

Dear IAEG-SDGs Members,

This statement reflects the consolidated agreement and collective UN input on SDG 6 indicators compiled by UN-Water. We also take this opportunity to comment on target 11.5 on water-related disasters. Following an extensive and broad consultation we are proposing a set of 12 indicators for global monitoring of SDG 6 for your consideration.

In support of these 12 indicators, on October 8th UN-Water submitted a consolidated metadata note, accompanied by an updated statistical note prepared by the WHO/UNICEF JMP for 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3.1. Together these documents provide further information on definitions, methodologies, current data sources, ability to report on other targets, and the existence of global monitoring systems for these indicators. UN-Water also supports the concept of 'monitoring ladders' to capture different monitoring starting points, ambitions and goals at the national level.

We would like to respond to comments and concerns by IAEG-SDGs members on individual targets as follows:

Target 6.1:

There is broad support for the suggested priority indicator 6.1.1 "Percentage of population using safely managed drinking water services", which is defined as "a basic drinking water source which is located on premises, available when needed and free of faecal and priority chemical contamination". Full definitions, including information on disaggregation, are provided in the metadata note, complemented by the JMP statistical note. There is limited support for an additional indicator 6.1.2 "Average weekly time spent in water collection" but we do not consider this to be a priority indicator as it is largely subsumed under 6.1.1 and no metadata is currently available. **We recommend to retain 6.1.1 but remove 6.1.2 as a priority indicator.**

Target 6.2:

There is broad support for the suggested priority indicator 6.2.1 "**Percentage of population using safely managed sanitation services**", which is defined as "a basic sanitation facility which is not shared with other households and where excreta are safely disposed in situ or treated off-site". However the target also calls for adequate and equitable hygiene for all. To maintain the ambition of the target, we therefore support calls from a large number of countries to add a second priority indicator, "**Percentage of population with a hand washing facility with soap and water at home**". **We recommend to retain 6.2.1 and add a second priority indicator, 6.2.2, on handwashing with soap and water.**

Target 6.3

For target 6.3, we support the two suggested priority indicators currently on the list, and suggest slightly altered wordings: "**Percentage of wastewater safely treated**" and "**Percentage of water bodies with good ambient water quality¹**", and want to emphasise the importance of keeping both indicators, for which there is broad support. Wastewater (domestic and industrial) is one of the most important and

¹ We acknowledge that 'good' ambient water quality is not ensured through these proposed five core parameters, as there can still be harmful effects for example from pesticides or heavy metals. Rather than lowering the ambition of the indicator to only cover these core parameters (which would also open a new discussion on the their selection), however, we propose as with other targets the adoption of a "ladder approach" whereby the definition of good water quality will evolve over time with increased understanding of the effects of pollutants (including emerging pollutants such as endocrine disrupters, flame retardants, etc.) and the capabilities for measuring those pollutants in the ambient environment. This approach would ensure that the indicator is relevant to all countries and throughout the next 15 years. We have tried to explain this better in the revised metadata compilation document.

manageable pollutants and the indicator is both relevant and action-oriented.² Our metadata notes that ambient water quality represents the outcome of all pollution and pollution reduction activities, and describes the status of ecosystems and their functions, supporting the monitoring of many other SDG targets.

Target 6.4:

For target 6.4, we support the two suggested priority indicators, including 6.4.1 on “Percentage of change in water use efficiency over time”, and 6.4.2 on “Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal in percentage of available freshwater resources”. The wording for the latter has been changed to acknowledge comments on the importance of withdrawals. We want to emphasize that keeping both indicators is crucial to be able to report on both the environmental and economic component of target 6.4. The indicator on withdrawals builds on methodologies and data collection from the MDGs and data is available for all countries. The indicator on efficiency is action-oriented and of highest relevance also for the goals on agriculture, energy, industry, and production and consumption. For detailed information and full definitions please refer to our metadata note.

