

# Chapter 5: The way forward



ESCWA



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## The way forward

The months ahead leading up Rio+20 will see an extraordinary level of engagement from governments and citizens worldwide committed to tackling the world's most pressing sustainable development challenges. The task for the global water community is to ensure that water is recognised and addressed as a fundamental building block for achieving a green economy. To this end, the Zaragoza Conference was an important step.

**“ For Rio+20, we need to think about solutions to bring forward actions in developing and developed countries. We are really hoping that all stakeholders can join together to work on these solutions and achieve these targets. ”**

**Karin Krchnack,  
World Water Council**

### Events in the water diary

A key event in the calendar for water is the **Bonn2011 Conference**: “The water, energy and food security nexus – solutions for the green economy” on 16-18 November 2011 and organised by the Government of Germany. This event aims to tackle the complex interconnections between water, agriculture and energy, taking a nexus perspective on the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social, ecological). Franz Marré (Government of Germany), in his opening speech at the Zaragoza conference, explained that the Bonn2011 Conference will bring together not just water people, but people from all other water-using sectors to develop integrated and coherent solutions.

Moving closer to Rio+20, the **6<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum** on 12-17 March 2012 will be a critical event for articulating concrete targets and solutions for water and the green economy. Water and green growth is a thematic priority for the Forum and will be focused on five specific targets. The first of these targets is to propose a framework for action on water in green growth, in support of the MDGs and implementation of Rio+20 agreements that addresses local, na-

“ Think beyond the borders of your sector! What are the unintended consequences of your behaviour for other water users? ”

**Franz Marré, Head of Division for Water, Energy and Urban Development, Government of Germany**

tional and regional levels. The World Water Council are working closely with the Korean Government to develop policy options and mid- and long-term roadmaps for presentation at the Forum and to ensure that water features highly on the international agenda for the green economy. The other targets for water and green growth relate to boosting investment and innovation; sustainable financing; ecosystem valuation; and green accounting and data improvement.

On 22 March 2012, **World Water Day** will draw international attention on the relationship between water and food security. Agriculture is a key issue for the green economy as it accounts for 37% of employment, 34% of land use, 70% of water use and up to 30% of greenhouse gas emissions, globally. Agricultural production will have to increase to achieve food security for a growing population, whilst using fewer natural resources and reducing poverty through improved rural livelihoods. The event will be coordinated by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on behalf of UN-Water members and partners.

### Past and future events in the roadmap to Rio+20 specifically related to water

Date	Place	Organisers	Title	Focus
7 March 2011	New York, United States of America	UN-Water and UNSGAB	Official Side Event at the 2 <sup>nd</sup> UNCSD 2012 Prep Com	First identification of <b>key challenges</b> (warming up)
20 March 2011	Cape Town, South Africa	Korean Government and World Water Council with OECD	World Water Day 2011: Side Event 'Water and green growth'	Presentation of national <b>approaches</b> and approaches from different international organisations on water and green growth Preparation for the World Water Forum
21-27 August 2011	Stockholm, Sweden	SIWI	World Water Week 2011: UN-Water Round Tables Rio+20 day Stakeholder dialogue	<b>Political debate</b> <b>Analysis of key issues and strategies</b> for water and green growth Discussion on beyond 2015 in the stakeholder dialogue
21-23 September 2011	Astana, Kazakhstan	UNECE	The Seventh Ministerial Conference 'Environment for Europe' "Save water, grow green!" <a href="http://www.unece.org/env/efe/Astana/welcome.html">www.unece.org/env/efe/Astana/welcome.html</a>	Themes of conference: Sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems; and Greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development <b>Focus on specific challenges and best practices in Europe</b> on water and the green economy
3-4 October 2011	Zaragoza, Spain	UNW-DPAC	Water in the green economy in practice: towards Rio+20 <a href="http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/green_economy_2011">www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/green_economy_2011</a>	<b>Examples of the use of specific tools</b> to promote water and the green economy Creation of a water toolbox to provide input to Rio+20

