

---

## SUSTAINABILITY DECLARATION

---

March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018



**We, multi-stakeholder participants attending the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum “*sharing water*”<sup>1</sup>, considering the convergence of all the statements produced during the forum<sup>2</sup>, call for an urgent mobilization of all parties to ensure a sustainable future for our World and commit ourselves to face and tackle the increasing water challenges.**

### Preamble

**Sustainability means that human development is built in harmony with the environment. This leads to respect for biodiversity, for human rights (especially the 2010 Human Right to Water and Sanitation), and responds to the basic needs for a dignified life (health, food, energy, education). It refers to economic growth, resilience, mitigation and adaptation measures to face natural hazards and human made disasters including climate change, responses to emergencies and the provision of a cooperative environment for prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts.**

Water is among the most threatened resources and the most necessary for of humankind and the planet’s ecosystems (especially groundwater and major basins such as the Amazon), biodiversity and climate.

Its proper governance and management is essential, integrating urban and rural areas to achieve sustainable development (food, energy, health, economic activities, cities development, education, gender), human well-being and human rights.

Progress in water management is not only an objective *per se*, but also a pivotal contribution to the global success of most Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (ASD). Achieving the water targets is crucial for the success of the whole ASD. For example, ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all is a

---

<sup>1</sup> The 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum has been jointly organized by the World Water Council and the Brazilian authorities. It gathered thousands of participants in Brasilia from 18<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2018. Many sessions, panels, events were made open to/accessible to all types of representatives and stakeholders, coming from more than 170 countries.

<sup>2</sup> The youth declaration (March 18th), the Brazilian Business Commitment for Water Security (March 19th), the parliamentarians manifesto (March 20th ), the ministerial declaration issued on March 20th, the water governance initiative pledge (March 21st), the call for action of local and regional authorities (March 21st), the Water Business Day Declaration (March 22nd ) as well as the outcomes of the nine thematic closing sessions, of the regional process, of the citizen process, of the political process and of the sustainability focus group reported in their closing sessions.

necessary condition for ending poverty and hunger, improving quality of life and achieving most of the other ambitious goals proposed in the 2030 Agenda.

Water issues cannot be addressed in contexts where peace, human rights, equity, gender respect, equality and education are absent. Due to the cross-cutting nature of water, specialists and other stakeholders in the sector must improve cooperation with other sectors and look “out of the water box”.

### Recommendations

**We consider that current water policies will not be sufficient to reach the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We request the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development of the United Nations (HLPF, July 2018) to give a determined push to cooperative alliances, water reforms and financial innovations.**

Global water challenges are increasing. Action towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets related to water must be implemented without delay and achieved in due course: there is not much time left until the first review of Goal 6 on water in July 2018 by the HLPF.

We call for the strengthening of the United Nations’ support of its Member States and for the development at the highest level of a political dialogue and regular UN meetings on water. This should be supported by the reinforcement of multi-actor platforms including scientists, public and private practitioners, national partnerships, civil society, donors and decision makers.

International cooperation based on the United Nations Decade should be promoted and actively coordinated with major treaties<sup>3</sup>.

**The SDG 6 targets cannot be achieved with current policies. We, together, must commit to the implementation of good practices (many of them have been presented during the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum) as well as a drastic improvement of water governance.**

We particularly raise the attention to some major conditions of success :

1. Governments should announce national commitments to increase their ambition towards achieving SDG 6 and other SDG’s targets related to water, leaving no one behind and starting by the most vulnerable, including forcibly displaced populations, and to give a dedicated support to fragile states ;
2. Sufficient financial innovative tools and instruments at all levels need to be developed to ensure effective progress towards SDG 6 targets;
3. Peace, stability and prevention of conflicts should be ensured through wise water diplomacy arrangements and alliances, as well as transboundary water cooperation based on win-win solutions embedded into international treaties;
4. Climate change mitigation and adaptation measures need to be budgeted and implemented at all relevant scales, with the support of international community assistance if necessary;

---

<sup>3</sup> The Convention on the law on Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses (1997), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (2015), the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change (2015) and the new Urban Agenda Habitat III (2016)

5. Monitoring and information need to progress and be better used. Current indicators do not suffice to monitor the targets set by countries in the SDGs and new sub-indicators needs to be brought forward; finalization by the UN Statistical Commission of the methodology of Tier III indicators relative to Water is needed;
6. Knowledge, science (including human sciences), technology and innovation at large including the one from traditional knowledge should guide policy makers and contribute to reinforce the capacity of local governments and citizens;
7. Legal and economic security have to strengthen the public and private sectors responsible for water supply and sanitation services, with a focus on universalization, transparency and tariff moderateness; it should recognize community based approaches;
8. Business needs to value and mainstream water into its strategies, materiality and decision making process<sup>4</sup> and share good practices in water management;
9. The value of water has to be understood beyond its economic sense towards its cultural, medicinal, traditional and social heritage. The education system must transmit it to the youngest starting by the most vulnerable;
10. Water issues must no longer be considered in isolation, by focussing on the terrestrial part of water cycle alone (from crest to reef, including groundwater) but have to be strongly related to the oceans and the atmosphere, as a unique cycle. In all institutions and decision-making processes, sectorial approaches must be questioned, and tools must be built to ensure coherence. Integrated efficient water management need to be implemented at the different levels of the watershed. Sustainability of water critically depends on conservation, restoration and proper managements of ecosystems like forests. Nature based solutions, especially to sustain a new city model, aren't optional;
11. Strong, democratic and inclusive collaboration and cooperation involving the society at large is expected. It must gather indigenous peoples' communities and minority groups, private and financial sector, academics and policy makers, parliaments and local authorities, national water partnerships. A specific acknowledgment of women and youth contribution to the sector is mandatory;
12. Humanitarian assistance is not a choice. It should be a commitment for every Nation around the world. It requires global and governmental sufficient funding and support to existing coordination mechanisms (clusters and national coordination platforms), on the response to crises (conflicts, major natural disasters), preparedness measures and rehabilitation transitional strategies.

### Concluding Statement

**We affirm that the United Nations and the governments, as well as all societies must consider water as a need to achieve Sustainability. No solution for water issues can be found without progress for Sustainability in many other sectors. Recognising the Human Right to Water and Sanitation in 2010 and dedicating a specific SDG to water and sanitation in 2015 have been major steps in this direction. However, efforts remain to be accomplished beyond the water sector to develop holistic policies and avoid fragmented approaches.**

### **Self-commitment of the Forum to reduce its own footprint**

---

<sup>4</sup> Currently water (SDG 6) is in the 11<sup>th</sup> position among all SDG according to a research with 250 major global companies, been prioritized by only 34% of them.

We all considered from the beginning of the Forum's preparation that the Forum itself had to be as respectful as possible of the environment. Many efforts have been made to reduce the footprint of our activities and a report of these efforts will be published.