

# ***“Challenges in addressing SDG 6 in Asia Pacific”***



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*Water is integral to numerous global challenges, most obviously climate change, food production, growth and poverty reduction. Yet water management decisions are still made outside the water sector, usually in the framework of agricultural, industrial or infrastructural development objectives.*

Globally there is about a 40 per cent gap between the amount of water now available and the amount of water that will be needed in 2030 for aggregate food production, energy, municipal and industrial goals. This is a dangerous situation — acute shortages will emerge, even if ecosystem water needs are not taken into account.

This is the reason why there is an urgent need that water sector managers must get out of the water box if they wish to have any hope of influencing decisions about sustainable development. Actors must start linking water to adaptation, mitigation, national planning, economic and agricultural policy, as well as disaster planning. And all this work must use an ecosystem approach.

Integrated water resources management is one way to do that. It is an internationally acknowledged approach that seeks to avoid the lives lost, the money wasted, and the natural capital depleted because of decision-making that did not take into account the larger ramifications of sectoral actions. IWRM emphasizes the importance of getting all sectors involved to build the needed resiliency for both development and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Sustainable management of water needs a basin level approach, which often requires both an IWRM approach and transboundary cooperation. While there are numerous regional and basin-level legal agreements on transboundary waters, there are also many cases where no cooperative agreements exist.

IWRM helps to allow sustainable growth and protect essential environmental services. Therefore better coordination between federal and local governments as well as among various departments and sectors is needed to curb damaging externalities, reduce waste and sustainably use all our resources for a prosperous future.

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UNSGAB sees IWRM, as important for sustainable growth. IWRM is a flexible tool for addressing water challenges and optimizing **water's** contribution to sustainable development. It is a comprehensive approach within the water sector and provides the tools for implementation. Applying IWRM is necessary to more effectively manage the rapidly increasing need for water to adapt to climate change, expand agriculture and maintain environmental needs while using an ecosystem approach.

The Board has included IWRM in all three of our Hashimoto Action Plans. We have advocated that countries report on their progress with IWRM Planning at the United Nations. We have made the point that IWRM is the best approach available for climate change adaptation.

We have also pushed countries to ratify the United Nations Watercourse Convention which is the first global framework on fresh water and the **world's** only global framework for transboundary cooperation. The Board was encouraged when the Watercourses Convention entered into force this August. We would encourage the participants here today to urge your countries to ratify the Convention. Right now, Asian countries are not well represented. The convention can help address the fragmentation among basin specific agreements. In addition, further ratifications sends a message that international water law requires states to cooperation over international watercourses. This will help countries better manage their water resources in the future.

The Board has also advocated to include IWRM as part of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goal on Water. We are happy to announce, that IWRM is now included within the proposed Water Goal under point 6.5 **“by 2030 implement integrated water resource management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as **appropriate**”**. UNSGAB is committed to continue its efforts through 2015 and advocate for the water goal to be within the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals.