



Third Asia-Pacific Water Summit: Water Security for Sustainable Development

Yangon Declaration: The Pathway Forward

The Asia-Pacific region, with the largest and most dynamic economies in the world, is experiencing vigorous growth accompanied by a rapid reduction of poverty. However, approximately 1.1 billion people in Asia alone live in areas currently experiencing severe water stress and, unless significant action is taken, the number of affected population is expected to increase by more than 40% by 2050. Water security is a key component of sustainable development and faces enormous challenges. Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can only be materialized if water is valued and if water resources are effectively protected and managed for the enhancement of water security in all the countries of the region.

The Third Asia-Pacific Water Summit (3rd APWS) was convened in Yangon, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, on 11-12 December 2017, with the aim of promoting cooperation and partnership, as well as sharing knowledge and experiences to enhance water security in the region towards concrete actions and solutions for sustainable development. This marks the beginning of a regional endeavor to take a leading role in the implementation of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028.

We, the Leaders of the Asia-Pacific region,

Celebrating the significant progress made in the past ten years since the First Asia-Pacific Water Summit held in Beppu, Japan, in 2007, and the Second Summit in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in 2013, in which period there have been large contributions to the achievement and improvement of the water-related targets of the Millennium Development Goals across the region, particularly in strengthening water supply to fulfill basic human needs,

Expressing continued concern over the remaining gaps between the ambition to deliver internationally agreed post-2015 water-related goals contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the increasing threats to water security, such as climate change, particularly in the lowest income countries, countries with mountain areas and Pacific Island Countries, as well as the impacts on vulnerable groups, such as women, children and the elderly, in rural areas alongside emerging and rapidly growing urban areas,

Reaffirming shared commitments to achieving the water-related Sustainable Development Goals and targets, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change to enhance resilience and the quality of socio-economic growth,

Being aware that the abovementioned threats will continue to intensify as the world population is expected to reach 10 billion inhabitants in 2050, in which over half of them will be living in the Asia-Pacific region, meaning that the sustainability of the region becomes a key component of our global future,

Hereby *express* our determination to achieve water security for sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region and *declare* to:

Provide safe and affordable drinking water and basic sanitation for all in the region by 2025, five years in advance compared to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as agreed at the First Asia-Pacific Water Summit, both in fast-growing urban areas, as well as in rural areas;

Double investment at the regional level in infrastructure and community-based efforts to address water-related disasters and significantly increase water security;

Advance research and development, as well as education and training, to generate innovative solutions, particularly in water use efficiency and productivity, recycling, risk assessment and reduction, policy and governance, meet growing water demand, reduce disaster damage and improve sanitation and wastewater management;

Recognize that there is no one-size-fits-all solution and *apply* measures tailored at local conditions of countries and communities through regional knowledge management;

Facilitate the implementation of integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation, as appropriate, and partnerships.

We *envision* the Pathway Forward to upscale innovation for water security in the Asia-Pacific region and *are determined* to:

Sound water cycle management

Integrate rainwater, rivers, groundwater, glaciers, oceans and ecosystems, where relevant, into water cycle analysis and related policies at the river basin level;

Undertake efforts to conserve and restore water-related ecosystems, including deltas and estuaries, and promote the inclusion in the development agenda of wastewater management, green infrastructure and nature-based solutions for disaster risk reduction;

Take actions to increase water productivity in irrigation and drainage to achieve food security and sustainable agriculture;

Combine the management of water resources and urban, regional and national land use planning;

Governance and inclusive development

Establish sound regulatory mechanisms and planning at the local and national level to supply safe and sustainable drinking water and to extend and improve sanitation and wastewater management services;

Ensure the protection of vulnerable groups from water-related disasters and *engage* them in disaster management;

Promote the integration of scientific and engineering approaches with sociologic and economic perspectives, along with local and traditional knowledge, in water-related assessments and activities;

Take measures to build the capacity of all stakeholders, particularly women, youth, disabled and the poor, and create mechanisms for involving them in water-related decision-making processes and multi-stakeholder partnerships at the different levels of governance;

Urge all parties to end open defecation by 2025, as agreed at the First Asia-Pacific Water Summit, ensuring the availability of sanitation facilities, as well as promoting hygiene education for behavioral change;

Financing the implementation of water-related Sustainable Development Goals

Support the development of innovative and sustainable financial instruments that generate low-interest lending mechanisms, long-term cash-flow and attractive returns for high-impact water-related investment at multiple levels and scales;

Adopt innovative financial solutions such as reforming public finance, advancing Public-Public Partnerships, Public-Private Partnerships, structuring blended finance, applying Environment, Governance and Society investment and developing financial tools for long-term investment;

Focus on ex-ante investment for infrastructure and community-based efforts, including disaster preparedness and risk reduction, in addition to post-disaster recovery;

Develop a regional monitoring system on the financing of water-related Sustainable Development Goals and targets, aiming at harmonizing and complementing national and international initiatives and incentivizing collaborative partnerships.

We *request* the Asia-Pacific Water Forum (APWF), as a leading coordination and facilitation platform for water security solutions in the region to:

Water cooperation at all levels

Present this Yangon Declaration “The Pathway Forward”, accompanied by a supporting document to Call for Action, to relevant regional and global fora;

Provide region-specific inputs to the outcomes of the High-Level Panel on Water (HLPW);

Contribute to the Asian Water Development Outlook as an ongoing analysis to support the improvement of the water security situation in the Asia-Pacific region;

Lead the regional contribution to the Eighth World Water Forum, to be held in March 2018 in Brasilia, Brazil;

Advocate innovation and *lead* through action at the Singapore International Water Week, to be held in July 2018;

Keep playing its coordination role for the contributions of the Asia-Pacific region to the Stockholm World Water Week.

We collectively *express* our sincere appreciation to the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar for successfully hosting the Third Asia-Pacific Water Summit and for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to all participants.