

To: Adaptation Committee

Responding to: Call for submissions to Parties and other stakeholders on the Adaptation Committee's (AC) mandates stemming from decision 1/CP.21

Submission by: World Water Council



12 January, 2017

1. Decision 1/CP.21, paragraph 42 (a): Requests the Adaptation Committee (AC) to review, in 2017, the work of adaptation-related institutional arrangements under the Convention, with a view to identifying ways to enhance the coherence of their work, as appropriate, in order to respond adequately to the needs of Parties, with a view to preparing recommendations for consideration and adoption by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement, at its first session (CMA1).

- What are the major needs of Parties to which adaptation-related institutional arrangements under the Convention need to respond?

Integrating water in UNFCCC programmes

For future success of the implementation of adaptation efforts, entry points should be provided for integrating water in the future climate architecture, including in the design of the UNFCCC programmes and mechanisms. Given the importance of sustainable water resources management to implement the Paris Agreement and noting that 93% of the Adaptation chapters of INDCs mention water, the World Water Council as an international multi-stakeholder platform organization is committed to contribute to the success of the Paris Agreement and its Action Agenda.

The obvious links between water and climate change have for a long time been ignored in international climate summits. COP21 changed that with water events organized by the French and Peruvian Presidencies and partners from the civil society (e.g. commitments made during the Lima-Paris Action Agenda), and most recently with the first ever organized Global Water Action Day at CoP22 in Marrakesh, as one of the feature thematic days of the Global Climate Action Agenda. This Water Day was a joint collaboration between the Moroccan CoP22 Presidency and the water community, notably the World Water Council and International Network of Basin Organizations.

However, keeping Parties' commitment, and elevating the profile of water within the adaptation agenda is a priority. Building on the success of the Water Day at CoP22, one way to support Parties to implement their national adaptation plans or determined actions would be for the Adaptation Committee to also include water as one of its key thematic focus areas. The World Water Council, drawing on its members and long experience, stand ready to support this process.

Furthermore, the importance of helping governments and partners in the least developed countries (LDCs) is evident, as those populations are the most vulnerable and are already highly exposed to extreme climate phenomena and will be the most affected by them. These are the same populations with the least capacity to respond and adapt. Given these needs, the Convention should ensure that a proportion of financing is used to enhance the water security of least developed countries.

Support the Political Call for action on Water and Climate

In view of raising political awareness for water within the climate change discussions so as to increase water security while reducing injustices, the Presidencies of CoP21 and CoP22, the French and Moroccan Governments, together with the World Water Council, organized the International Conference on Water and Climate: "Water Security for Climate Justice" in Rabat, Morocco, in July 2016, half-way between the two CoPs. Through a high-level roundtable discussion where more than

20 African ministerial delegations participated, a call for action was launched to unite African voices around the specificities of the continent with regard to water and climate change. The “Water for Africa” outcome document calls for attention to be given equally to mitigation and adaptation measures, and also calls for the development of specific financial mechanisms to benefit the African continent.

This event resulted in a Blue Book, and together with the African ministers’ call it was presented at a high-level event at CoP22 in Marrakesh, in the context of the above-mentioned ‘Water Day’, chaired by the French and Moroccan Governments.

We believe 1) that such regional cooperative efforts should be recognized and replicated at future CoPs, and 2) that it would be valuable to continue the engagement of CoP Presidencies in the future to continue cooperation specifically on water and climate and together with them, a preparatory meeting in between CoPs dedicated to climate and water shall be organized to support the process of strengthening the role of water within the CoP agenda.

Robust water infrastructure and good governance

Resilience to climate change requires adaptive water management and robust water infrastructure. People most at risk need strengthened resilience to help withstand the impacts of climate change. The World Water Council, in cooperation with the Mexican Government, have just launched a book entitled *Increasing Resilience to Climate Variability and Change: The Roles of Infrastructure and Governance in the Context of Adaptation*. Eleven case studies document successful adaptation efforts in projects, basins and regions in the Americas, Australia, Brazil, China, Egypt, France, Nepal, Mexico, Pakistan, Turkey and South Africa. The case studies argue that reservoirs are essential to build resilience contributing to adaptation to climate variability and change. However, that for them to be effective, they need to be planned and managed within a governance framework that considers long-term perspectives and multi-sector and multi-level actor needs and perspectives.