Target 6.5:

For target 6.5, a composite indicator is needed to capture the *implementation of IWRM at all levels*, as stated in the target. UN-Water supports the suggested priority indicator, “**Degree of integrated water resources management (IWRM) implementation (0-100)**”³, based on proven methodology and reporting for IWRM carried out in 2007 and 2012 on request from the CSD, for which data are available for 134 countries. For detailed information about the methodology and full definitions please refer to the metadata note. However, target 6.5 also explicitly mentions “transboundary cooperation” and we therefore support, in line with a number of Member States, to include an additional indicator on the 11 August list “**Percentage of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation**”. The inclusion of transboundary aspects in this indicator represents a significant increase in the aspiration regarding water management compared to previous international commitments⁴ and an associated indicator is essential so as not to lower its ambition. The submitted metadata shows that the indicator implies a straightforward calculation,⁵ and a global baseline comparative assessment of transboundary river basins and aquifers⁶ already exists.

Target 6.6:

For target 6.6, we support the suggested priority indicator, “**Percentage of change in wetlands extent over time**”. Our metadata note uses broad Ramsar definitions and includes further information on the connection between wetlands, rivers and lakes. We acknowledge concerns that the wetland indicator

² Further, domestic wastewater is an integral part of the sanitation chain, and its safe treatment is essential for reaching target 6.2. Industrial wastewater responds to the target 6.3 component of minimizing release of hazardous chemicals, and it is closely linked to industrialization and production practices. The target element on “substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally” is not directly covered, but in the future as the methods and data improve, the proposed wastewater indicator could be disaggregated to cover the proportion of safely treated wastewater that is safely reused. Ambient water quality represents the outcome of all pollution and pollution reduction activities, and is essential to fully report on target 6.3. The indicator describes the status of ecosystems and their functions, e.g. in regard to food production and biodiversity, and it is also strongly linked to marine pollution.

³ The difficult choice between a simple metric versus a composite indicator for IWRM is well known and has been thoroughly discussed within UN-Water. One major reason for choosing a composite indicator is to capture the intention of target 6.5 (*implementation of IWRM at all levels*), as stakeholder engagement (in itself very difficult to verify) only captures one aspect at one level. Another reason is that, to make the monitoring and reporting useful for national decision-making and policy development, countries need the full set of diagnostics, not just one number. This is particularly important when it comes to complex issues such as IWRM and water governance.

⁵ Practically only classification of cooperation frameworks still remains to be clarified and work on this is ongoing.

⁶ Transboundary Waters Assessment Project (TWAP)

does not cover the entire target, and would welcome the development of additional indicators to report on other types of water-related ecosystems. In this regard, we note that the target will be supported by indicators 6.3.2 and 6.4.2, as well as the covering of forests under target 15.2.

Target 6.a:

For target 6.a, we support in principle the suggested indicator but propose a modified indicator in consultation with OECD: **“Amount of water and sanitation related Official Development Assistance that is part of a government coordinated spending plan”**, computed as the proportion between the amount of water and sanitation related ODA a government receives, and the total amount budgeted for water and sanitation in a government coordinated spending plan. The modification allows for a better understanding of how much a country depends on ODA, and highlights its total budget for water and sanitation over time.

Target 6.b:

Although the target is essential for the long-term sustainability of interventions, we note that the circulated list does not include an indicator, and we would thus like to reiterate our proposal: **“Percentage of local administrative units with established and operational policies and procedures for participation of local communities in water and sanitation management”**. Monitoring builds directly on the UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) and the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) reporting in SDG target 6.5.

Finally, for target 11.5:

Target 11.5 on water-related disasters is also highly relevant to water as the vast majority (over 90%) of disasters are water-related⁷. Therefore any indicator proposed should disaggregate by type of disaster. Given the comments so far on 11.5, more than one indicator may be required for this target in order to meet its full ambition. We would welcome the replacement of the proposed indicator with new indicators that allow reporting on different types of losses (e.g., number of deaths and missing people; number of people displaced; and economic losses). Countries would benefit from this approach as it allows increased understanding of the dimensions of the losses from disasters.

⁷ As we approach the development of the penultimate indicators for target 11.5, there are benefits of having coherence and complementarity between those for the IAEG-SDG and those established by the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group (OIEWG) on Indicators and Terminology Relating to Disaster Risk Reduction.