## Water on the Road to Rio+20 and the way forward

Date	Place	Organisers	Title	Focus
19-20 October 2011	Dushanbe, Tajikistan	Government of Tajikistan, UNDESA	Towards the UN conference on sustainable development (Rio+20): water cooperation issues	<b>Current issues and challenges in water cooperation</b> , to be included in the programme of the thematic session on water cooperation in the framework of the Rio+20 conference
25-26 October 2011	Paris, France	OECD	ECD Global Forum on Environment: making water reform happen <a href="http://www.oecd.org/document/57/0,3746,en_2649_33713_47429177_1_1_1_1,00.html">www.oecd.org/document/57/0,3746,en_2649_33713_47429177_1_1_1_1,00.html</a>	Challenges and success factors for designing and implementing <b>water policy reforms</b>
16-18 November 2011	Bonn, Germany	German Government	Bonn2011 Conference 'The water, energy and food security nexus: solutions for the green economy' <a href="http://www.water-energy-food.org/">www.water-energy-food.org/</a>	Approaches which address the <b>interconnection between water, agriculture and energy</b>
12-17 March 2012	Marseille, France	France and World Water Council	6 <sup>th</sup> World Water Forum 'Time for Solutions' <a href="http://www.worldwaterforum6.org">www.worldwaterforum6.org</a>	<b>Steps for achieving specific targets</b> for water and the green economy
22 March 2012	To be confirmed	FAO on behalf of UN-Water	World Water Day	<b>Water and food security</b>
20-22 June 2012	Rio, Brazil	UNDESA	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development: Rio+20 <a href="http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/">www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/</a>	<b>Final presentation of proposals on objectives beyond 2015</b> Presentation of UN-Water report on monitoring progress in Water Resources Management

### The future of the MDGs

An important topic up for discussion at Rio+20 is the future of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Ever since their inception, the eight MDGs have catalysed and directed international development efforts. The year 2015 will likely be met with some successes and some failures. The target to halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water is on track for being achieved globally, but the sanitation target lags slowly behind. There is as yet no global framework looking beyond 2015 and the question of 'what next' bears on the future of the sustainable development agenda.

Initial discussions led by the WHO and UNICEF on post-2015 monitoring of drinking water and sanitation indicate broad agreement that further goals, targets and indicators are still necessary. One possible outcome is the conversion of the water and sanitation targets into a goal of universal coverage for both. There is support for new global targets but which are better linked to national level targets and accompanied by continued assessment of the enabling environment (e.g. policy frameworks, institutional arrangements, human resource base, financial flows) to identify bottlenecks in implementation. A key message to Rio+20 is that water and sanitation targets should reflect the General

Assembly Resolution 64/292 which declared these services as a human right. The human rights concept of progressive realisation should be realised through rolling five-year interim targets allowing for ongoing monitoring and revision.

### Rio+20 and the formal preparatory process

There a number of meetings in the formal preparatory process for Rio+20 which may provide the opportunity for water to be discussed, particularly as an 'emerging issue'.

#### Key events and dates in the formal process ahead

Date	Place	Organisers	Title
September – December 2011	Various	UNESCAP, UNECA, UNECE, UNECLAC, UNESCWA	Regional preparatory meetings
1 November 2011		UNDESA	Deadline for providing input to the working document, the 'zero draft', which will form the basis of the outcome document of Rio+20
15-16 December 2011	New York, United States of America	UN Secretariat/UNDESA	2 <sup>nd</sup> Intersessional Meeting of UNCSD
16-18 January 2012	New York, United States of America	UN Secretariat/UNDESA	Meeting to discuss Zero Draft Document
13-17 February 2012	New York, United States of America	UN Secretariat/UNDESA	First informal negotiating week on Zero Draft
5-7 March 2012	New York, United States of America	UN Secretariat/UNDESA	3 <sup>rd</sup> Intersessional Meeting of UNCSD
19-23 March 2012	New York, United States of America	UN Secretariat/UNDESA	2 <sup>nd</sup> informal negotiating week on Zero Draft
30 April – 4 May 2012	New York, United States of America	UN Secretariat/UNDESA	3 <sup>rd</sup> informal negotiating week on Zero Draft
30 May – 1 June 2012	Rio, Brazil	UNDESA	3 <sup>rd</sup> Preparatory Committee Meeting of UNCSD
20-22 June 2012	Rio, Brazil	UNDESA	Earth Summit 2012 Rio+20

The major outcome of the Rio+20 Summit will be a 'focused political document' on the objectives and two themes of the conference. This as yet vaguely defined output will be the subject of intense discussion and negotiations in the months to come, and of course during the conference itself. At the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee in March 2011, the conference Bureau issued an invitation *to all stakeholders* to provide comments and input for a draft working document – the Zero Draft – which will form the basis for the outcome document of the conference. This Zero Draft will be compiled by the Bureau of the UNCSD Preparatory Committee based on the contributions from stakeholders and Member States and presented in January 2012 when a three-day meeting will be convened to discuss the contents. From February to May, there will be another three separate weeks of informal negotiating on the Zero Draft, before the conference itself.

