

To: SBI 46

Subject: Opportunities to further enhance the effective engagement of non-Party stakeholders with a view to strengthening the implementation of the provisions of decision 1/CP.21



Submission by: World Water Council

28.02.2017

The international water community as a whole was very pleased to have been included in non-party stakeholder consultations during CoP21 and CoP22, and hopes to continue to do so in future CoPs as well as other UNFCCC meetings, such as the SBI. The World Water Council sees the role of observers to be very important and relevant, and we appreciate the opportunity to be able to submit our views on opportunities to further enhance the engagement of non-Party stakeholders in respect to the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

At the same time, the World Water Council was just recently granted observer status to the UNFCCC during CoP22, and has therefore not yet been able to fully explore the various engagement options that exist for observer organizations. Our views presented here stem from our experience as a Non-Party stakeholder serving the role of a co-facilitator of the Water Action Day – one of the dedicated thematic days within the Global Climate Action Agenda, (now Marrakesh Partnership for Global Climate Action-MPGCA) at CoP22.

In order to enhance the involvement of non-Party stakeholders we would suggest to:

1. Maintain, and further strengthen visibility for water and other issues within the UNFCCC Processes, notably through the continuation of the Action Days within the official program;
2. Provide more clarity for long-term engagement of the non-state actors within, and outside of the MPGCA;
3. Integrate more strongly multi-stakeholder engagement processes (such as the MPGCA) within official UNFCCC Processes and the work of the Parties.

1. Maintain, and further strengthen visibility for water and other issues within the UNFCCC Processes, notably through the continuation of the Action Days within the official program

The obvious links between water and climate change have for a long time been ignored in international climate summits. Indeed, there was no mention of water within the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement. However, water was identified as one of the key factors of adaptation in 93% of the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions that countries submitted the UNFCCC Secretariat. Therefore, the World Water Council believes that more effort is needed to “hydrate” climate discussions.

Indeed, it is important to be able to vehicle the message towards Parties in a formal way that climate change impacts first and foremost water resources, in particular through extreme climatic events that further exacerbate existing freshwater quality and quantity challenges. Systematically addressing water issues is, therefore, key to adapting to climate change and reducing the negative impacts of water-related disasters, while continuing to progress on sustainable development issues. In addition, water is also critical for successful climate change mitigation.

The most vulnerable countries and populations, and those who are already affected by extreme climate phenomena will be the most impacted by climate change in the future. They are also the ones

To: SBI 46

Subject: Opportunities to further enhance the effective engagement of non-Party stakeholders with a view to strengthening the implementation of the provisions of decision 1/CP.21



Submission by: World Water Council

with the least means to respond. It is for this reason that their voices need to be heard, and their participation is key within the officially recognized UNFCCC mechanisms.

2. Provide more clarity for long-term engagement of the non-state actors within, and outside of the MPGCA

In recent years, we have been very pleased to witness the evolution through which non-party stakeholders can engage with UNFCCC processes. They have been innovative and well organized, although at times, somewhat unclear and arranged at the last minute.

In our experience, from CoP20 to CoP21, the creation of the Lima-Paris Action Agenda provided a new mechanism to coordinate state and non-state stakeholders from the local, national to the global levels. The LPAA did not recognize water as one of its principle pillars, but it was embedded within different subjects, notably under 'Resilience.' Water was given visibility through a four-hour event during CoP21 on Resilience Day, but with no clear conduit towards the Parties.

At the same time, due to long years of collaborative efforts dedicated to elevating the issue of water within climate policy, members of the water community representing non-state actors continuously participated at CoP and other UNFCCC meetings. At CoP21, for example, a dedicated 'Water Day' took place in the Green Zone, civil society area to mobilize non-state actors' towards the same goals as those speaking during the Resilience day within the LPAA process. However, these Green Zone events found little resonance with climate negotiators due to lack of physical proximity and channels of communication.

While the LPAA was a respectable effort at engaging a wider range of stakeholders, the collection of activities housed in the LPAA platform appeared to have no particular coherence, with no perspective for follow-up or evolution. It is still unclear what purpose this database serves, and it could be very quickly outdated and obsolete.

After CoP21, this collection of activities converged into the Global Climate Action Agenda, now Marrakesh Partnership for Global Climate Action (MPGCA), led by the Climate Champions from the French and Moroccan Presidencies. Contrary to the LPAA, water was, indeed, identified as one of the key themes. This mechanism intended to support the creation of new partnerships between Parties and non-Party stakeholders in the implementation of the Paris Agreement, and strived to support further and faster action to address the climate crisis. However, the initiatives, which were of very different natures, seemed to lack measurable progress and continuity from the LPAA.

Within CoP22, and founded on the GCAA approach with the support of its Champions, water was emphasized as one of eight priority areas for action that were highlighted throughout the two weeks of CoP22 through dedicated Action Days, but the process of nomination of facilitators for each of the Action Days was not clear and in some cases became conflictual. The Action Days were meant to demonstrate progress since the previous CoP on a select number of initiatives (again which initiatives were most pertinent remained a subject of contention) and to announce new initiatives, in addition to offering multi-stakeholder policy dialogue opportunities.

To: SBI 46

Subject: Opportunities to further enhance the effective engagement of non-Party stakeholders with a view to strengthening the implementation of the provisions of decision 1/CP.21



Submission by: World Water Council

For us, it is clear that the historical achievement of the CoP's first Water Action Day is primarily due to the institutional agency and initiative of the outstanding leadership of the CoP21 and 22 host countries, with the support of many and diverse members of the international water community. It would be important to see, therefore, how this singular priority of a CoP Presidency can be transformed into a more permanent feature of the CoPs' multi-stakeholder outreach.

While the GCAA and the Water Day was a welcome achievement, the mechanisms for engagement, the rules of the game and the future evolution of the GCAA/MPGCA were and still are very unclear. This has created a huge amount of confusion and animosity amongst water stakeholders, who are all rallying for visibility. Therefore, while the World Water Council supports maintaining the "Action Days" as conducted at CoP22 as a means for creating opportunities to discuss important issues and involve Parties in those discussions, there is also a need for greater clarity on what purpose that serves, how observers and non-observers can be involved in that process in differentiated ways, and how these discussions can actually impact decision making at the global and national levels, rather than create much noise within a silo among stakeholders who are already convinced by the cause.

3. Integrate more strongly multi-stakeholder engagement processes (such as the MPGCA) within other UNFCCC Processes and the work of the Parties

An integrated approach for multi-stakeholder engagement that offers true interaction with Parties, UNFCCC subsidiary bodies, and overall the climate negotiations rather than a parallel process, is, therefore, of the utmost importance.

To enhance impact, non-state actors should be provided more entry points to engage physically and intellectually with the official processes of the UNFCCC. In our experience, the dedicated Water Action Day, with numerous and rich discussions, was distilled into three minutes of general statements and a very concise Outcome Document on which consensus was difficult to reach and in which the future of commitments made was rather unclear. The restitution of the Champions towards the plenary in the final High-Level event, for example, gave little mention of water among other topics, therefore, the actual impact of the Water Action Day seems to remain extremely limited in terms of the overall negotiations that take place during the Conference of the Parties.

Finally, the MPGCA should not be used as a way for Governments to appropriate action from other non-state actors towards the commitments that nations need deliver on in order to make progress. While partnerships and cooperation are key to progress, it should not become a substitute for political will and governmental action.