

UN SDG 6 Synthesis Report – Draft (2nd May 2018)

Coalition Eau comments

Coalition Eau is the network of French NGOs from the water and sanitation sector. We welcome this very useful and comprehensive report, and the effort made to reflect all the water related issues, including the interlinkages with other issues.

Areas that could be further developed include:

a) Methodology for global estimates

Considering the fact that less than 50 per cent of countries have comparable baseline estimates for the majority of SDG 6 global indicators, the report should clearly explain how the global trends and estimates are being calculated.

b) Linkages with the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation

The Human Rights to Water and Sanitation are mentioned several times. However the report could go further and present the linkages between the SDG framework and the Human rights to water and sanitation: explain how the human rights approach is taken into account in the SDGs or not, and how the SDG 6 and other SDGs contribute to the progressive realization of the HRTWS.

On page 23, the report says: “The human rights to water and sanitation is widely recognized by Member States (Box 2)”. This sentence can be confusing: while the human right has been internationally recognized through the UN General Assembly resolutions; how many countries have recognized them in their national law? Some figures and examples could be provided here.

c) ODA targeting

For indicator 6.a, aside from global amounts, the report could provide more information about the ODA targeting (information available through the OECD CRS database): disaggregation by type of countries, type of activities (large scale/ basic systems, sector strengthening etc.). The report notices that ODA targeted at the water sector has shifted away from grants towards concessional loans since 2005. This is one of the main reasons why ODA is not targeted towards the countries most in need. This could be analyzed.

d) Accountability mechanisms on the implementation of SDG6

The report makes a strong case for the need for reliable and consistent data as essential to stimulate political commitment and inform policy-making and decision-making. But data is not enough. Governments are accountable for their formal commitments under SDG 6 and have committed to engage in systematic follow-up and review of implementation. Four Civil Society Organisations - End Water Poverty, Watershed Programme, Coalition Eau and WSSCC - agreed to conduct an in-depth inclusive analysis on country-level accountability mechanisms towards SDG6 implementation and produce a comprehensive report for the HLPF 2018.

The report calls for governments to invest in effective national accountability mechanisms, to support progress towards Agenda 2030 ambitions. Effective accountability mechanisms are considered transparent, engage a diversity of stakeholders, facilitate and encourage critical reflection on progress, and are responsive to issues addressed by stakeholders. The study indicates that participatory accountability mechanisms have the potential to increase political attention and funding for SDG 6. Moreover, it leads to capacity building within government for implementation of SDG 6. Participation in accountability mechanisms can also lead to better and more effective ways for the collection of data and

monitoring practices, which can successfully influence government policies, and an increased attention on marginalised areas, grassroots communities, and vulnerable groups.

Government should increase accountability mechanisms for all stakeholders (including grassroots and marginalised groups) in a formal and systemic manner, on a regular basis, while ensuring that stakeholders' contributions with regard to planning, implementing, monitoring and reporting on SDG6 are taken into account.

e) The need to strengthen global water cooperation to achieve SDGs

Water is a global common good and protecting and preserving it is a shared responsibility that requires international cooperation. To achieve the water related SDGs, there is a need to strengthen intergovernmental coordination on all water matters at the UN level, including the participation of all stakeholders. The High Level Panel on Water, in its outcome document of March 2018, stated as a headline recommendation : "Strengthen the UN system's support to member states and its coordination of water matters, by establishing UN meetings on water at the highest possible levels, consider a scientific panel on water and promote international cooperation. »

f) Interdependency of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): from recognition to ACTION

One of the main messages of the report is the need to understand that achieving SDG 6 is essential for making progress on all other SDGs and vice versa. Despite the strong rhetoric on the linkages across SDGs and the need for a multi-sectoral approach to the 2030 Agenda, challenges remain in understanding how governments and partners can work effectively across sectors to drive a comprehensive approach to the achievement of social, environment and economic goals. This is why beyond recognizing the important role of water for the realization of the 2030 Agenda, there is a need to ACT on this interdependency and engage the water sector in having a greater impact on other SDGs.

g) Global baseline status of water related targets and indicators in other SDGs

It would be interesting to complement this report with information regarding other water related targets across the 2030 Agenda:

viability of food production systems and drought / flood (2.4), water-borne diseases (3.3), pollution-related diseases and water contamination (3.6), safe schools (4.a), adequate and safe housing and basic services (11.1), water-related disasters (11.5), rational use of resources and risk management (11.b), adaptation to climate change, (12.4), freshwater ecosystems (15.1), land degradation and desertification / drought / floods (15.3).

h) "Leave No One Behind" should not forget people in emergency and conflict settings

The report stresses the need to eliminate inequalities and the fact that effective policies, strategies and subsidies must be developed to ensure no one is left behind, which implies going beyond households and increased attention on disadvantaged groups. The report also recommends improving international cooperation and better use of funding. However, insufficient attention is given to the fact that "leaving no one behind" also means not forgetting vulnerable populations that present specific challenges, like refugees, displaced populations, and people in humanitarian crisis and conflicts.

SDGs ambition towards universal access will not be possible without specific strategies to target these vulnerable populations, including improving the response, coordination and financing of WASH in emergency contexts. The links between emergency mechanisms and development mechanisms need to be strengthened, particularly in the post-crisis phase, in order to provide a structural and sustainable response to people's WASH needs. In times of stability, crisis prevention and risk reduction measures must be put in place.

There is also need to better integrate data from humanitarian contexts into SDG monitoring. Finally, specific support is needed for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals for fragile and conflict-affected States.

i) Gender disaggregated data on capacity development and human resources

The report mentions the lack of capacity, human resource shortages and the fact that several countries are producing national capacity development strategies for the water sector. It would be particularly interesting to have gender disaggregated data on this issue.

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