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Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP)

4th Extraordinary Session of the IHP Intergovernmental Council

Online meeting, 29 September – 1 October 2021

FINAL REPORT

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

1. The Fourth Extraordinary Session of the Intergovernmental Council of the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP) of UNESCO took place online from 29 September to 1 October 2021. The meeting was attended by 55 Member States of UNESCO, of which 29 IHP Intergovernmental Council members and 26 observers. Representatives of 12 UNESCO category 2 water-related Centres, five (5) UNESCO Water Chairs, xx UN and intergovernmental organizations and xx non-governmental organizations attended the meeting as observers.

1.1. Address by the Director-General of UNESCO

2. Ms Shamila Nair-Bedouelle, Assistant Director-General of UNESCO for Natural Sciences, welcomed delegates on behalf of Ms Audrey Azoulay, the Director-General of UNESCO and thanked the Member States for their continued support for the IHP Programme. She highlighted the important contribution of scientists and international scientific cooperation towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 on Clean water and sanitation. She informed the Council of UNESCO's role, together with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), as co-coordinators of the capacity development component of the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework. She stressed the need for IHP to cooperate with members of the UN Family and Partners on the implementation of the Ninth Phase of IHP (IHP-IX) and thereby contribute to the success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to the UN Conference on the UN International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development" (2018-2028) to be held in 2023. Ms Nair-Bedouelle finally highlighted the importance of joining forces and strengthening individual capacities in achieving one common goal of "water for all".

1.2. Address by Mr Fadi Comair, Chairperson of the IHP Intergovernmental Council

3. Mr Fadi Comair (Lebanon), Chairperson of the IHP Intergovernmental Council, thanked the IHP Secretariat and the Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences for the continuous support he has received in his capacity as the IHP Council Chairperson. He highlighted that the preparation and approval of the IHP-IX Strategic Plan had been achieved through cooperation, which he hoped would continue through to its implementation. He underlined IHP's commitments to contributing towards the 2030 Agenda, the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework and the UN Conference on the Water Action Decade in 2023. He underlined that UNESCO is in a unique position within the UN system to guide its Member States in their ecological transition thanks to its category 2 water centres, Chairs and UNESCO-designated sites. He also highlighted IHP's key role in facilitating multi-level and interdisciplinary dialogues on the management of water resources through scientific cooperation, in coordination with the UN family. Finally, the Chairperson expressed gratitude to Mr Giuseppe Arduino on his retirement from the IHP Secretariat for his invaluable contribution to the programme over the past 20 years.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND DETERMINATION OF THE COUNCIL'S METHOD OF WORK

4. The Council adopted the agenda with no amendment. The Council also adopted the method of work for the session, based on the prioritization of agenda items and the related timetable, proposed by the IHP Bureau at its 60th Session on 27 September 2021.

5. The delegate of Germany, noting the short notice provided for Member States to review and consult on the proposed draft resolutions at inter-ministerial level, proposed considering the draft resolutions on Day 2 of the session. The Council adjusted the timetable of the session accordingly.

3. PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

3.1. Implementation of the eighth phase of IHP (IHP-VIII) by Member States' Representatives

6. The IHP Secretary noted that the discussion on this agenda item was merged with agenda item 3.3.

3.2. Regional perspectives on IHP by Bureau Members

7. The IHP Secretary noted that the discussion on this agenda item was merged with agenda item 3.3.

3.3. Secretariat's report on the implementation of the eighth phase of IHP (IHP-VIII)

8. The Secretariat presented the key achievements of the implementation of the Eighth Phase of IHP (IHP-VIII) since the 23rd ordinary session of the IHP Council in 2018, highlighting the main activities undertaken under its six themes together with their respective results and outcomes. The following points were also underlined: 1) the use of online modality for events and training programmes enabling a wider outreach; 2) the achievements of IHP-VIII reached in parallel with the Secretariat's work to support the preparation of the IHP-IX Strategic Plan; and 3) UNESCO's contribution to both the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework and the preparation of the 9th World Water Forum to be held in Dakar, Senegal, in 2022.

