

Introduction

The World Water Forum represents one moment every three years where the international community can bring together a diversity of shared knowledge, raise awareness for water issues among political, social and economic decision makers based on shared knowledge, align activities toward a common agenda, and create collective action to reach those shared goals, notably but not limited to the SDGs.

For this 9th edition of the World Water Forum (Dakar, 2021), the co-organizers wish to break with the “business as usual” approach to its organization, in part because the global development community is in dire need of accelerating action. In this perspective, the World Water Forum should not be considered as just an event organized once every three years, but it becomes a milestone in an ongoing change process to catalyze positive collective action for the cause of water and sanitation.

To this end, the partners agree that the 9th World Water Forum:

- Will embrace the overarching theme of “Water security for peace and development”;
- Will focus on four priorities (Water Security, Rural Development, Cooperation and Means & Tools) where operational responses of quality will be catalyzed around action-oriented objectives, identifying concrete results, commitments and actions;
- Will not offer a siloed approach according to traditional thematic, regional, political and citizens process. It will encourage innovation and greater integration while federating communities, providing a place for expression from all types of stakeholders and a safe space for different entities to have difficult conversations and foster collaboration;
- Will produce more concrete political results to accelerate the implementation at all levels of international agendas (e.g. SDGs, Paris Agreement, etc.);
- Will address challenges in an African context, while retaining its international scope.

