

**THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR ACTION, 'WATER FOR LIFE':
PROGRESS ACHIEVED AND LESSONS LEARNED
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

30 March 2015

UN Headquarters –Trusteeship Council

Background

In December 2014, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Resolution International Decade for Action, 'Water for Life', 2005-2015, and further efforts to achieve the sustainable development of water resources (A/RES/69/215) which "invites the President of the General Assembly to convene a one-day high-level interactive dialogue of the sixty-ninth session of the Assembly on a comprehensive review of the progress achieved in the implementation of the Decade, including the best practices and lessons learned relevant to the achievement of sustainable development".

Water is essential for life on this planet – it is the source and foundation of all living things. Over the past years the international community has come to acknowledge the indispensable role water and sanitation play for human well-being and sustainable development. With the aim of furthering efforts to achieve internationally agreed water-related goals such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the period 2005-2015 as the International Decade for Action, 'Water for Life'. The Decade has strived to promote greater focus on water-related issues, the participation of women in water-related development efforts, and the strengthening of cooperation at all levels.

During the course of the Decade, great progress has been made internationally in the areas of water and sanitation: almost two billion people gained access to improved sources of sanitation between 1990 and 2012¹ and in 2010 the MDG target to halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water was met ahead of schedule. In the same year, the UN recognised access to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right.

In the Rio+20 Conference, Heads of States and Governments recognized that water is at core of sustainable development and underlined the critical importance of water and sanitation within the three dimensions of sustainable development. Discussions around the Post-2015 development agenda, including a proposed goal of ensuring the availability and sustainable

¹ WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP), Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation, 2014 Update: http://www.unicef.org/gambia/Progress_on_drinking_water_and_sanitation_2014_update.pdf

management of water and sanitation for all by the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals, emphasize the importance of promoting an integrated approach to sustainable water management.

Objectives

In line with resolution 69/215, the high level interactive dialogue aims at providing Member States and other stakeholders an opportunity to comprehensively review the achievements and gaps in the implementation of the ‘Water for Life’ Decade, while also reflecting on the lessons learned that can contribute to an effective and comprehensive approach to availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation in the post-2015 development agenda.

As the international community approaches the end of the Decade and the beginning of the post-2015 development agenda, it is timely to have this in depth discussion on how the best practices and lessons learned from the Decade can be translated into concrete actions for sustainable water management in the new development agenda.

Format, Outcome and Participation

The one-day interactive dialogue will take place on 30 March 2015, at the UN headquarters in New York, and is being prepared in cooperation with UN Water.

It will consist of an opening and a plenary segment in the morning, dedicated to a comprehensive review of the ‘Water for Life’ Decade, followed in the afternoon by one interactive, multi-stakeholder panel discussion , focused on the theme “carrying lessons learned from Decade into the post-2015 development agenda”.

A President’s summary will be prepared and circulated to member States and stakeholders as the outcome of the high-level interactive dialogue.

The interactive dialogue will include participation of Member States at the highest possible level, Observers, UN Agencies and representatives of civil society, private sector, and other relevant stakeholders.

Additional details, including a provisional programme, will be communicated at a later stage.