9. Mr Imasiku Nyambe, Vice-Chairperson of Group Va (Africa) of the IHP Intergovernmental Council and delegate of Zambia, requested more detailed information on the IHP-VIII implementation, with a breakdown of achievements in the Member States in Africa. He furthermore highlighted the need to involve the IHP Council Vice-Chairs and IHP National Committees in the implementation of IHP in order to engage Member States, especially those in Africa.

10. Mr Mitja Brilly, IHP Vice-Chairperson of Group II (Eastern Europe) and delegate of Slovenia, underlined the need to establish more water centres and chairs in Eastern Europe as many countries in the region either are economies in transition, or are facing economic crises. He also stressed the need for IHP cooperation in the Danube River Basin, where the number of hydrological observation stations has fallen dramatically.

11. Ms Silvia Chavez, Vice-Chairperson of Group III (Latin America and the Caribbean) and delegate of Mexico, commented that the participation in the IHP implementation of IHP National Committees in the Latin America and the Caribbean region needs to be strengthened.

12. Mr Manuel Menéndez Prieto, Vice Chairperson of Group I (Western Europe and North America) and delegate of Spain, reaffirmed the relevance of solid scientific and technical knowledge for decision-making on water-related issues and the role of water in the fight against climate change. He called for an effective use and distribution of the financial capabilities of Group I in order to respond efficiently to priorities and avoid overlapping efforts.

13. Mr Zhongbo Yu, Vice-Chairperson for Asia and the Pacific and the delegate of China, chairing the meeting, applauded the Secretariat's work, despite Covid-19 challenges. This was seconded by the delegate of Egypt.

14. The delegate of Egypt emphasized the action by UNESCO Regional Offices and congratulated the UNESCO Office in Cairo on their work related to the IHP implementation. He informed the Council about the regional meeting of IHP National Committees in the Arab region to be held either in October or November 2021. He furthermore expressed appreciation for the implementation of inter-sectoral cooperation, involving education and culture sectors (for example, the protection of cultural heritage from water-related disasters). He informed the Council that a project on water education would be developed in Egypt. The delegate also

highlighted that cooperation with other UN agencies has been multiplied, avoiding duplications of work.

15. The Chair noted the decision of the Arab Water Council, taken during their recent meeting in Dubai, to launch a water diplomacy centre.

16. The delegate of Japan provided a brief update on activities on water implemented by the UNESCO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific with funding from Japan, mentioning in particular the support provided by Japan to the publication of the Catalogue of Hydrologic Analysis for Asia and the Pacific (updated every 2 years) and related annual workshops.

17. The delegate of Ethiopia highlighted the importance of IHP activities on water-related disasters, focusing on the involvement of stakeholders in drought and flood management, from preparedness to emergency response. She also welcomed the launch of the Regional Centre on Ecohydrology (category 2 centre) and called for more activities on capacity building, including the institutional aspects.

18. The IHP Secretary thanked Council members for their comments and highlighted that sound scientific knowledge is key in addressing interrelated, complex water challenges, stressing also the importance of South-South cooperation through IHP.

Draft Resolution XTR-IV-DR.1

19. The Council considered the draft resolution (XTR-IV-DR.1) regarding a proposal to pilot a "Seal of Excellence for Urban Water Management", funded by the Republic of Korea, following a brief presentation of the proposal by the Secretariat. The delegate of the Republic of Korea expressed appreciation to the Secretariat for supporting this proposal towards the improved management of urban water and the sharing of best practices between cities. The delegate of Uganda supported the draft resolution. The delegates of Argentina and Turkey requested the inclusion of the full title, number and date of the UN General Assembly Resolution on human right to access to clean water and sanitation, referred to in the draft resolution. The resolution was adopted, as amended.