This also raises the question of financing multi-purpose infrastructure to help the most vulnerable. According to the World Water Council’s latest publication on the matter, *Water: Fit to Finance? Catalysing National Growth through Investment in Water Security*, the quest for greater water security is occurring in the face of increasing hydrologic uncertainty, rivalry between user groups, and the need to provide public goods such as drought prevention, flood control and environmental protection. Historically these different perspectives might have resulted in infrastructure designed with limited uses in mind. Looking to the future, these pressures will be intensified by climate change and increasing demand for water. Hence it is clear that multi-purpose water infrastructure (MPI) is set to become an increasingly important asset class by itself.

- Are there gaps and/or overlaps in the work of existing adaptation-related institutional arrangements under the Convention that may need to be addressed to adequately respond to the needs of Parties? If so, how could these gaps and/or overlaps be addressed?

As adaptation efforts must address management of water resources, it may be challenging for some countries, especially vulnerable states/developing countries, to realize their national adaptation plans, in particular due to lack of financing, capacity or inadequate governance. Often, allocation for water and sanitation investments in national budgets are insufficient in developing countries that have other urgent competing priorities. However, investing in water leads to increased resilience to climate change impacts, averted exponential costs and great benefits in increased productivity in the future. In addition, infrastructure planning needs to evolve to fit new requirements and constraints, pressed by climate change, scarcity, conflict over resources and other factors. This implies a more inclusive and systemic approach to the planning of such projects.

- Which institutional arrangements could be strengthened or given greater priority to enhance the coherence of their work?

Create more engagement and increased visibility for water within the Conferences of the Parties

Since water was not mentioned in the Paris Climate Agreement adopted in 2015 at COP21, other avenues need to be pursued to make water more visible within climate discussions. The implementation of the Global Climate Action Agenda is an important and innovative commitment that recognizes and involves non-state actors within the UNFCCC in order to attain the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Earlier, water did not benefit as an independent category of the GCAA, but was rather embedded under “Resilience.” It is extremely beneficial that a new category was created within the GCAA entirely dedicated to water so that water-related actions supporting the implementation of the Paris Agreement could be readily visible and addressed together.

We believe that this needs to continue, therefore over the past year, the World Water Council has worked closely with the French and Moroccan CoP Presidencies and other partners to facilitate the organization of the first official UNFCCC Global Water Action Day on 9 November in Marrakech during CoP22. This collaborative action of members of the global water community has enabled CoP22 to become a landmark in the history of the UN Climate Conference, making water much more visible within the climate debate. To enhance this work, CoP23 shall ensure to keep water high on its agenda.

This Water Day at CoP22 began with a Press Conference, where Hakima El Haite, Moroccan Climate Champion, and Charafat Afilal, Moroccan Minister Delegate in Charge of Water, and WWC Vice President Dogan Altinbilek, among others, presented key actions and messages on water and climate. In the presence of the CoP22 Commissioner, Abdeladim Lhafi, the official program was opened by the Moroccan Climate Champion, Hakima El Haite, who encouraged cooperation across various sectors so that water may be taken into better consideration in all domains. Charafat Afilal then launched the ‘Water for Africa’ initiative, which will mobilize partners to improve water and sanitation services and management in Africa as a means of countering the impacts of climate change. This initiative stemmed from the conclusions presented in the Blue Book also launched during the event, as mentioned earlier.

Systematically including a “Water Day” and strengthen its role that can lead to further meaningful actions within each of the CoPs would be recommended so as to give water issues the attention that they deserve within climate discussions.

- What modalities for cooperation and collaboration exist between the adaptation-related institutional arrangements? Which of them should be strengthened, and what new ones should be developed?

As mentioned above, systematically including a “Water Day” within each of the CoPs, would be recommended so as to give water issues the attention that they deserve within climate discussions.

