



Status Report on
The Application of
Integrated Approaches to

Water Resources Management

2012



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UN-Water is the United Nations inter-agency coordination mechanism for all freshwater related issues. Established in 2003, UN-Water fosters greater co-operation and information sharing among UN entities and relevant stakeholders.

UN-Water monitors and reports on the state, utilization and management of the world's freshwater resources and on the situation of sanitation through a series of inter-connected and complementary publications that, together, provide a comprehensive picture and, individually, provide a more in depth analysis of a specific issues or geographic areas.

PERIODIC REPORTS:

World Water Development Report (WWDR)

is coordinated by the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) on behalf of UN-Water and published every three years. It provides a global strategic outlook on the state of freshwater resources, trends in use of the resource base in the various sectors (inter alia, agriculture, industry, energy) and management options in different settings and situations (inter alia, in the context of urbanization, natural disasters, and impacts of global climate change). It also includes regional assessments.

- ✓ Strategic outlook
- ✓ State, uses and management of water resources
- ✓ Global
- ✓ Regional assessments
- ✓ Triennial (4th edition)

Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS)

is produced every two years by the World Health Organization (WHO) on behalf of UN-Water. It provides a global update on the policy frameworks, institutional arrangements, human resource base, and international and national finance streams in support of sanitation and drinking water. It is a substantive input into the activities of Sanitation and Water for All (SWA).

- ✓ Strategic outlook
- ✓ Water supply and sanitation
- ✓ Global
- ✓ Regional assessments
- ✓ Biennial (since 2008)

The progress report of the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP)

is produced every two years. The JMP Report is affiliated with UN-Water and presents the results of the global monitoring of progress towards MDG 7 target C: to halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking-water and basic sanitation. Monitoring draws on the findings of household surveys and censuses usually supported by national statistics bureaus in accordance with international criteria.

- ✓ Status and trends
- ✓ Water supply and sanitation
- ✓ Global
- ✓ Regional and national assessments
- ✓ Biennial (since 1990)

In the years 2012 – 2013 UN-Water also publishes:

2012 UN-Water Report on Integrated Approaches in the Development, Management and Use of Water Resources is produced by UN-Water for the Rio+20 Summit (UNCSD 2012). A similar status report was produced in 2008 for UNCSD. The report assesses the status and progress of the management of water resources in UN Member States and reports on the outcomes and impacts of improved water resources management.

2013 UN-Water Country Briefs pilot project. They provide a strategic outlook on the critical importance of investments in water for human and economic development at country level.

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Foreword

The Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development marks 20 years since the historic Earth Summit¹ that was instrumental in laying the foundations and charting the course for contemporary sustainable development.

This report looks at the issues that pertain to the management, development and use of fresh water resources. Its starting point is in the Earth Summit's Agenda 21 recommendation for an integrated approach to the management of water resources. This report demonstrates that while there is still a long way to go, progress towards the goal of sustainable water resources management is undoubtedly being made.

For example, the report shows that 64% of countries have developed integrated water resources management plans and 34% report an advanced stage of implementation. However, progress appears to have slowed, or even regressed, in low and medium Human Development Index (HDI) countries since the last survey carried out in 2008. Much remains to be done to finance and implement plans in many HDI countries.

The Rio+20 conference has chosen Green Economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication as an overarching theme for realizing transformational change.

One of the challenges, and opportunities, of Rio+20 is to define ways of scaling-up and accelerating the myriads of positive sustainable development actions and initiatives that are flourishing across the globe, including in the area of water resources. It is hoped that the findings and lessons captured herein will help the Rio+20 negotiators set targets and reach agreement on actions to advance more effective management, development and use of this essential resource for peoples (or households), economies and the natural world.

The report is part of the stock-taking needed in the run-up to Rio+20, but is also necessary in order to recalibrate the sustainable development compass to allow Earth's seven billion inhabitants, which will rise to over nine billion by 2050, to prosper and fulfill their full potential. Rio+20 is likely to set a process in motion to deliver a range of new goals for after 2015 aimed at bringing rich and poor nations into more cooperative efforts towards a sustainable 21st century.

This report, rich in analysis and recommendations, can assist in defining how those new transformational goals can be forged – and, more importantly, be met – over the coming years and decades. UN-Water will strive to contribute to this process through improved monitoring and reporting to inform policy-making, advocacy and capacity development, and through more effective coordination across the spectrum of UN agencies involved in water in lending support to countries toward achieving sustainable water resources development and management.



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Meteorological Organization
and Chair, UN-Water



¹ More formally known as United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

Executive summary

At the request of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development a global survey has been carried out to determine progress towards sustainable management of water resources using integrated approaches. Findings from the analysis of data from over 130 countries show that there has been widespread adoption of integrated approaches with significant impact on development and water management practices at the country level.

The rationale for a status report on water resources management

Agenda 21 of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992 called for “*the application of integrated approaches to the development, management and use of water resources*” (Chapter 18). UNCED recognised the challenges of managing water resources for a multiplicity of uses and threats which are set within the much broader contexts of changes in the economic, social and political landscapes.

UN-Water was asked by the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (UN CSD, at its meeting in 2005) to produce status reports on the progress of water resources management for the UN CSD meetings in 2008 and 2012. UN-Water called upon UNEP to lead a UN-Water Task Force on Water Resources Management and established a Working Group¹ to prepare the present status report for submission to the UN CSD 2012, the Rio+20 conference.

The report follows an earlier UN-Water report presented to the 16th session of the CSD in 2008 which primarily took stock of the development and implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management and Water Efficiency Plans, as required in the 2002 Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPoI). The present report is more extensive, covering more

management and related work of the UN and other external support agencies at country level.

Key messages and recommendations

The following key messages and recommendations are based on an assessment of the findings from the survey². The specific findings are summarized further below.

1. **Since 1992, 80% of countries have embarked on reforms to improve the enabling environment for water resources management based on the application of integrated approaches as stated in Agenda 21 and affirmed in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.**

To ensure continued progress and positive outcomes in applying integrated approaches to water resources management, government and external support agencies should learn from experience and increase their efforts. Implementing integrated approaches to water resources management should remain a key component of future development paradigms.

2. **Water-related risks and the competition for water resources are perceived by a majority of countries to have increased over the past 20 years.**

Given the increasing challenges and risks, it is important that the international community supports countries to operationalize integrated approaches that focus on solutions that address country priorities and needs.

3. **Countries that have adopted integrated approaches report more advanced infrastructure development but further efforts are needed to ensure appropriate levels of coordination.**

Countries should be supported in adopting integrated approaches to water resources management that are coordinated with the development of infrastructure to

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