



# Concept Note

## Political Process Commission

### April 2017

## Introduction

The 8th World Water Forum, jointly organized by Brazil and the World Water Council (WWC), will take place in Brasilia from 19th to 23rd March 2018.

The World Water Forum is the world's largest multi-stakeholder event, which brings together representatives from governments, businesses, academia and the civil society to share experiences, identify priorities and set the basis for future work.

The 8th World Water Forum has five processes: Political, Thematic and Regional; as well as a Sustainability Focus Group and a Citizen's Forum. The World Water Forum will also hold a Fair and Exhibition, where all stakeholders will have the opportunity to showcase their experiences, products and contributions.

The recent developments in the international arena, with the adoption of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement under the UNFCCC and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, set the basis for a new momentum for political engagement to tackle water challenges.

## The Political Process

The political process of the Forum aims at bringing together politicians, elected officials, and judges from all over the world, responsible not only for water, environment, agriculture or energy policies, but also for finance and other domains, in order to create an understanding on the urgency of the implementation of positive and pro-active policies on water issues. The final goal of the Political Process is to engage the largest number of political actors to share ideas and good practices and raise the level of political commitment towards more sustainable practices in water management across sectors in all government levels.

The political process of the Forum has three sub-processes related to: (i) Governments; (ii) Parliaments; and (iii) Local Governments. It is proposed to add a fourth sub-process: (iv) Judges.

The role of the Political Process Commission (PPC) is (i) to conceive a preparatory process developing, in coordination with the Forum's Thematic and Regional processes and other Commissions, the agenda for the four sub-processes sessions during the World Water Forum; (ii) to supervise and guide the organization of the High Level Political segment, as well as the Parliamentarian, Local and Regional Governments and Judges sessions; and (iii) to facilitate the negotiation of the Political Declaration of the Forum and/or other outputs of the PPC subcommissions.

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This role will be achieved through close coordination with the other processes of the Forum, especially the Thematic and Regional Commissions, to set priority issues, but also draw upon relevant outcomes from previous World Water Forums and the inputs provided by participants and coordinators of each of the three political sub-processes.

## The Political Process Framework

The OECD estimates an increase of 55% of water demand by 2050 due to demographic growth. Around 70% of these water resources would be destined to agricultural production to provide food for the increased population if there is scarce improvement in current efficiency rates. In 2050, four billion people will be living in river basin areas. They will draw out more water from waterbeds and increase water contamination all the way to the ocean, compromising water quality and biodiversity at all levels, especially if present patterns are not changed. All this points out to the urgency of a stronger political commitment towards sustainable water production and management.

This is a global multilayered challenge that will need the involvement of all sectors and government levels. The 8th World Water Forum's Political Process will focus on gathering together government representatives, especially elected officials and legislators, as well as judges, to raise awareness about the need to improve financial mechanisms and governance to foster investment, innovation and knowledge to tackle the present and future challenges regarding water. This exercise may be reflected in a political declaration that, together with other results from the Forum, will serve as a roadmap for implementation.

The 8th World Water Forum presents two important features: its main theme “Sharing Waters” and the fact that this is the first World Water Forum to be held in the Southern Hemisphere. The Political Commission and its sub-processes will focus on the opportunities provided by these two features to further engage countries, especially developing countries, in the Forum.

Sharing waters means sharing views on common problems to find common solutions and ultimately bringing benefits for human well being. The Political Process will facilitate the debate about initiatives and best practices that present a universal nature or are adaptable to other local circumstances and realities. The sharing of views on common problems and solutions will not be restricted to water management technical issues, but also focus on experiences regarding means of implementation, such as finance, capacity building and technology.

Although water security concerns both developed and developing countries, the latter face greater challenges in what regards water supply and quality. Developing countries present poorer performances in water supply, sanitation, infrastructure and related health issues.

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They are more vulnerable to associated climate change and disaster risks. They are also in greater need for the development of finance and governance mechanisms. Increasing political commitment to sustainable water management is a most relevant path towards global sustainable development in future years. In the case of developing countries it also means the possibility of saving lives in the very short term.

One of the goals of the 8th World Water Forum's Political Process is to further engage political officials from all over the world, also taking advantage of the opportunity of engaging more representatives from developing countries in the work of the Forum. Drawing upon the six main themes and three cross-cutting issues from the Thematic Process and the priorities identified through the Regional Commission will be instrumental to enhance involvement at all levels.

### **The Sub-Processes**

The Political Process is at the core of future implementation of the results and roadmaps agreed by the 8th World Water Forum. The identification of stakeholders truly committed to develop an achievable political declaration and to continue working towards its implementation, including through future World Water Forums, is key to its success.

In this sense, the central governments sub-group will aim at ensuring participation of government authorities, and engage them in the elaboration of the political declaration from its earlier stages. The objective is to engage Ministers and high authorities responsible for water and development issues related to water. The local governments sub-group will gather cities' mayors and other sub-national authorities from all over the world with different experiences and backgrounds, from cities with model practices to those which faces the major challenges, in order to ensure a diverse and fruitful exchange of ideas.

One of the goals of the 8th World Water Forum Parliamentarian sub-process is to provide for a more permanent framework for the engagement of legislators with the Forum and its results throughout next years. This could be achieved, as a pilot project, by strengthening the Parliamentarian sub-process as a platform for the sharing of legislative developments regarding water issues. The objective is not to create a new structure under the WWC, but to provide a locus where legislators could keep on the work initiated by the 8th World Water Forum and previous fora.

This will be the first time that a sub-group for Judges will be organized. Judges and other judicial authorities have a crucial role in the following up environmental issues. Judges have long had a central role in enforcing effective laws for the protection of the environment and ensuring access to justice. The development of environmental courts and tribunals in many countries, together with the international strengthening of environmental law, provide for an opportunity of enhancing cooperation among magistrates to share their



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experiences and approaches. The 8th World Water Forum will provide for an unique occasion to further this cooperation.