

# ASIA-PACIFIC FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 2018

“Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies in Asia and the Pacific”

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## Report of Roundtable on SDG 6 on Clean Water and Sanitation



The Roundtable was co-organised by **UN ESCAP, UNESCO, ILO, UN Environment and FAO**, with inputs from **UN-Water**.

Moderators: Ms. Maki Hayashikawa, UNESCO, Bangkok, Ms. Sunniva Bloem, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and Ms. Cristina Martinez, ILO

Presenting the Goal Profile: Ms. Eunhee Lee, UNESCO

### Panelists

- Ms. Shaila Shahid, Gender and Water Alliance
- M. Arvind Kumar, India Water Foundation

Discussant from civil society: M. Deepak Sasi Nikarthis, CSO- India

### Working group moderators

WG1: M. Masato Motoki, UN Environment

WG2: Ms. Eunhee Lee, UNESCO

WG3: Ms. Cristina Martinez, ILO

WG4: Ms. Caridad Canales, ESCAP

Rapporteur: M. Ashok Kumar Jain, Adviser, NITI Aayog, Government of India

## **Outcome of the Roundtable**

Asia and the Pacific has made some progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6 on water. However, the region needs to accelerate its efforts across all sectors to ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all by 2030. Acceleration can be supported by encouraging policy coherence and inter-sectoral coordination within and between countries by enhancing synergies and minimizing trade-offs between sectors and goals. Water resource management, within and across countries, needs further attention and requires implementation of existing policies and laws in the water sector supported by monitoring and accountability schemes. More efforts should be made to ensure just and equitable access to water and sanitation for all with a particular focus on women and children and the poor.

Given that the region faces serious scarcity issues, with the lowest per capita water availability in the world, the region needs to improve and stimulate the management of recycled water and other sources of water, such as rain water, as a valuable resource. Governments need to design better incentives and systems to assure compliance for water management and sanitation; and stronger policies to fully eliminate water pollution. Good practices like raising awareness and promoting clean water and sanitation in relation to human rights and human health, and in the world of work, should be actively promoted. Stronger attention should be paid to water-related innovations and the promotion of green jobs across countries, but it is also important to promote existing technologies that can be applied in new sectors or in new settings. All of these can only be achieved by promoting partnerships and ensuring wide participation of local stakeholders, including women and indigenous communities and other vulnerable groups.

## **Outcome of the working groups**

### **1. Working group 1 on “Current status on SDG 6 in Asia and the Pacific, including areas where good progress is made and areas requiring specific attention and associated key challenges**

1. In the area of good progress made, an increased awareness on WASH and the importance of water can be observed.
2. In the areas requiring specific attention, the summary should be articulated with clear statistical definitions to enable correct understanding of the actual status of the SDG6; more efforts should be made to ensure just and equitable access to water and sanitation for all with a particular focus on women and children; and water resource management needs further attention as it affects both within-country and transboundary water security.
3. In the area of key challenges, despite good progress made, key challenges remain in the areas of ensuring accountability at all levels, including the monitoring and actual implementation of existing policies and laws.

Validation of the Goal Profile:

Further clarifications are required, particularly on statistics and definitions, to truly capture and reflect the current status of the SDG6.

### **2. Working group 2 on “Promising innovation and best practices to build upon for making further progress on SDG 6 in Asia and the Pacific”**

1. Innovations and best practices to achieve SDG6 require partnerships, where different sectors work together and create innovations at the inter-sectoral level, including public private partnerships and participatory planning with community engagements.
2. Mainstreaming SDG6 requires a bottom up approach, and policy making that goes from community/local level to national level, and from transboundary level to national levels.
3. There is a need to integrate human rights and health perspectives when discussing best practices in the water sector.
4. Strong attention should be paid to innovations, but it is also important to promote existing technologies that can be applied in new sectors or in new settings.
5. Nature-based solutions, such as planting mangroves to prevent flooding, can create new entry points for interventions and investments and can also help in building sustainable blue economies.
6. Innovative technologies, such as ICT and GIS mapping tools that can observe changes of water-related ecosystem in time series, should be promoted to strengthen the collection of data to monitor SDG6 indicators.

**3. Working group 3 on “Policy recommendations on priority for action, to be ideally structured around: thematic areas, means of implementation (as per SDG 17) and regional collaboration”**

Priority policy actions to make further progress on SDG 6 in Asia and the Pacific:

1. Improve and stimulate the management of rainwater as a resource.
2. Create better incentive structures for water management in general.
3. Governance of water and sanitation resources need to be monitored by members of the community and be under the control of the people who have the rights to these common water resources.
4. Create policies that reduce water pollution by des-incentivizing polluting activities and sectors.
5. Ensure the availability of budget for countries to spend on environmental inspections together with labor inspections.
6. Increase cross-border river-ecosystem cooperation and management and promotion of green entrepreneurship and employment across borders.

**4. Working group 4 on “Policy recommendations to address interlinkages between goals- a background document will be provided on this, mapping interlinkages between SDG 6 and other SDGs”**

Policy recommendation for integrated SDG 6 implementation with other SDGs in Asia and the Pacific:

1. Build awareness and capacity to identify and understand the interlinkages between different SDGs for effective implementation and encourage intersectoral coordination, within (considering geographic differences in countries) and between countries (recognizing the transboundary dimension of water) for enhancing synergies and minimizing trade-offs.
2. Ensure multi stakeholder and community participation, at all levels – including vulnerable groups; indigenous, women, elderly and small-scale farmers.
3. Whilst recognizing different national contexts, use internationally agreed principles on the right to water and sanitation as reference to prioritize water allocation and use amongst sectors and users.