3.4. Update on the preparation of the Operational Implementation Plan of IHP-IX Strategic Plan (2022-2029)

20. Ms Silvia Chávez Cereceda (Mexico), Chair of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on the preparation of the IHP-IX Implementation Plan, and Mr Cheikh Becaye Gaye (Senegal), OEWG Rapporteur, informed the Council of the preparation of the IHP-IX Implementation Plan, in particular: the launch of the survey calling for expressions of interest; and the summary of the responses received to date. The OEWG Chair encouraged Member States to take part in the survey, which remains open. He also informed the Council of the plan to organize, in October and November 2021, a series of IHP-IX thematic meetings between the Secretariat and thematic leads, co-leads, contributors and partners.

21. The Secretariat presented the proposed roadmap and implementation matrix for the preparation of the IHP-IX Implementation Plan (2022-2029), which had also been presented at the 60th session of the IHP Bureau on 27 September 2021. As part of the proposed working methodology for the preparation of the plan, the Secretariat outlined the roles envisaged for leads, co-leads and contributors to the different outputs of the IHP-IX Strategic Plan. The Secretariat assured the Council that efforts would be made to reach out to all members of the UNESCO Water Family and to invite more partners to contribute to the IHP-IX implementation.

22. The delegate of Japan requested that the IHP-IX Implementation Plan and its budget be updated with enough flexibility to consider the fiscal timings of Member States acting as leads, co-leads and financial contributors in order to ensure a smooth implementation of the IHP-IX Strategic Plan, especially with regards extrabudgetary activities. The Secretariat reiterated that the IHP-IX Implementation Plan would be both updated regularly and aligned to UNESCO C/5 Programme and Budgeting. It was also underlined that activities of the IHP-IX Implementation Plan would be tied to the availability of budget and extrabudgetary fundraising.

23. The observer representing the International Association of Hydrological Sciences (IAHS) welcomed the reference to 'unsolved problems in hydrology' made in the IHP-IX Strategic Plan and expressed the interest of IAHS to act as contributor to the IHP-IX Implementation Plan.

24. Mr Harry Dixon, Chair of the Working Group on IHP Flagship Initiatives and the delegate of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, informed the IHP Council of the working group's meetings, noting that the following elements would be presented to the 25th session of the IHP Council: i) a draft proposal to better integrate the IHP Flagship Initiatives into the implementation of IHP-IX, to be shared by late 2021 with the hosts of the Flagship Initiatives and Member States for feedback before submission to the 25th session of the Council; and ii) workplans for each Flagship Initiative, aligning activities to the IHP-IX outputs and Implementation Plan. Additionally, he mentioned that the Working Group had requested the Secretariat to assess its resources available to manage Flagship Initiatives and consider the need to identify members of the UNESCO Water Family with capacities to act as new hosts of Flagship Initiatives in the context of the IHP-IX Strategic Plan. The latter would be necessary to ensure a sustainable support and delivery by the Flagship Initiatives. The Council agreed to hold a more detailed discussion on this matter during the 25th session of the IHP Council.

4. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS AT UNESCO

4.1. Developments at the Natural Sciences Sector and the Division of Water Sciences following the 205th to 211th sessions of the Executive Board and the 40th session of the General Conference

25. The IHP Secretary noted that this agenda item was covered in the agenda item on category 2 centres.

4.2. Report on IHP Special Account

26. The IHP Secretary made a plea for the Member States to contribute to the IHP Special Account, noting that to date the account had received no funds.

4.3. IHP-related extrabudgetary activities

27. The Secretariat presented a summary report on IHP extrabudgetary activities, indicating a total of 49 extrabudgetary projects, 21 of which were still ongoing and thanked all its financial partners including among others the Global Environment Facility (GEF), European Commission and contributions from the Republic of Korea, Brazil, Spain, Sweden, Japan, and Indonesia.

4.4 Report of the Finance Committee

28. The Secretariat provided a summary of the state of finances at the IHP Secretariat, noting that more budget had been decentralized to Africa, as the region is a global priority for the Organization.

