 2 & 12)
 - biodiversity and the environment (6.6 & SDG 14 & 15)

Still missing a bit on the broader economy and work on water efficiency and water quality more explicitly, but the SDG/gAenda 2030 could be made to work as a structure and basing for the interactive dialogues.

Group 4: Thematic Focus

Name of moderator: Neil Dhot (AquaFed)

Name of rapporteur: Angie Saleh (SWA)

Highlights of discussions:

1. What would be the desired outcome from the five dialogues in this option?

- How can we make the Conference more than just bla-bla.
- Ideally feed into the Conference outcome.
- Formulate or build an action agenda – what to do next.
- Formulate what change/transformation do we need.
- Make sure we review the Action Decade – what has been done, what success, what failures, and how do we move forward.
- Commitment from Member States on those actions that will be identified.
- Build political will to achieve those actions through effective communication.

2. How would the dialogues be structured/designed to achieve this outcome?

- Build in a process within the dialogues to enable them to be taken forward into the Conference outcome.
- What are people doing differently? What are the success stories?
- Bring in a completely different set of speakers from outside the sector – to raise the media and the public's attention.
- Multi-stakeholder approach.
- Getting out of the sector and looking beyond our own SDG 6 target bubbles.

3. How would key cross-cutting themes be incorporated?

- The thematic focus brings forward many cross-cutting themes.
- Some can be merged.

4. In general, is anything missing or needs to be added or edited in your assigned option?

- We need to pick the themes that would accelerate things more quickly – it doesn't have to be all encompassing.
- Suggestions under Option 4 'Thematic Options' are too many. We need to choose five of them. We can choose the first five and merge the rest into them in the way the dialogues are structured. We can't decide on that.
- We can't neglect the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework – we need to report on it in whatever option we choose.
- It is important in any theme to ensure that a human rights based approach is promoted in general in the water sector and in particular strengthened in the management of freshwater ecosystems, biodiversity, and ecosystem services

to ensure that all human rights of local people, women and men, ethnic minorities, nomadic or other marginalised groups are taken into account.

Group 5: Blended Approach

Name of moderator: Alice Aureli (UNESCO)

Name of rapporteur: Nicolas Franke (WMO)

Highlights of discussions:

1. What would be the desired outcome from the five dialogues in this option?

- The desired outcome is that the dialogues contribute to the objective of the Mid-term Review as defined in GA resolution A/RES/75/212.
- Are we able to have an outcome where everyone can come behind?
- Take stock of solutions and proposals around thematic issues and accelerators, and suggested way forward to scale-up and improve implementation by stakeholders including the UN, its Members and partners (including civil society, business, academia etc.).
- A merit of outcomes.
- A change of mindset so all value water, the UN 2023 Conference should make the world value water better.

2. How would the dialogues be structured/designed to achieve this outcome?

- Keep in mind different levels of water management in different countries – invite the right people.
- Dialogues among people at the working level, community of practice to get political statements out on the table.
- Engage with others outside the water sector, so they can understand how water can get them where they want.
- Will there be a process where we reach to the dialogues in the Conference to have a common agreement on themes?
- Identify those who do not have a voice and create a space of trust, like to hear from the various water users, go by type of users, e.g. industry, agriculture incl. fishers, environment – a roadmap would be needed for a consultation process.

3. How would key cross-cutting themes be incorporated?

- Key cross-cutting themes will serve as the narrative in the concept paper for each of the dialogues and serve as a basis for presentations and discussions.

4. In general, is anything missing or needs to be added or edited in your assigned option?

- Like the blended approach, very general in the formulation, should be more focused to avoid speeches.
- Maybe formulate themes as questions.
- Climate change should not be forgotten. Apply a risk lens, using a risk based approach, pursuing coherence with other global frameworks.

- Key elements such as human rights, gender, transboundary waters, etc. need to be included.
- Focus on vulnerable communities and places.
- Governance has to be a key part in the dialogues, or at least part of a dialogue, maybe under 4.
- Use the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework to tackle other issues than water.
- Get people to discuss key common challenges.