



Group of Friends on Water and Peace

Terms of Reference

July 2016

Introduction

Sustainable water resources management is already a major global challenge of the 21st century. By 2050, over 50% of the global population may be living under water stress and 45% of the world GDP may originate in water-stressed regions¹. An ambitious water goal, including elements from the concept of the human right to water as recognized by the General Assembly, has been adopted in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030.

The water sector has to face new global changes that are taking place at a greater rate and scale than ever experienced before, such as population growth, migration, urbanization, climate change, land-use changes and economic alterations among other trends. These multiple changes and accelerations impact directly on water resources, water services and ecosystem services.

Areas that are already struggling with challenges such as poverty, social tensions, environmental degradation, and/or fragile political institutions are particularly vulnerable to these changes. In the near future, problems such as water shortage, low water quality, or floods are increasingly likely to exacerbate existing social tensions. This can undermine economic development in various countries (e.g. by limiting production of hydropower energy, constraining industrial capacity, etc.) and could increase the risk of instability. In turn, these trends will increase the risk of seeing water used as a

¹ Veolia Water, 2014. Finding the Blue Path to a Sustainable Economy, IFPRI White Paper, available at: www.veolianoorthamerica.com/sites/g/files/dvc596/f/assets/documents/2014/10/199791IFPRI-White-Paper.pdf

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weapon or to further terrorist objectives. This represents a major security risk that could also undermine efforts to reach the water-related 2030 SDG (Goal 6).

However, despite the complexity of the challenges, water is also a source for collaboration. While the past 50 years have seen approximately 40 cases of acute violent water conflicts, they have also given rise to over 150 water treaties around the world². It is in this hopeful vision that the Global High Level Panel on Water and Peace was established in order to propose a global architecture to transform water from a source of potential conflicts to an instrument of cooperation and peace.

1. The Global High Level Panel on Water and Peace

1.1. Overview

A group of 15 countries³ from all parts of the world convened and launched the Global High Level Panel on Water and Peace (hereinafter referred to as the Panel) at a ministerial gathering in Geneva on November 16th 2015. Each of the fifteen co-convening countries nominated a panelist and agreed to provide their support (practical, political...) in helping the Panel to fulfill its mandate.

The Panel is independent – each panelist is serving in his/her individual capacity, and is tasked with outlining concrete proposals and recommendations to enable water to be an instrument of peace. These proposals / recommendations will be non-binding, and will address policy issues at all levels (global, regional, national and local). However, the Panel will not make any country specific recommendations.

The Panel is chaired by Dr Danilo Türk, former President of the Republic of Slovenia. The work of the Panel will span two years (until end of 2017), with working sessions and regional consultations scheduled in Africa (Senegal, April 2016), Latin America (Costa Rica, November 2016) and Asia (TBD, spring 2017). A final report will be published in the fall of 2017. The Panel's work is also expected to be presented at various global events, such as the 2016 UNGA, the UNFCCC COP 22 in Marrakesh, the 2017 WEF and the 2018 World Water Forum in Brasilia.

While the Panel will function outside the formal structure of the United Nations, it will work in close cooperation with relevant stakeholders, notably with the UN – which is represented in the Panel through UN-Water as observer.

² www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/transboundary_waters.shtml

³ The fifteen co-convening countries are the following: Cambodia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Estonia, France, Ghana, Hungary, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Oman, Senegal, Slovenia, Spain, and Switzerland.

The Secretariat of the Panel is provided by the Geneva Water Hub (GWH), with the support of the think tank Strategic Foresight Group (SFG).

1.2. Main objectives and specific topics to be addressed by the Panel

The Panel will make recommendations for a global architecture for transforming water into an instrument of peace, and has the following over-arching objectives:

- to develop a set of proposals aiming to strengthen the global architecture to prevent and resolve water-related conflicts;
- to facilitate the use of water for building peace and cooperation; and
- to put water relations at the center of government policy worldwide.