4.5. Report of the Communication and Outreach Committee

29. Mr Martijn van Staveren (the Netherlands), Chairperson of the IHP Communication and Outreach Committee, presented the report of the Committee, stressing the need to increase communication, and applauded the efforts made to enhance IHP visibility (for instance via YouTube). He called for contributions and ideas for an improved approach to communication.

30. The Secretariat informed the Council that two communication specialists had been hired to support IHP with its communication and outreach.

5. IHP ACTIONS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 6 RELATING TO WATER AND SANITATION

31. The Secretariat reported on IHP's work on SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, in particular, SDG Indicator 6.5.2 (transboundary water cooperation), and on the development of a new indicator on water education at the tertiary level of the formal education systems, underlining that it was seeking guidance from Member States on the way forward.

32. The Chairperson highlighted recent developments in the negotiations for transboundary waters in several countries and expressed satisfaction that several category 2 centres were very active in water diplomacy, even if this was not explicitly mentioned in IHP-IX.

33. The delegate of Germany asked the Secretariat to clarify whether the proposed IHP indicator on water education related to the SDG 6 monitoring in the framework of the UN-Water Integrated Monitoring Initiative for SDG 6 (IMI-SDG6) or was intended to be used in the context of IHP implementation. The Secretariat clarified that there were no indicators on water education in the SDG 6 monitoring framework. It was noted that the IHP Council had already requested the IHP Secretariat to propose a new indicator on water education and to make it available to all Member States. The Secretariat further clarified that following a trial period, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators could be approached to consider the proposed indicator on water education. In connection with this, the delegate of Germany indicated that her country would present in the future a draft resolution on the water education indicator and its use, after the trial and finalization of the indicator.

34. The Vice-Chairperson for Africa asked whether the pilot exercise of the new methodology for the assessment of a water education indicator was carried out in other regions than in Africa (Gabon). The Secretariat responded that there was a similar pilot exercise in Uruguay.

35. Referring to an IHP questionnaire on water education which had been circulated recently, the delegate of Libya asked about the possibility for Member States who had not yet done so, to provide inputs and feedback. The Secretariat confirmed it would consider the possibility.

36. The delegate of Uganda stressed that although more attention is being given to groundwater in several African countries, data and capacity on groundwater management were limited. He requested therefore that the Council recommends developing capacity building on groundwater and suggested that IHP National Committees should engage in awareness raising on these issues.

37. The delegate of Turkey underlined that the methodology for the SDG Indicator 6.5.2 had been designed in the framework of the UNECE Water Convention, which calls for the operational arrangements for water cooperation. As such, the indicator can only measure progress in countries which are parties to the UNECE Water Convention. She furthermore emphasized the existence of many more transboundary basins around the world where cooperation is well established among riparian countries in forms other than those indicated by UNECE's operational arrangements. She stressed that the data on SDG 6.5.2 indicated that only 24 out of 153 countries had been covered by operational arrangements for transboundary water cooperation.

6. UNESCO'S WATER FAMILY

6.1. Status and operation of the UNESCO Water Family

38. The Council took note of the Secretariat's update on the status and operations of the UNESCO Water Family.

6.2. Specific actions for the management of the Category 2 Centres' network

39. The Secretariat presented the new UNESCO strategy for Category 2 Centres (40 C/79), which contains specific requirements concerning i) the eligibility of new proposals; ii) the timeframe for proposal submission; iii) agreements and entry into force; iv) yearly reporting obligations; v) the creation of the Intersectoral Review Committee to review proposals and renewal evaluations; and vi) changes in the process of the designation of category 2 centres, under the auspices of UNESCO. In particular, it was highlighted that the new strategy does not foresee any decision-making role in the process for intergovernmental bodies such as the IHP Council, but that the Executive Board and General Conference of UNESCO remain the final decision-making authorities.

40. The IHP Secretary highlighted the importance of aligning the existing process of the designation of water-related category 2 centres to the new strategy, noting that until now proposals had been submitted to the IHP Council for adoption of a resolution, requesting the assistance of the Secretariat to prepare the necessary documentation to be submitted to the UNESCO Executive Board for consideration and decision. He reiterated that, according to this new strategy, it was no longer mandatory for the IHP Council to adopt a decision regarding proposals for the establishment of new water centres.