Ultimately, the real success of Rio+20 will not be measured by the length of negotiations, the number of heads of states attending, the bold declarations made or even the final outcome document, but by the renewed commitment and practical steps taken by countries to shift to a greener economic model.

### The role of UN-Water on the road to Rio and beyond

**A**s a coordinating inter-agency mechanism, UN-Water has a significant role to play in the Rio+20 process and the developments that follow. First, UN-Water will support the transition to a green economy by identifying practical solutions and scale-up opportunities. The water toolbox derived from the Zaragoza Conference is an example of such an effort.

Second, UN-Water and its member agencies have a number of monitoring mechanisms that can be instrumental in monitoring performance against commitments and targets agreed upon at the Rio+20 Summit. The UN World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) and Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking Water (GLAAS), FAO's global information system of water and agriculture AQUASTAT, and the UN-System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Water (SEEA-Water) are prime examples of tools which could be utilised to assess the implementation of green economy policies, ensuring that governments live up to their commitments.

**“ Together with our partners in the water community, UN-Water is in a position to express a collective view on how water can plug into the green economy. We can help by identifying messages, advocating them and translating them into policy guidance. ”**

**Zafar Adeel, Chair of UN-Water**

Third, UN-Water has a critical role to play in supporting the capacity development of developing and transition countries, facilitating knowledge generation and technology transfer. Lastly, UN-Water can distil, advocate and disseminate messages and guidance on water and the green economy, acting as a communications channel between the global water community, policymakers and the general public.

UN-Water has prepared a statement of recommendations to participants of the Rio+20 Summit. The statement highlights the importance of sustainable water management and the sustainable provision of adequate drinking water and sanitation services for successfully achieving a green economy. It emphasises the importance of targeting the poorest to help lift them out of poverty and realise their human right to basic water and sanitation services. The statement calls for effective water management to help adapt to the impacts of climate change. Water policy and institutional reform is urged, in order to promote water use efficiency, protect freshwater ecosystems and achieve water, energy and food security. Increasing the water resilience and sustainability of cities is identified as a priority area, as is agriculture where there is a need to increase efficiencies along the whole food supply chain from water use through to reducing food wastage.

# Water in a Green Economy: A Statement by UN-Water for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development 2012 (Rio+20 Summit)

This statement reflects a collective opinion of the UN-Water Members and comprises recommendations to the participants of the UNCSO 2012 as well as a list of potential actions in support of green economic approaches.

## Key Messages from UN-Water

- 1. Success of green economy depends on sustainable management of water resources and on safe and sustainable provisioning of water supply and adequate sanitation services.** Population growth, expanding cities and accelerating economic activity increase the demand for energy and food, and create additional pressures on our limited water and land resources as well as the supporting ecosystems. The lack of integration of water in the development agenda and minimal investments in water are putting a serious brake on social and economic development in emerging economies<sup>1</sup> while adversely impacting the most vulnerable groups and our environment. This places water and therefore also energy and food security at risk, increases public health costs, constrains economic development, slows down poverty eradication, and could also lead to social and geopolitical tensions while causing irreversible environmental damage.
- 2. The integrated approach to water resources management, as defined in Agenda 21, remains relevant and must be central in strategies towards a green economy.** In a recent global survey carried out by UN-Water as a contribution to the Rio+20 Summit, 80% of countries reported that they have embarked on reforms to improve the enabling environment for water resources management based on application of integrated approaches. This has already led to better water resources management practices and

1. [www.wsp.org/wsp/content/economic-impacts-sanitation](http://www.wsp.org/wsp/content/economic-impacts-sanitation)  
[www.who.int/water\\_sanitation\\_health/economic/en/](http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/economic/en/)



## Water on the Road to Rio+20 and the way forward

demonstrated important social and economic benefits. To better inform pertinent policy and decision-making by governments and external support agencies, a regular global reporting mechanism should be established for water resources management that would assess progress and share information.