The issue of “Water and Peace” has many facets. The Panel will thus focus specifically on:

- identifying legal, economic, financial and institutional mechanisms to incentivise multi-sectoral and transboundary water cooperation;
- examining how to cope with and prevent water-related conflicts, namely transboundary and intersectoral; possibly exploring potential mechanisms to promote hydrodiplomacy;
- promoting effective implementation of the global water conventions; and
- promoting best practices in water cooperation.

2. Group of Friends on Water and Peace

2.1. Background

In response to the high level of interest generated by the Panel, the panelists proposed that a Group of Friends (GoF) should be created. This intention was announced by Federal Councilor Didier Burkhalter, Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, during the Panel’s launch event in November 2015.

The general idea is to have an open platform which provides representatives from interested countries - and eventually other stakeholders, with the opportunity to regularly interact with the work of the Panel. As such, the GoF complements the Panel by offering an informal platform for dialogue, outreach, engagement with, and dissemination among the broader international community.

2.2. Scope

The work of the GoF is intended to complement and support the Global High Level Panel on Water and Peace. As such, its scope is focused specifically on the topics and themes outlined in the Panel’s Terms of Reference (see Annex I).

2.3. Objectives

The Group of Friends supports the main objective of the Global High Level Panel on Water and Peace, which consists in developing a set of proposals aiming to strengthen the global architecture to prevent and resolve water-related tensions and conflicts, and facilitate the use of water for building peace.

It is expected that the GoF will share its views with the Panel and will pursue the following objectives:

- To help shape the global agenda by maintaining an open space for dialogue and exchanges on multi-sectoral and transboundary issues relating to water and peace.
- To raise awareness among, engage and facilitate exchanges with interested stakeholders (UN agencies, civil society, private sector, academia, media, etc.) around specific issues raised by the Panel and which might require broader discussions.
- To amplify and disseminate the work of the Panel, including by promoting “hydro-diplomacy” and by raising overall levels of awareness within the international community on the political relevance of water and peace.

2.4. Role of GoF Participants

In pursuit of the above objectives, GoF participants are expected to:

- Participate actively in GoF discussions and meetings,
- Contribute knowledge and ideas which can help achieve the above-mentioned objectives;
- Act as national focal points for the Panel and ensure that information related to its work is being channeled to relevant stakeholders, and that its work and recommendations are adequately disseminated at the national, regional and international level;
- Lend political support to the Panel’s work and, in particular, promote the Panel’s recommendations at the highest level within the United Nations and in other regional and international fora;
- Follow closely the work of the Panel and ensure that inputs and suggestions are offered in a timely and constructive manner; and
- Keep abreast of ongoing activities discussions that may relate to the work of the Panel so as to maximize opportunities for collaboration and minimize risk of overlaps.

2.5. Structure and Modalities of Work

a) Participation: The number of countries eligible to join the GoF is open-ended, meaning every country is welcome to participate as long as they uphold the present Terms of Reference. Participants of the GoF will aim to ensure a sound geographical balance by reaching out to countries from under-represented regions and inviting them to join. Countries will be represented by their Geneva-based UN Missions. If decided by the GoF, participation may be broadened to include representatives from other relevant stakeholders (e.g. civil society, international organizations, academia and the private sector).

b) Chairing: The chair of the GoF rotates annually, starting in May 2016. The chair of the GoF may have up to three co-chairs. The GoF is chaired by one of its participants.

c) Location: The GoF's center of gravity will be based in Geneva, taking advantage of the broad expertise available in the area⁴ and of the presence of the permanent missions to the UN. Proximity with the Geneva Water Hub (GWH), which acts as the Secretariat to the Panel, is another key advantage of centering the GoF in Geneva. The GWH will also act as the Secretariat to the GoF.

d) Venue and Time-frame: In line with the informal nature of the GoF, the frequency and venue of meetings will be determined on a rolling basis, in accordance with the Panel's agenda, as well as with the broader agenda of relevant international processes and events. The duration of the GoF is open-ended.