2. Decision 1/CP.21, paragraph 42 (b): Also requests the AC consider methodologies for assessing adaptation needs with a view to assisting developing country Parties, without placing an undue burden on them, with a view to preparing recommendations for consideration and adoption by CMA1.

- How could adaptation needs be defined? What should be the goals(s) when assessing adaptation needs?

Climate change impacts water resources first and foremost.

The range of necessary adaptation efforts is highly reliant on the climate change impacts in a given country or region. However, it is certain that across the world, climate change further increases the intensity and frequency of natural disasters and water-related extreme events. Water is the first and foremost resource to consider in adaptation efforts, given that climate change impacts are felt through, by, and with water through unpredictable rainfall and floods, water shortages, cyclones, salinization and droughts. These events further exacerbate existing freshwater quality and quantity challenges. Systematically addressing these challenges is, therefore, key to adapting to climate change and reducing the negative impacts of water-related disasters.

Water security is key to climate adaptation and can offer solutions

Along with the immediate issues surrounding access to drinking water and sanitation and hygiene services, this resource is also fundamental for food security (rainwater and irrigation), human health, energy production, industrial productivity, biodiversity, and virtually every activity that supports prosperity and resilience.

To ensure there continues to be enough good quality water for these multiple purposes despite the impacts of climate change, it is important to increase our scientific understanding as well as generate reliable and accessible data on water. In many cases, useful data either doesn't exist or cannot be consulted publicly. When we look closely, however, 93% of the adaptation chapters of submitted INDCs included references to water, and that focus on water must remain as countries confirm their NDCs and move toward their implementation plans.

- What are examples of methodologies for assessing adaptation needs? What are the strengths and/or limitations of these methodologies?

In Copenhagen in 2009 and in Cancún in 2010, developed countries committed to jointly raising \$100 billion per year by 2020 to help developing countries cope with climate change. As part of the Paris Agreement, this goal was extended until 2025, prior to which a new collective goal will be set. It is important to ensure the pledged amount is provided for the successful implementation of the Nationally Determined Commitments and the National Adaptation Plans and that the Green Climate Fund can be easily invested in water-related projects that will increase resilience to climate change.

For too long, water has been a neglected and marginalized sector in discussions of public policies for growth and sustainable development. In comparison with sectors like energy and transport, water has not received its share of political support. This lack of attention becomes most visible, and dangerous, in the form of insufficient water infrastructure which enables greater resilience to climate change. We see this in countries at all stages of development where not enough is being done to maintain and replace existing systems and structures, nor to prepare the infrastructure for growing future requirements. Water infrastructure—especially large and multipurpose infrastructure—is costly, and its funding needs to receive the attention of the international financing systems. Yet, donors often claim that there is a lack of good quality, fundable projects. An important reason why water infrastructure is so under-funded is that it rarely satisfies the criteria of financial viability required by commercial funding sources. While more could be done to make effective use of existing “traditional” sources of infrastructure finance, there is both a need and an opportunity to engage with newer sources, such as climate funding, green bonds, pension funds, insurance funds and sovereign wealth funds.

We would suggest establishing a means of prioritization for applications to the Green Climate Fund that will strive to improve hard and soft measures related to water resource management, in addition to offering capacity development activities to those seeking funding or mechanism that facilitate donor-recipient interaction.

- What barriers and gaps exist with respect to the development and application of methodologies for assessing adaptation needs? What actions are needed to address these barriers and gaps, particularly within the context of the Convention and the Paris Agreement?

It would seem important to harmonize the metrics being used to measure progress on the Sustainable Development Goals with those that will be used to measure progress on the Paris Agreement, so as to minimize the burden on countries' reporting obligations.

As adaptation efforts globally will largely include water-related actions, suitable metrics should reflect water-related aspects of increased resilience to climate change and other related criteria, such as increased investment in water resource management, numbers of new/completed water projects or improvements to existing infrastructure, or a reduction in the number of deaths and damages resulting from water-related disasters.

It is important to recognize that review and reporting will be country driven and that there is no one size fits all solution.