41. The delegate of the UK took note of this new strategy and stressed the importance for the IHP Council to be provided with updates on the status of water-related category 2 centres in order to identify gaps and provide guidance on the further development of the network of water centres. The Secretariat confirmed its will to involve all members of the UNESCO Water Family and deliver collectively on the IHP-IX implementation and assured the Council that the Secretariat would continue to report to the Council on the status of water centres.

42. The delegate of Senegal mentioned the important role of the Regional Centre AGRHYMET (not a UNESCO category 2 centre) in building capacity to monitor floods through the development of its Early Warning Systems and the data integration system, taking place within the framework of the WADIRE Project in partnership with ICHARM, stressing the need to extend information and training activities to other interested countries affected by floods in the region. The IHP Secretary noted that the training activities were indeed facilitated by AGRHYMET and could be replicated in some African countries and mentioned that the Secretariat is in contact with Japan for any fundraising opportunity in that regard.

6.3 UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme

43. The Secretariat reported on key activities carried out by the World Water Assessment Program (WWAP), highlighting the World Water Development Reports and its 2021 edition.

Draft Resolution XTR-IV-DR.2

44. Following a presentation on WWAP's work on water and gender, the Council considered the draft resolution (XTR-IV-DR.2), calling to mobilize the international community towards mainstreaming gender elements in water policies. The Council adopted the resolution, with minor amendments proposed by the delegate of Turkey.

7. RELATIONS WITH UNITED NATIONS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

7.1. Cooperation with the UN System on freshwater issues

45. The Secretariat provided a general update on IHP's cooperation within the UN system.

46. The representative of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) made a statement on the cooperation between UNESCO and WMO regarding hydrology and mentioned that a working agreement is now ready for signature. He mentioned that areas where collaboration could be reinforced were being identified in the context of the IHP-IX Strategic Plan and the

WMO strategies related to floods, droughts, hydro-climate and meteorological data to support food security agenda, and high quality data to support science. He highlighted that the WMO research strategy, which would soon be approved, considers the need for improved research into operational hydrology forecast and warning systems supported by hydrological services.

47. Responding to a question raised by the Vice-Chairperson from Zambia concerning the development of the international agenda on water in Africa, with particular references to the World Water Day and the World Water Week, the Secretariat clarified that the World Water Day is organized by UN-Water and invited African countries to cooperate with the IHP Secretariat and UNESCO Field Offices in the region in order to coordinate these events. The IHP Secretary furthermore noted that governments were responsible for organizing these events in their respective countries.

7.2. Cooperation with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations

48. The Secretariat provided a brief update on cooperation with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, including: the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW), for which UNESCO is a founding partner; the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (Helsinki Commission, HELCOM), on emergent pollutants; the European Union, on microplastics; GEF, as a strategic funding partner on the topic of international waters; the Global Water Partnership (GWP), on integrated water resources management; and Ibero-American Water Directors Conference (CODIA), on capacity development. Regarding cooperation with the scientific organizations, collaborations with the following organizations were highlighted: International Association of Hydrological Sciences (IAHS), International Association of Hydrogeologists (IAH) and International Water Resources Association (IWRA), the Sanitation and Water for All and other partnerships involving UNESCO Field Offices.

49. The Vice-Chairperson for Europe and Northern America and delegate of Spain highlighted Spain's collaboration with CODIA on capacity development in Ibero-American countries and invited other countries to join Spain to extend this experience to other regions as part of the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework.

7.3. IHP's contribution to the UN World Water Development Report

50. The Secretariat delivered a presentation on IHP's contribution to the UN World Water Development Reports, emphasizing IHP's role in the preparation of the 2019, 2020, and 2021 reports, and highlighted IHP's involvement in the preparation of the 2022 report, dedicated to groundwater. The Secretariat also informed the Council that UNESCO has signed a partnership with the government of Senegal for the launching of WWDR 2022 on the occasion of the 9th World Water Forum in Dakar, Senegal.