e) Collaboration with the Panel: Collaboration with the Panel will be guided by the above-mentioned objectives. Examples of such collaboration include; facilitating exchanges between the Panel and GoF countries; organizing events for discussing the work of the Panel; disseminating Panel recommendations; and advocating for the Panel's agenda during relevant events.

f) Collaboration with external bodies: A key role for the GoF will be to link the Panel's dedicated focus on Water and Peace with other relevant initiatives, such as the "High Level Panel for Water", launched by the Secretary General of the UN and the President of the World Bank, which focuses specifically on achieving the water-related Sustainable Development Goal (SDG6). The Geneva-based GoF will maintain close collaboration with the New-York based group the "Friends of Water"⁵, thereby ensuring coordination and cross-fertilization between both hubs of multilateral diplomacy. Additional collaborations with relevant actors will be pursued in accordance with the evolution of the Panel's work.

g) Language: The working languages of the GoF will be English and French.

⁴ The multi-sectoral nature of the Geneva-based expertise spans across such relevant fields as conflict prevention, humanitarian aid, human rights, corporate social responsibility, sustainability, and water governance, among many others.

⁵ This group was established by the UN Permanent Mission of Tajikistan in 2005 and co-chaired by 5 countries, including Switzerland, initially as a platform for the implementation of the UN Decade for action, 'Water for Life', being now an informal voluntary association of like-minded countries in the promotion of the UN-Water agenda.

Group of Friends on Water and Peace
Terms of Reference and Modalities of Work

16 November 2015

Objectives of the Global High Level Panel on Water and Peace

The Global High Level Panel on Water and Peace (hereinafter referred to as the Panel) aims at taking the issue of water in the context of maintenance of peace and security, from a technical to a political level. It has the following objectives:

- Develop a set of proposals aimed at strengthening the global architecture to prevent and resolve water-related conflicts;
- Facilitate the role of water as an important factor of building peace and cooperation; and
- Enhance the relevance of water issues in national and global policy making.

Main themes and specific topics to be addressed by the Panel

The issue of “Water and Peace” has many facets. The Panel will focus on four main themes:

- Identify legal, economic, financial and institutional mechanisms to incentivize multi-sectoral and transboundary water cooperation;
- Examine how to cope with and prevent water-related conflicts, namely transboundary and inter-sectoral — possibly exploring potential mechanisms to promote hydro-diplomacy;
- Promote effective implementation of the global water conventions;
- Promote best practices in water cooperation.

In addition, the Panel will address the following specific topics in relation to the above core themes:

- The Panel will explore:
 - Appropriate ways to interact with the UN system;
 - The management of inter-sectoral water allocation issues;
 - Solutions to better protect water infrastructure during internal and international armed conflicts and against any terrorist attacks;

- The transboundary implications of water quantity and quality, and insufficient access to water as a potential source of conflict;
- The use of technology to prevent water disputes and promote cooperation (including desalination, water purification, strategic water reserves, water grid, innovation in data collection and sharing);
- The multifaceted role of water that has already been part of the thematic agenda of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) such as climate change, disease prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict building;
- The role of financial instruments in promoting management and cooperation on shared water resources;
- The role of public/ private partnerships in the context of shared water resources;
- Ways to strengthen educational institutions contributing to water as an instrument of peaceful cooperation;
- Ways to align water policy goals and economic integration in transboundary contexts.
- The Panel will explore and exchange best practices in the field of transboundary water management / cooperation / and conflict prevention. In this regard, Senegal River Basin Organization (OMVS), Gambia River basin organization were mentioned;
- The Panel will pay particular attention to the governance and protection of groundwater resources;
- The Panel will bring water into discussions of climate change and discuss a strategy to engage in COP 22 with a view to adaptation where water plays an important role;
- The Panel will contribute to the goal of increasing the reach of the 1992 and 1997 Conventions on water.

