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6th World Water Forum Ministerial Process – Draft document

1. We the Ministers and Heads of Delegations assembled in Marseille, France, on 13 March 2012 at the Ministerial Conference of the 6th World Water Forum, “Time for Solutions”, are determined to address water challenges at all scales. Building upon the outcomes of 5th World Water Forum, held in Istanbul on 16-22 March 2009 and taking account of the contributions of the political, thematic, regional and grassroots and citizenship processes the inputs collected on the “Platform of Solutions” of the 6th World Water Forum, we therefore agree on the following:

2. Following up on Chapter 18 of Agenda 21, the United Nations Program of Action from Rio at the Earth Summit on 3-14 June 1992 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development on 2-4 September 2002, water is central to provide powerful, multifaceted contributions to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development “Rio+20” on “a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication” and “the institutional framework for sustainable development”, including the Rio Conventions , in particular the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (the UNFCCC).

Ensure Everyone’s Well-Being: Implement the Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation, Expand Sanitation and Deliver on Water and Health

3. Bearing in mind the commitment made by the international community to fully achieve the Millennium Development Goals and following the recognition of the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation through United Nations resolutions, we commit to accelerate the implementation of this right by all appropriate means to overcome the water crisis at all levels.

4. We are therefore determined to find solutions to achieve the required availability, quality, acceptability, accessibility and affordability of safe drinking water and sanitation for all, focusing on the most vulnerable and taking into account gender equality. To improve the situation of the nearly one billion people lacking access to safe drinking water and the 2.6 billion people without proper sanitation, we will target our efforts on local and national planning and coordination, adequate financing and investment, and robust regulatory, monitoring and accountability frameworks, involving all stakeholders.

5. An integrated approach towards sanitation and wastewater management is needed, as the provision of non-conventional water resources available for re-use, turning wastewater into a resource, will stimulate local economies and help prevent the degradation of ecosystems. We need to ensure that wastewater management, including collection, treatment, de-pollution and re-use is an integral part of integrated water resources management as well as of rural and urban development planning.

6. We need to intensify prevention and reduction of freshwater pollution through national regulatory frameworks and institutions, with a view to accelerating access to sustainable sanitation. We agree to promote a shared, innovative and integrated vision of urban, rural, industrial and agricultural wastewater including context-specific targets for the implementation of our actions, through national policies supported by regional and international cooperation, including the dissemination of relevant technologies.

7. Water and sanitation are essential for health and hygiene and related Millennium Development Goals.



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We are determined to follow up on the resolution on safe drinking water, sanitation and health, adopted by the World Health Assembly, to fight water-related diseases. We will mainstream safe drinking water and sustainable sanitation, personal and domestic hygiene, water quality monitoring and warning tools in health strategies and programs. Their elaboration and implementation rely on strengthened, integrated and coherent inter-sectoral policy frameworks and cooperation between all authorities and stakeholders.

8. To contribute to health, hygiene and nutrition, solutions require effective institutional frameworks to operate and maintain existing water and sanitation services and to optimize investment in infrastructure. Integrated processes such as water and sanitation safety plans contribute to better water quality and health risk management. Strong support to community ownership, participation, education and empowerment is also needed to change behavior.

Contribute to Economic Development: Green Economy, Water for Food Security and Water and Energy

9. Water has a critical role in all environmental and social systems that underpin the global economy and should therefore be recognized as such in economic development in conjunction with its social and environmental benefits. The development of a green economy will translate sustainable development into operational policies to eradicate poverty and foster growth while preserving ecosystems, taking into account, as appropriate, water footprints.

10. A new approach to water, food and energy based on a better understanding and more systematic recognition of their inter-linkages in decision-making and planning will improve the allocation of these scarce resources. More efficient use, productivity gains and reduced waste will enable better access to water, food and energy. We will enhance policy coherence across sectors, adapt existing institutional arrangements and establish incentives frameworks to maximize synergies and avoid unintended consequences across sectors.

11. Given the cross-sectoral demands for and multiple uses of water, sustainable development requires integrated water resources management, which offers a set of principles and processes to facilitate decision-making, planning and investment at all levels. As part of the solution, we encourage, at the appropriate basin level, integrated water resources management authorities to adopt the more coherent, equitable and sustainable cross-sector frameworks needed to build a green economy.

12. Water is key for agriculture, rural development, food processing and nutrition, as there can be no food security without water. Therefore water and food security policies need to be integrated. To achieve food security for a growing world population, in a context of global climate change, solutions involve tailor-made and innovative approaches to address the diversity of situations worldwide, including the availability and quality of water and land, the development of infrastructure for rain-fed and irrigated agriculture, the exposure to floods and droughts, the utilization of groundwater resources and the institutional capacity of the stakeholders concerned.