7.4. IHP's role in the World Water Forum and other key international events and agendas

51. The Secretariat informed the Council of the IHP work on: climate change and COP26; IHP participation in international events, including, amongst others IHP's role in the 9th World Water Forum in Senegal; and IHP's participation in the Dushanbe Water Conference (Tajikistan).

52. Regarding the 9th World Water Forum, the Secretariat confirmed IHP's commitment to supporting Senegal in organizing the forum, with the help of the UNESCO Water Family, and mentioned the Memoranda of Understanding signed between UNESCO and the government of Senegal and the World Water Council to this end, noting that IHP is a part of the forum's International Steering Committee and is providing guidance on programmatic aspects of the forum. It was also noted that UNESCO Regional Offices were facilitating the regional processes of the forum. The Secretariat also mentioned that IHP was involved in the World Water Week and the African Water Week, organizing technical sessions and leading sub-themes.

8. OTHER MATTERS

8.1. The ECOMED Academy

53. The Chairperson of the IHP Council indicated that the ECOMED Academy would be created to assist Mediterranean countries set up impact assessment on eco-pollution and that this would be done in collaboration with IHP through capacity building and training. The representative of the IHP National Committee of Lebanon presented a summary on the proposed Academy and informed the Council that the Academy would constitute a platform to share best practices between researchers and practitioners on different issues including climate change and migration. The Secretariat informed that the revised draft resolution proposes a call to set up a task force to explore the feasibility of the initiative and to report on the findings to the 62nd Bureau and eventually to the 26th session of the IHP Council.

Draft Resolution XTR-IV-DR3

54. The delegate of Turkey expressed concern about insufficient time to hold discussions with the government on the draft resolution (XTR-IV-DR3) due to its dissemination at short notice. She also commented that the proposed resolution was too broad and ambitious. She proposed that the revised draft resolution be presented in a timely manner before the 25th session of the IHP Council. The delegates of Argentina, Egypt and Zambia supported the draft resolution, signalling that there was a need for capacity building in the region.

55. Several amendments to the draft resolution were proposed, including: the precise reference to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region; the explicit mention of Africa, alongside the MENA region, proposed by the delegate of Zambia; and providing details of the 'Barcelona Convention', as indicated by the delegate of Argentina.

56. The resolution was adopted, as amended.

8.2. The Grand Water Atlas of the Asian Water Towers

57. The IHP Secretary informed the Council that the draft resolution on "The Grand Water Atlas of the Asian Water Towers" had been removed from the agenda, following the request from the representative of the Member State, who originally submitted it.

8.3. The 5th Extraordinary session of the IHP Council (additional)

58. The IHP Secretary asked the Council members to decide on the date for the 5th Extraordinary session of the Council, which, according to the rules of procedure, should be held after the General Conference of UNESCO in order to elect new members of the IHP Bureau, including a new chairperson, four vice-chairs and one rapporteur. He also noted that elections should also be held to renew the membership of the IHP Finance, Communication and Outreach, and Resolution Drafting committees. He added that, based on the traditional rotational approach, the next chairperson of the IHP Council should be elected from the Asia-Pacific region. Considering the elections to be held in person, the Secretariat requested the Council members not being in position to be present in the 5th extraordinary session could always give their voting rights to their Permanent Delegation based in Paris.

59. Following the proposal from the delegate of Egypt and considering the upcoming meeting of the IHP Asia and the Pacific Regional Steering Committee (to be held on 25-26 November 2021), the Council decided to hold its 5th Extraordinary Council session on 25 November 2021 in the morning (10:00 CET) in person and the 2nd meeting of the OEWG on IHP-IX Implementation Plan on 25 and 26 November (13:00-16:00 CET) in a hybrid format.

9. CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

60. The Chairperson thanked the Council members and the IHP Secretariat for their important achievements and closed the session on 1 October at 15:30.