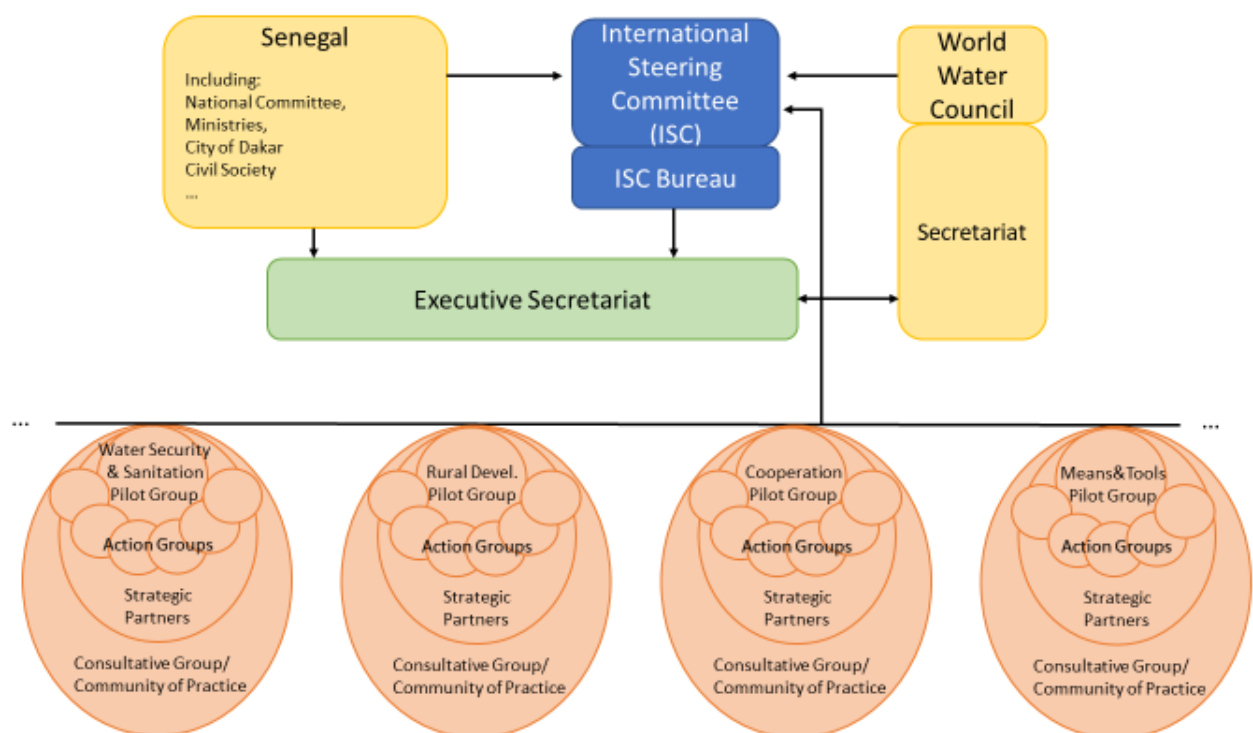
Some basic principles

- The **International Steering Committee**, a body made up in equal parts of Senegalese and World Water Council members and partners, hold the decision-making responsibility for the Forum organization. Its decisions are implemented by the Forum Secretariat in cooperation with the World Water Council Secretariat.
- The Forum's content development will be centered around each of the four priorities. The work within each priority is coordinated by a **Pilot Group**.
- Each priority has 5 or 6 actions that have been identified through various consultative processes and represent what the Forum will strive to accomplish. These actions are fully aligned with a broad set of water-related Sustainable Development Goals targets (See Forum Framework below). Other frameworks, such as Sendai, the Paris Agreement, or others may also be identified. An **Action Group** will be constituted around each of these actions.

Concept note for stakeholders contributing to the Forum's preparatory process

- **Strategic Partners** support specific activities of the Forum through their confirmed commitment agreed explicitly with the Forum organizers. These activities can be situated either at the priority level or the action level. The support can take various forms: financial, intellectual, logistical, coordination-oriented, in-kind. Strategic partners are included in pilot or action groups.
- **Consultative Groups** act as a broader community of practice encompassing a variety of stakeholders. These groups are aligned with each Action Group. They are formed through an open call process and operate on a voluntary basis. In particular, they can be solicited to react to and comment on different proposals; express interest in being actively involved in various activities; respond to surveys; etc.

Figure 1: The World Water Forum's Organizational Instances



- The interaction between pilot groups and action groups can be considered as the merging interface between a top-down and bottom-up process where the driving force, guidance and responsibility for the development and distillation of the priorities and their outcomes throughout the preparatory process resides with the pilot group members with the support of the strategic partners, while the broader community of practice through the consultative groups can influence the direction of the thematic development at specific moments in time and generate bottom-up contributions and successful examples for inclusion in the discussion.

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- The Forum is aiming for a program with under 100 sessions focused on concrete outcomes and 4 Keystone Roundtables which are key events that will bring together the synthesized outcomes related to each priority. All stakeholder perspectives (including political ones) should be integrated to the extent possible into the discussion on each priority rather than in parallel. Interaction will be designed to support the Heads of State Summit as the primary political event of the 9th World Water Forum.

Pilot groups

- The members of the 4 pilot groups aligned with the 4 priorities have been named by the ISC, in accordance with a principle of equal balance between Senegalese and international members.
- Each pilot group contains approximately 6-8 members, representing a diversity of stakeholders and identified political representatives at multiple levels (Government, Parliamentarian, Local Authority), in addition to a Youth Representative. The co-chairs can invite additional experts to participate in discussions when needed.
- Each pilot group oversees the Action groups contained within its priority and guarantees quality, balance and respect of process.
- The pilot groups will make recommendations on the Forum's program to the ISC through its 2 Co-Chairs, who are also members of the ISC.
- The pilot groups will be responsible for the coordination of the final frame of sessions and activities proposed by the action groups.
- The pilot groups will be responsible for the development of the four Keystone Roundtables (one for each priority) that will take place during the Forum week, a key event that will bring together the synthesized outcomes related to each priority. As such, they will have the responsibility for transmitting all the outcomes and messaging for the priority as a whole.

Action Groups

- The Action Groups are aligned with the identified actions under the 4 priorities (6 under Water Security, 6 under Rural Development, 6 under Cooperation, and 5 under Means & Tools)
- Each Action group will contain approximately 4-6 members: a core has been initially identified by the ISC but will evolve over time and will be completed through an open call process to guarantee geographical and stakeholder representativity.
- The defined actions provide a more granular focus on concrete objectives, outcomes and activities. The group will be asked to define and implement activities that will contribute to the achievement of the defined objective or action. While this collective

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action can have a timeline that goes far beyond the 9th World Water Forum, a certain number of sessions will be developed for the 9th Forum in Dakar to showcase activities that are contributing to reaching the targeted action. Additionally, the outcomes and future plan for continued activities should be presented to the Forum participants.

- Illustrations of responses or good practices will also be provided by the Dakar 2021 Initiative¹ to the relevant action groups. These examples may also serve to enrich the action group's reflection and work.
- Potential linkages to a broad set of Sustainable Development Goal targets have already been identified (See Forum Framework below). This will facilitate contributions to global monitoring processes.
- The action groups must collaborate broadly with others on the session development notably with the consultative groups. It will be especially important to reach out to stakeholders working on targets outside of the water sector.