13. We will prioritize smallholder farmers, especially women, in water and food security policies. To deliver more nutrition and crop per drop and to increase the total food supply-chain efficiency “from field to fork”, we will focus on the promotion of soil and water management to minimize erosion, land degradation and water pollution. Solutions include water saving and storage technologies and practices

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in rain-fed and irrigated areas, the reduction of water and food losses and waste, the re-use of wastewater in agriculture and industry, accelerated development of drought-tolerant plant varieties and the involvement of food security stakeholders, especially producer organizations, in water policies. The G20 commitment to address water and food security is welcome.

14. Water and energy are increasingly interdependent, as water is a major input to energy production and industrial processes and energy is needed to produce and distribute water and manage wastewater. We need to address water and energy policies coherently to foster the sustainable and efficient use of water and energy to satisfy universal access to both while favouring growth opportunities. In this, we appreciate that success of most mitigation interventions to combat climate change, rests upon the availability and sustainability of water resources. In this perspective, multistakeholder platforms and intergovernmental processes like the UNFCCC, will help harmonize water and energy policies, through multi-sectoral processes.

15. Reporting on water use in energy production and on energy use in the water and sanitation sector will improve water and energy efficiency. Improved energy efficiency in water and sanitation services, especially for desalination, and in agricultural and industrial water use, will contribute to greenhouse gas reduction. We will support the Sustainable Energy for All initiative, acknowledge hydro-power as a renewable source of energy for urban and rural areas and promote the production of “more energy per drop”, sustainable multi-purpose water storage, wastewater as a source of renewable energy as well as the use of renewable energy, in particular solar and wind, in water supply and sanitation.

Keep the Planet Blue: Water in the Rio Conventions, Water-Related Disasters and Water and Urban Development

16. Due to its cross-cutting nature, we need to ensure that freshwater is an integral part of conventions, strategies and programmes pertaining to climate change, biodiversity and desertification. Leveraging synergies with and among the 3 Rio Conventions is essential and will be continued. A similar focus on freshwater with respect to other international environmental agreements, including for forests, waste and chemical management, will enable coordinated solutions, especially in terms of knowledge and experience sharing, long-term forecasting and planning, strategic financing and investment and research and policy interactions.

17. We need to build resilience to climate change and variability through a more flexible and integrated land and water resources management. Improved water use efficiency, water storage capacity, inland navigation, ecosystem services, wetland restoration and conservation as well as intensification and diversification in agriculture, will contribute to adaptation and mitigation. Solutions to adapt to climate change also include better water demand management, preventive measures and insurance schemes.

18 In response to climate change we call for cross sectorial policies whereby adaptation and mitigation measures developed within the UNFCCC can fully support the needs of the developing world. Following the decision of the UNFCCC COP 17 in Durban, the water community stands ready to contribute to organizing and follow up of the Technical Workshop on Water under SBSTA as it will illuminate to the Parties how dependent all adaptation and mitigation measures are with regard to on appropriately addressing water.



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18. We recognize that water-related biodiversity and ecosystem services are essential for water management infrastructure, as they provide substantive economic, social and environmental returns on investment at national and transboundary levels. We will take actions for the valuation of costs and benefits associated with water-related biodiversity and ecosystems, in projects such as dams, storage, irrigation and drainage. We will also encourage investment in water resources as natural capital through appropriate incentives and policies such as water stewardship.

19. Due to worsening water-related natural disasters, such as floods and droughts, as well as man-made disasters, we will engage in pro-active national and transboundary strategies. Solutions encompass risk prevention, monitoring and assessment, early warning systems, emergency and recovery plans, which fully take into account water and sanitation, integrated flood management and infrastructure construction and operation. We recognize the urgent need for platforms, preferably at the basin level, for the implementation of joint strategies and the coordination of prevention and response in emergency situations. We need to prepare for mega water-related disasters, which cause huge human, economic and environmental losses.

20. We need to take full account of the central role of water and sanitation requirements in humanitarian and emergency crises, implementing the Humanitarian Reform Principles. Improved coordination on water and sanitation will help develop adequate strategies for a transition between emergency, reconstruction and development policies, towards sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

21. Cities generate opportunities in terms of improved public health, job creation and more efficient use of resources, but pose major challenges for water and sanitation, due to the increasing demand for water and the correlated growing generation of wastewater, storm water and water pollutants, particularly for groundwater. Solutions include improved urban planning processes at the local level and integrated policies between departments and agencies, taking into account interactions between cities and their rural surroundings. Local and regional authorities are at the front line of such integrated policies and should be encouraged to implement the "Istanbul Water Consensus" launched at the 5th World Water Forum.