Mandate of the Panel

- Panel members are serving in their individual capacity;
- The Panel is independent and is tasked with outlining concrete proposals and recommendations to enable water to be an instrument of peace. These proposals / recommendations will be non-binding, and will address policy issues at all levels (global, regional, national and local). However, the Panel will not make any country specific recommendations;
- The Panel is established for a period of 2 years, until the end of 2017;
- The mandate of the Panel comes from the fifteen co-convening countries;
- While the Panel will function outside the formal structure of the United Nations, it will work in close cooperation with relevant stakeholders, notably with the UN which is represented in the

Panel through UN-Water as observer. It will be the only body serving in this capacity. The Panel will hold consultations or hearings to get inputs from all relevant organizations and stakeholders;

Structure and Modalities of the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace

- There are fifteen co-convening countries and panelists forming the Global High Level Panel on Water and Peace. It is proposed that the number of panelists (and hence co-convening countries) should remain the same;
- It is proposed that a Group of Friends for the Panel should be created in order to include any other country that expresses its interest in being a part of this process;
- The proposal of Switzerland that Dr. Danilo Türk chairs the Panel was accepted by the Panelists;
- H.E. Mansour Faye of Senegal and Dr. Alvaro Umaña Quesada of Costa Rica are Vice Chairs of the Panel;
- All decisions of the Panel shall be made by consensus wherever possible;
- The Panel will work under Chatham House rules;
- With respect to meetings of the Panel:
 - There will be 4 meetings held over the span of the next two years.
 - The first meeting was held in Geneva, with the official launch of the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace;
 - The next meetings will be held in different parts of the world in order to have regional representation;
 - The second meeting of the Panel will be held in Senegal, most likely on 5-6 April 2016. The exact dates will be conveyed in January 2016;
 - At the second Full Panel meeting in Senegal, there could be one session with regional bodies in Africa. There could also be a focus on best practices since OMVS was mentioned repeatedly as a good example of cooperation;
 - There could also be interactive sessions on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. The Slovenian Foreign Ministry and Swiss Foreign Ministry will decide on a suitable date (possibly by September 2016);
 - The third Full Panel meeting will be held towards the end of the year 2016, preferably in Latin America;
 - The fourth Full Panel meeting will be held in April-May 2017;
 - The Panel's outputs are expected to be presented at global events such as the 2016 UNGA, the COP 22 in Marrakesh, the 2017 WEF and the 2018 World Water Forum in Brasilia;

- There could be more meetings of sub groups as and when decided upon by the Panel;
- There may be smaller meetings (via video conference) held of the Panelists as and when the opportunities present itself;
- In case of non-attendance by a Panel member no proxy can be sent;
- The final report of the Panel should be prepared by the autumn of 2017;
- The Secretariat of the Panel is provided by the Geneva Water Hub (GWH), with support of the Strategic Foresight Group (SFG).

Commitments made at the first meeting held on 16 November 2015

1. As Panel's Secretariat, Geneva Water Hub in collaboration with SFG and in consultation with the Panel will design a website for the Panel which will include a public section (with materials from the launch event), and a restricted access workspace accessible only to Panel members and the Secretariat;
2. Prof. Andras Szöllösi-Nagy will prepare a strategy note on the ongoing initiatives that the Panel could be associated with;
3. SFG will prepare a draft note on the lessons to be learnt from the successes and failures of past commissions;
4. Dr. Alvaro Umaña Quesada and Dr. Pascual Fernandez will prepare a note on creating financial incentives for promoting water cooperation;
5. Mr. Franck Galland and Prof. Laurence Boisson de Chazournes will prepare notes on (i) how to protect water infrastructure from a legal and a technical point of view in armed conflicts, and (ii) how to use water as a strategic asset for post-conflict reconstruction;
6. Mr Ciaran O'Cuinn will prepare a note on how to use water as a tool for peace-building in a situation of conflict between two or more countries;
7. Dr. Claudia Patricia Mora and Mr. Aziz Bouignane together with Geneva Water Hub will prepare a note on inter-sectoral water issues;

The Panel Secretariat will discuss further with the panelists specific needs for support for these notes. The notes have to be finalized by the end of February 2016 and the Secretariat will expect a one page outline by the first week of January 2016.