

# HIGH-LEVEL SYMPOSIUM ON WATER



Lisbon, 27<sup>th</sup> of June 2022

Bridging SDG 6 and SDG 14  
Fresh and salt water communities working together

## Concept Note for the Ministerial Roundtable 3 of the High-Level Symposium on Water

Lisbon, 27<sup>th</sup> of June 2022

*Ministerial Roundtable 3: Existing successful and innovative partnerships to support the implementation of SDG6 and 14: challenges, opportunities and actions*

### Topics to be addressed:

- Coastal waters and ecosystems
- Surface and groundwater resources
- Drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater services
- Governance and partnerships

### A. Introduction

The United Nations, with the support of the Governments of Portugal and Kenya, will host the UN Oceans Conference in Lisbon from 27 June to 1 July 2022. As part of this Conference, there will be a High-Level Symposium on Water “Bridging SDG6 and SDG 14” which will comprise a ministerial roundtable on “Existing Successful and innovative partnerships to support the implementation of SDG 6 and 14: Challenges, opportunities and actions”.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2015, is an urgent call for all countries to come together and achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions. Key among the goals were SDGs 6, 14 and 17, which sought to “ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”, “conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”, and “strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development”, respectively. These goals are integral to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and they

require increased attention on the global political agenda and urgent need for global action.

## B. The Sustainable Development Goals

It is important to recall the main targets within SDGs 6, 14 and 17.

**SDG 6** aims to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. Targets include the following: achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable **drinking water** for all; achieve access to adequate and equitable **sanitation and hygiene** for all and end open defecation; improve water quality by **reducing pollution**, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally; substantially increase **water-use efficiency** across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity; implement **integrated water resources** management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate; protect and **restore water-related ecosystems**, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes; expand **international cooperation and capacity-building** support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies; and support and strengthen the **participation of local communities** in improving water and sanitation management.

**SDG 14** seeks to **conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development**. Targets which are particularly relevant to inland water and water services include the following: prevent and significantly **reduce marine pollution** of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution; sustainably manage and **protect marine and coastal ecosystems** to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans; **increase the economic benefits to small island** developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism; and **increase scientific knowledge**, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology.

**SDG 17** intends to **strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development**. Targets which are particularly relevant to coastal waters, inland waters, and water services include the following: developed countries to implement fully their official **development assistance commitments**; mobilize **additional financial resources** for developing countries from multiple sources; enhance **regional and international cooperation** on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing; promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound **technologies** to developing countries; fully operationalize the **technology bank and science**,

**technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism** for least developed countries and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology; enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted **capacity-building** in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals; enhance the **global partnership** for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, and encourage and promote effective **public, public-private and civil society partnerships**.

## C. Interlinked challenges

Through SDGs 6, 14, and 17, we can understand that inland water resources and water services, coastal waters and partnerships are interrelated in multiple ways, particularly:

**Impact on coastal waters due to inland waters:**

- Pollution of coastal waters caused by **discharges of untreated urban, livestock and industrial wastewater**, runoffs from agricultural fields (diffuse pollution), and non-treated storm water and diffuse point sources, contribute to eutrophication, lowered water quality and health problems, and affect ecosystem services and related economic activities, such as fisheries and tourism.
- Coastal waters affected by variations in **sediment** transport flow, contribute to coastal erosion and affect maritime structures stability and economic activities like tourism, and cultural ecosystem services.
- Imbalance in the coastal **ecosystems** due to changes in the inland water resource management affect the flora and fauna of coastal and marine ecosystems.

**Impact on inland waters due to coastal waters:**

- **Groundwater resources** can be affected by rising water levels due to climate change, poor groundwater quality and high withdrawal from demand in the agricultural sector and community.
- **Surface water resources** can be affected by rising water levels of coastal waters and higher frequency of extreme events due to climate change in downstream areas, reducing surface water quality and its potential to be used for drinking water and agriculture.

**Impact on water services, urban and agriculture due to coastal waters:**

- **Drinking water services and infrastructures** can be affected by rising water levels due to climate change, which can cause reduced treatment performance standards and structural damage.

- **Wastewater and stormwater services and infrastructures** can be affected by the coastal water tide cycle, saline intrusion in the soils and rising water levels due to climate change. Saltwater entering the sewer system can reduce treatment performance standards, decrease hydraulic performance, and cause potential structural damage. Saline wastewater can also decrease the potential for wastewater reuse.

## D. Action areas

To minimize those impacts, we need to:

- Reinforce skills to **protect coastal waters** from urban, livestock, industrial wastewater, agriculture effluents and stormwater.
- Reinforce skills to **protect surface and groundwater** from rising of coastal waters due to climate change.
- Reinforce skills to **protect drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater services** from rising coastal waters due to climate change.
- **Manage water services**, water supply, wastewater, and storm water in the territory in a holistic manner.
- **Reinforce governance** of waters, with a whole-of-government approach to ensure coherence in policies that govern coastal waters, inland water resources and water services.
- Manage waters in **coastal cities**, with high population density and facing environmental pressures, by introducing circular economy approaches to maximize water resources, minimize waste, and valorise subproducts from the urban water cycle, while incorporating desalination as a new water source.
- Enhance **innovation** and technology to better manage coastal waters, inland water resources and water services.
- Galvanize **effective and innovative partnerships** at local, sub-national, national, regional, and global levels.

## E. Questions to be addressed:

- How can we reinforce **local partnerships**, at the city level, to better manage coastal waters, inland waters, and water services, while employing a circular economy approach? How can we improve water governance and promote multistakeholder involvement that is aligned to the different interests? What type of instruments are required to achieve these objectives? Can we identify some successful case studies?
- How can we reinforce **subnational partnerships**, at the water catchment basin level, to better deal with joint management of coastal water, inland waters, and water services? How can we improve water governance at this level and

promote multistakeholder involvement that is aligned to the different interests? What type of instruments are required to achieve these objectives? Can we identify some successful case studies?

- How can we reinforce **national partnerships**, at the country level, to better deal with and integrate public policies on coastal waters, inland waters, catchment areas, and cities? How can we improve water governance at this level and promote whole-of-government involvement aligned to the different policy strategies? What type of instruments are required to achieve these objectives? Can we identify some successful case studies?
- How can we reinforce **regional partnerships**, namely at the transboundary level, to improve cooperation to solve shared problems? How can we align the different interests? What type of instruments and commitments are required to achieve these objectives? Can we identify some successful case studies?
- How can we reinforce **global partnerships** at the international level, to better share successful experiences? How can we align the different interests? What type of instruments and commitments are required to achieve these objectives? Can we identify some successful case studies?
- How can partnerships with **civil society** help solve these challenges, and contribute to increased public awareness, accountability and transparency of public policies and investments in this area? How can we raise public awareness of the tangible and intangible value of water, including the social aspects?