ANNEX I RESOLUTIONS

Resolution XTR-IV-1

RESOLUTION ON THE PREPARATION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE “SEAL OF EXCELLENCE FOR URBAN WATER MANAGEMENT”

The Intergovernmental Council of the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP) of UNESCO

- Noting** that lack of access to drinking water of adequate quality and quantity remains one of the largest human health problems globally,
- Recalling** the UN General Assembly resolution (ref. no., date and full name to be included) declaring access to clean water and sanitation a human right in July 2010,
- Further recalling** that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes a dedicated goal on water and sanitation (SDG 6) that aims to “ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all” as well as targets of other goals related to water” such as 3.3, 3.9, 11.5, 12.4, 15.1 and 15.8,
- Further noting** that UNESCO has committed along with other UN organizations and specialized agencies to the implementation of the UN SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework, a new, unifying initiative that involves all sectors of society to speed up progress by improving support to countries, and has been entrusted to co-lead along with UNDESA its Capacity development Accelerator.
- Considering** that water demand continues to increase in the future, an increasing number of cities will face challenges of managing scarcer and less reliable water resources in an efficient way,
- Also considering** one of the objectives of the IHP-VIII Focal area 4.3 "Institution and leadership for beneficiation and integration" and Focal area 4.4 "Opportunities in emerging cities" is to improve and promote the tap water and public water supply system.
- Recognising** the need for an international platform for balanced improvement of the drinking water supply by sharing best practices and trouble-shooting case with the aim of helping cities in developing Member States for the achievement of SDG6.
- Requests** the IHP Secretariat to continue cooperating with other UN agencies, especially WHO and UN-HABITAT, and facilitating the work of the Task Force in reviewing the feasibility and implementation plan of the project;
- Further requests** the IHP Secretariat to report to the IHP Bureau at its 62nd session the results with a view of initiating pilot activities and to report the results of these pilots to the 26th session of the IHP Council;
- Encourages** Member States to actively participate in this initiative.

RESOLUTION XTR-IV-2

UNESCO WWAP-led Call for Action: “Accelerating gender equality in the water domain: bridging the data gap and developing concrete actions”

The Intergovernmental Council of the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme of UNESCO

- Bearing in mind** the UNESCO global priority of Gender Equality, in line with the UNESCO Gender Equality Action Plan (2014-2021),
- Highlighting** that the Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment and the Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) on Water and Sanitation for all have evident interlinkages, as no aspect or impact of the changing hydrological cycle is gender neutral,
- Recalling** that the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development also pledges the need for high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by gender (SDG 17, Target 18), as they are key to decision-making and in ensuring that no one is left behind,
- Reiterating** that the “Water and Gender Toolkit”, developed by the UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP), consisting of a methodological framework and gender-responsive indicators, was endorsed in June 2018 by the 23rd Inter-Governmental Council of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme – IHP (Resolution XXIII-2) with the request for financial and in-kind support to disseminate the Gender Toolkit among the Member States,
- Acknowledging** that UNESCO WWAP has developed in 2019 a second version of the ‘Water and Gender Toolkit’ based on the field tests done in four Member States, containing 105 gender-responsive indicators, to close the gender gap in national and regional water data, enable the creation of data-driven gender-responsive water policies, foster gender-transformative actions in water strategies, and monitor progress towards SDG 6 and SDG 5 and the interlinkages with the other SDGs,