22. Sharing of good practices and lessons learnt will also help scale up successful experiences and expand public and private partnerships with civil society and economic actors to optimize funding in and operation of infrastructure and social services, including the development of equitable and sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation services for all. Ensuring a sustainable urban development will hence contribute to improve the living conditions and revenues of urban citizens and peri-urban dwellers.

Conditions of Success: Governance, Cooperation, Financing and Enabling Environment for Water

23. Good water governance requires multi-stakeholder platforms, enabling the participation of all, including indigenous, marginalized and other vulnerable groups, promoting gender equality, democracy and integrity. Given the particular role of local and regional authorities, we recognize the need to strengthen their capacity to fulfil their responsibilities, as appropriate. Timely and adequate information is crucial to enable all stakeholders to make informed choices and actively participate in the design, implementation and assessment of water and sanitation policies. We need tools and indicators to



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strengthen water policy monitoring, evaluation and mutual accountability. The development of water information systems will facilitate sharing data and developing scenarios to cope with water challenges.

24. In line with the Principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and taking advantage of the 2013 International Year of Water Cooperation, we are committed to enhance cooperation across and beyond water, taking into account the interests of all riparian States concerned, to foster peace and stability. We encourage data transparency and monitoring to build trust and reach good water cooperation. We will promote coordinated and equitable water management within national and transboundary basins, through international instruments such as *inter alia*, and where and when applicable, the United Nations Conventions of 1992 and 1997 on international watercourses, the Revised Protocol on Shared Watercourses of the Southern Africa Development Community of 2000, the draft articles on the law of transboundary aquifers of 2008 and any related relevant regional initiatives.

25. Investment in water provides large returns in economic, social and environmental terms and significantly contributes to sustainable development and poverty eradication, in rural as in urban areas, in the agricultural as in the industrial sector. The importance of prioritizing investment in water and sanitation was underlined in all the regional processes leading to the 6th World Water Forum, in particular to drastically reduce poverty, to explicitly consider equity and poverty alleviation measures, to step up investment to achieve the Millennium Development Goals water and sanitation target and to develop international cooperation in water.

26. Prioritization of water and sanitation in budget allocations, as well as in international cooperation is key. We will promote strategic and sustainable financing planning, through an appropriate mix of contributions from public budgets, water users and direct transfers from donors. We recognize the need for sustainable and efficient cost recovery, pro-poor and innovative financing mechanisms, payment for ecosystem services and private investment. Contributions on water services provided by local and regional authorities to implement their water-related development cooperation programmes offer an example of innovative financing mechanisms.

27. To build, implement and monitor sound water policies, accurate information and agreed upon evidence rooted in robust scientific knowledge are needed. Taking into account initiatives such as the UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking Water (GLAAS), we will foster inclusive partnerships between scientists, policy makers, service providers and other stakeholders, to meet the policy needs and facilitate the science-policy interface, through the provision of state of the art technical tools and methods, the involvement of partners in the formulation of research questions to boost innovation and the dissemination of knowledge and the transfer of technology.

28. Capacity development, based on partnerships between public authorities, international and non-governmental organizations, utilities, private institutions and communities, is required to face the multiple challenges associated with emerging issues. In this context, a “helpdesk” will enable exchange of best practices on water laws, regulations and budgets, among and in support of Parliaments. We will develop training solutions for different categories of water professionals adapted to the labor market and attractive to the youth, through centers of excellence, associations of water professionals, water operators’ partnerships, water training center networking and twinning. We will pay particular attention to water education and awareness for citizens, and advocacy and empowerment for women and the youth.

29. We the Ministers and Heads of Delegations therefore agree to widely disseminate the results of the



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6th World Water Forum, “Time for Solutions”, held in Marseille on 12-17 March 2012, in relevant fora, in particular to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development “Rio+20”, focusing on the following priorities:

- Accelerating the implementation of the right to safe drinking water and sanitation for everyone’s well being and health, in particular for the most vulnerable, and improving wastewater management,
- Maximizing the potential of the water, energy and food security nexus, with a view to exploiting synergies and avoiding unintended consequences across sectors
- Incorporating water in all its dimensions in a renewed framework for Sustainable Development Goals, taking account the progress achieved towards the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

30. We further share the view on the following:

- The commitments, particularly those identified in the framework of the High Level Roundtables held during the Ministerial Conference, should be promoted to better deliver on water issues;
- Partnerships undertaken with Parliaments, as well as with local and regional authorities, who play a pivotal political and operational role on these issues, should continue, in connection with the thematic, regional and grassroots and citizenship processes of the 6th World Water Forum;
- Water solutions and commitments of the 6th World Water Forum should, as appropriate, be consolidated and disseminated and their implementation monitored and evaluated, so as to benefit the next World Water Fora, on the basis of the “Platform of Solutions”.