Session coordinators and contributors

- The action groups will depend on smaller sets of stakeholders within each group to conceptualize, coordinate, conduct and participate in sessions in accordance with the guidelines that will be provided. It is typical to identify one or more organizations to act as a focal point for the development of each session.
- Session coordinators and contributors can be drawn from consultative groups, which are formed through an open call process.

Platform

A virtual platform will be put in place to facilitate exchanges between stakeholders concerning the content development. Staff will also ensure the animation of this platform in order to drive the process forward. Each member of the pilot, action and consultative groups will have differentiated rights to access documents shared on the platform.

Partners Events

One innovative approach to the 9th World Water Forum's content development is to mobilize momentum by recognizing the contribution of existing events and processes throughout the

¹ The Dakar 2021 Initiative is an innovative component of the 9th World Water Forum that aims to generate commitments and identify water-related actions that can be implemented, scaled up or replicated for the benefit of communities on the ground, yielding fast results with sustainable impacts around the Forum's priorities. Identified projects will benefit from a label and their tangible results will be presented at the Forum in Dakar.

Concept note for stakeholders contributing to the Forum's preparatory process

world that are already leading to cutting edge thinking and shared learning, covering as expansive a geographical, sectoral and stakeholder base as possible.

The participants of the Kick-Off meeting identified a series of events that could be leveraged in the coming months to prepare the Forum across regions, specific to each Priority. Those events, or others to be identified, could be used to come together periodically to manage the development of each activity as appropriate.

To this end a labeling process has been put in place and an initial set of potential events that can contribute to the Forum's content development have been identified. The list of events will be shared with the pilot and action groups and updated on the platform.

9th World Water Forum Framework for Action (with related SDG targets)

1. **Water Security and Sanitation**

- A. Implement the Right to Water and Sanitation and provide access to safe water and sanitation in emergency situations (6.1, 6.2, 1.4, 11.1)
- B. Improve water quality and waste management (6.3 11.6 12.4, 12.5)
- C. Reduce water-related illness and deaths (3.9, 3.3, 3.2)
- D. Protect and restore ecosystems and forests, including coastal and marine impacts, and combat desertification (6.6 14.1, 14.2, 15.1, 15.3)
- E. Halt the loss of aquatic biodiversity and invasive species in water ecosystems (15.5 15.8, 15.9)
- F. Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate change and natural disasters (13.1, 11.5, 1.5, 11.B, 13.3)

2. **Rural Development**

- A. Ensure universal access to water (in rural areas) (6.1, 1.4)
- B. Ensure universal access to sanitation and hygiene (in rural areas) (6.2, 1.4)
- C. Provide public water, sanitation and hygiene facilities (schools, healthcare facilities, etc.) (4.A 5.1, 4.5, 3.3, 3.9, 6.1)
- D. Ensure sustainable agricultural practices, including water productivity and efficiency, reduction of diffuse pollution, and decreased food losses (2.3, 2.4, 12.3, 6.3, 6.4, 6.6, 14.1, 14.2)
- E. Engage and empower rural communities to be the drivers of social-economic development through water (8.2, 5.4, 5.A, 1.4, 2.A)
- F. Harmonize the rural-urban divide to curb migration (11.A, 10.7, 11.3)

3. **Cooperation**

- A. Implement IWRM at all levels (6.5)
- B. Implement transboundary cooperation to foster peace and prevent conflicts (6.5, 6.A)
- C. Expand international cooperation, including ODA, and capacity building to foster peace (6.A, 17.2, 16.A, 10.B)
- D. Enhance cooperation on multipurpose infrastructure, including hydropower (7.A, 7.B, 1.A, 9.1, 9.4, 9.A)
- E. Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation on data and information sharing, and capacity building (17.6, 12.8, 16.10, 17.9, 17.18)
- F. Enhance multi-stakeholder dialogue and partnerships, including with outside sectors (17.16, 17.17)

4. **Means & Tools (Transversal theme that relates to all other priorities)**

- A. Mobilize additional financial resources and promote innovative funding (17.3, 2.A)
- B. Implement the principles of good water governance, including participatory decision-making (6.5, 6.B, 16.7, 5.5, 17.18)
- C. Foster a water-sensitive approach to legislation and regulation (10.3, 5.C)
- D. Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels and promote integrity (10.6, 16.6, 17.15)
- E. Increase water efficiency and sustainable management through science, technology, innovation and education (6.4, 12.2, 8.4, 17.7, 17.8, 5.B, 4.3, 9.5, 12.A)