- Recognizing** that the year 2020 marked the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and that, despite numerous international gender- and water-related commitments, the world is still not on track with the global promises made,
- Recognizing further** that the limited gains made in the past decades are at risk because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and how urgent actions are now more crucial than ever,
- Taking note** that UNESCO WWAP is leading a Multi-Stakeholder Coalition to assess the progress made so far towards gender equality in the multi-faceted water domain, through the interconnections between water, gender, and numerous relevant aspects, which identification, evaluation, and associated recommendations for concrete actions are put forward in the Call for Action: “Accelerating gender equality in the water domain: bridging the data gap and developing concrete actions”, launched in August 2021,
- Calls upon** the interest, goodwill and support of the Member States to the critically urgent “Call for Action” promoted by UNESCO WWAP to accelerate gender equality and women’s empowerment (SDG 5) in the water domain (SDG 6), and to join the Multi-stakeholder Coalition to advocate the development and implementation of gender-inclusive strategies, and sustain concrete actions among which to ensure adequate gender-equal financing;
- Encourages** the provision of financial and in-kind support to implement the necessary concrete activities to support this Call for Action, including the implementation of integrative water and gender analyses, capacity development programmes on water and gender and advancing the collection of sex-disaggregated water data in all regions; and to sustain WWAP’s advocacy process (e.g. communication campaign, establishment of a digital community to exchange best practices) and monitoring of actions and progress in light of the Mid-term Evaluation of the UN Water Action Decade in 2023).

Resolution XTR-IV-3

ON THE PREPARATION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE “UNESCO ECOMED¹ Academy Network”

The Intergovernmental Council of the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP) of UNESCO

- Noting** that the MENA² (Middle-East and North Africa) region and Africa are facing, as many other regions, the consequences of climate change, water stress and sustainability of the ecosystem of the Mediterranean coast,
- Further noting** that these phenomena along with the massive population displacements cause Governments at all levels in this region to face an increasing scarcity of water resources, lack of sufficient treatment infrastructure for wastewater discharged into the sea as well as adequate urban drainage systems,
- Recalling** the UN General Assembly resolution declaring access to clean water and sanitation a human right in July 2010 (“Resolution 64/292 - The human right to water and sanitation”, adopted by the General Assembly on 28 July 2010) and the COP21 ‘Paris Agreement’ in December 2015, calling for a Mediterranean Dialogue on climate change adaptation strategies facing severe impacts on fast depleting water resources, environmental hazards and growing public health risks,
- Further recalling** The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) strategy recommendations for the implementation of prioritized programs for establishing minimum quality requirements for wastewater treatment effluents and securing adequate treatment of wastewaters and the provisions of the Barcelona Convention (The Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution, adopted on 16 February 1976) whereby all agglomerations have to ensure treatment of their urban wastewaters before discharging to the environment,
- Considering** that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes a dedicated goal on water and sanitation (SDG 6) that aims to “ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all” and that UNESCO has been designated to co-lead along with UNDESA the Capacity development Accelerator of the UN SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework and that UNESCO is the only UN Organization with Intergovernmental bodies on water and ocean sciences,
- Also considering** the objectives of the IHP-IX and its five priority areas as they were approved by the IHP Council at its 24th session, as well as the relevant C/4 and C/5 and its water related output,
- Recognising** the need for a regional platform to facilitate knowledge exchange by sharing best practices and inspire research projects on innovative solutions in the countries concerned as well as education, societal awareness and professional training programs of future managers and

¹ Environmental Coastal co-Operation for Metropolitan Eco-sustainable Development

² For the purposes of ECOMED, the MENA region’s countries initially identified as members of the task force are Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia

engineers of urban services facing the climatic challenges of sustainable development of the region,

- Welcomes** The proposal submitted by the Lebanese IHP National Committee to initiate the “ECOMED (Environmental Coastal Cooperation for Metropolitan Eco-sustainable Development)” Academy, with a secretariat based at W-SMART, an official UNESCO partner NGO, with the aim to: a) provide capacity building through its Network Members; b) support coastal ecosystem monitoring and c) share knowledge to support local research, education, and professional development programs of the countries concerned facing the ever-growing climate impacts;
- Requests** the IHP Secretariat to: facilitate establishing a Task Force to explore the feasibility of the ECOMED Academy, including possible cooperation with UfM, UNEP MED POL and the Mediterranean Action Plan and other UN agencies, especially UN ESCWA, in view of developing an implementation plan of the network;
- Further requests** The Task Force to report back on its findings to the 62nd IHP Bureau session;
- Encourages** Member States to actively participate in this initiative.