- 3. The highest priority must be given to the 'bottom billion' people while addressing inequities in access to water, which are closely linked to energy security as well as food security.** These people live in slums and impoverished rural areas without access to safe drinking water supply, adequate sanitation services, or adequate food and energy services. Addressing their water challenges and helping them out of extreme poverty must receive the highest priority and trigger action at all levels for a successful green economy. This is important from a humanitarian standpoint and for promotion of economic growth and social stability.
- 4. Effective management of water variability, ecosystem changes and the resulting impacts on livelihoods in a changing climate scenario are central to a climate-resilient green economy.** The water cycle is primarily accelerated by climate change, thereby increasing the number of extreme weather events and resulting in more floods and droughts. Adaptation measures that include effective and robust water management can boost green economy approaches and minimize impacts on livelihoods.
- 5. Universal coverage of water supply and sanitation services must be a central development goal in the post-2015 period.** UN-Water urges national governments to set realistic intermediate targets and goals. The framework for achieving the ultimate goal will need to accommodate both development targets and human rights targets at all levels, in line with the notion of access to water and sanitation services as a human right as stated in the UN General Assembly Resolution 64/292. Continued assessment and analysis of the enabling environment (policy frameworks, institutional arrangements, human resource base and financial flows) will allow the identification of critical bottlenecks.
- 6. There must also be a commitment to build the foundation for a water resource efficient green economy.** Over 70% of freshwater resources are utilized for agricultural production. Therefore, we must help farmers increase water efficiency in agriculture – more nutrition and crop per drop. Similarly, all stakeholders are urged to reduce water losses and waste from field to fork, thus increasing the total food supply-chain efficiency. National governments should also commit to increase water efficiency in energy production – more Kilowatts per drop.
- 7. There is a need for increased water resilience and sustainability of cities, keeping in view the global challenges and urbanization trends.** For the first time in human history, more people live in cities than in rural areas – a trend that will continue unabated throughout this century. Much unplanned urban growth has taken place in peri-urban areas and in slums, where the absence of adequate water supply and sanitation services threatens the quality of life of its inhabitants.
- 8. Water challenges are a global concern and international action and cooperation at all level are required to accommodate them within the green economy.** As recognised by the UN General Assembly Resolution 65/154 on the International Year of Water Coop-

eration 2013, there is an urgent need to develop appropriate water management frameworks and knowledge sharing networks for sound cooperation.

- 9. Green economies can only be achieved if they are supported by green societies.** Achieving sustainable development calls for enabling policies that take into account not only economic but also water-related scientific, social, educational and environmental considerations. This will foster “green societies” that promote a culture of sustainability together with a shift in behaviour and lifestyles, which would lead to sustainable consumption and production patterns.

### Key Actions by UN-Water

- 1. UN-Water can offer solid public policy recommendations and powerful solutions for monitoring progress against key development targets.** Existing methodologies and tools can be used for measuring progress against a new model of human and economic development that captures and promotes improvements in human well-being across the world. As the world leaders at the Rio+20 Summit undertake commitments and identify related baseline indicators, UN-Water can play an instrumental role in monitoring these indicators. Existing UN-Water monitoring mechanisms such as the WWAP and the GLAAS, UN-Water affiliated mechanisms, such as the WHO/UNICEF JMP, are effective tools that can be further strengthened and improved to provide relevant outputs.
- 2. UN-Water will continue to play a major role in identifying practical solutions that demonstrate success of green-economy policy choices, and facilitate their scaling up.** UN-Water has produced a toolbox that contains synthesized lessons learnt from implementation of green economy approaches and success stories identified in the public and private sectors. Ongoing work is further focused on identifying scaling up opportunities and challenges under different developmental and geographical contexts.
- 3. In support of green economy, UN-Water will continue its focus on capacity development, including enhancing knowledge generation, facilitating transfer of appropriate technologies and reinforcing cooperation among national governments.** UN-Water can effectively contribute to meeting the water-related capacity needs of developing countries and of countries in transition. Capacity development together with innovation and investments in green development offers numerous opportunities including the creation of green jobs, which is one of the fundamental elements of a green economy.
- 4. UN-Water is an effective medium for consolidating and advocating water-related green economy messages and providing communication channels for their dissemination.** Through its success in utilizing the World Water Day platform to communicate with the general public and policy-makers, UN-Water has demonstrated that it can consolidate a body of information, identify strong messages across the United Nations system and deliver them with high impact to relevant audiences. The convening power of the United Nations would allow for successful advocacy of green economy approaches, disseminating success stories and presenting underlying policy messages.