

## Session Report



# Water and Faiths:

Faith based Organizations contributing to  
the Water SDGs

Stockholm World Water Week 2016

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## ABBREVIATIONS

|        |                                                       |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| COP    | Conference of Parties                                 |
| FBOs   | Faith based Organizations                             |
| GDP    | Gross Domestic Product                                |
| GWP    | Global Water Partnership                              |
| MDGs   | Millennium Development Goals                          |
| SDGs   | Sustainable Development Goals                         |
| SIWI   | Stockholm International Water Institute               |
| UN     | United Nations                                        |
| UNFCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| WC     | Water Community                                       |

## PREFACE

The annual World Water Week held in Stockholm and convened by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) gathers cabinet ministers, government officials, business innovators, international organizations, civil society representatives, and researchers to exchange ideas, form partnerships, and celebrate achievements pertinent to water and development. The theme of the 2016 World Water Week was 'Water for Sustainable Growth' and has directly addressed the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris agreement on climate change.

In this context, the Church of Sweden, the Global Water Partnership, the Stockholm International Water Institute, and the Swedish Institute Alexandria invited representatives of various Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) to contribute to a discussion on how to effectively implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in a special World Water Week session entitled 'Water and Faiths'.

We recognize that FBOs have long played an important role in community development and many operate activities linked to sustainable development, including addressing environment and water issues at local, national, and global levels. Moreover, we understand that to meet the collective commitment of achieving the SDGs in just 15 years requires engagement and partnerships across all of our global communities.

The Water Community and FBOs have a lot to gain from a closer cooperation and exchange of knowledge and experiences. The 'Water and Faiths' session organized during the 2016 World Water Week has demonstrated the potential synergies for such a collaboration which can be further explored and leveraged going forward.

The 'Water and Faiths' session has helped to identify possible activities that could be carried out a local and global levels, as well as highlighting the shared interest of pursuing the dialogue between the Water Community and FBOs at the 2017 World Water Week.

In the interim, we seek to learn further from the existing experiences and knowledge of FBOs related to water issues and we continue to invite the active contribution of FBOs in the water dialogue at all levels.

We thank you all for supporting this initiative.

Rudolph Cleveringa,  
Executive Secretary, Global Water Partnership

Karin Lexén,  
Director, World Water Week, International Policy and Prizes

Rev. Henrik Grape,  
Officer on Sustainable Development, Church of Sweden

Peter Weiderud,  
Director, Swedish Institute of Alexandria

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Water is at the core of sustainable development and is critical for socio-economic development as well as for the preservation of healthy ecosystems and survival itself. In addition, water issues often mirror debates around social ethics: water as a common good, water as a facilitator of well-being, water and social justice, water as a human right, water as a wealth generator. In that context, water has become a specific goal of the Sustainable Development Goals recently adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015.



Water has also a profound symbolic meaning in religious and local traditions. Water can symbolize life, liberation, purity, renewal, reconciliation, healing, regeneration in most, if not all, of humanity's faith traditions. Conscious of the potential impact of climate change on future generations, faith and spiritual leaders have written a common Statement for the COP21 of the UNFCCC held in Paris in December 2015. It stipulates that it is our obligation to respect, protect and sustain the earth by all means.

There are considerable potential gains in building bridges between the Water Community (WC) and Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) at international, national and local levels. FBOs often hold a foundational role in guiding community values, beliefs and behaviors. Their vast and structured networks can become important means of channeling key messages on sustainable water management, access to drinking water and sanitation and hygiene - especially if we want to reach the SDGs in just 15 years.

In that context, the Church of Sweden, the Global Water Partnership, the Stockholm International Water Institute, and the Swedish Institute Alexandria invited representatives of the Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist and Hindu Communities to a session on Water and Faiths, that was held in Stockholm on the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 2016 during the World Water Week, to discuss and reflect on the role of FBOs towards achieving water related SDGs<sup>1</sup>.

The Water and Faiths Session was divided into two sessions: an introductory session during which selected guests were invited to express their vision about the role of FBOs in water and possible next steps; and a second open public session during which presentations were made followed by a facilitated panel discussion.

Panel discussions highlighted that a majority of the world population (55% to 80%) indicate that the practice of a faith tradition<sup>2</sup> is very important for them. Religious leadership is mobilizing and inspiring millions each day including for environmental and water action, hence the high potential to collaborating on cultural and behavior change issues.

There are existing and historical experiences and successes in engaging faith communities in water resource management, mediating transboundary water disputes, water law, and in influencing political will, by highlighting faith's relationship to water that could be further documented and shared with the WC. In addition, there are commonalities in the goals of faith communities and water communities, especially on the issue of increasing dignity of the

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<sup>1</sup> The Water and Faiths Sessions have benefited from the active support of both Francois Brikké from GWP and Elizabeth Yaari from SIWI.

<sup>2</sup> 2015 Global Attitude Survey, Pew Research Center.

person. Some participants felt that ‘Right to Water’ could be an important central message of faith based communities’ engagement with water. Others saw synergies to broader Human Rights issues, migration (hospitality), justice, and peacebuilding (water conflict/cooperation issues).

Cardinal Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, encouraged the session participants to ‘act together’ to achieve these share goals. Panelists concurred that these acts actually are ecumenical acts. Some examples were given of the contributions that FBOs can and are providing concerning water including:

- Organize interreligious campaigns for cleaning rivers or lakes, in order to foster mutual respect, peace and friendship among different groups. Educate youth to embrace solidarity, altruism and responsibility.
- Encourage governments to align national policies with international commitments.
- Leverage FBO’s broad networks to reach remote communities to provide critical information, training and resources related to water, health and hygiene.
- Encourage places of worship to serve as educational hubs of environmental action.
- Reaffirm human dignity and the common good of the whole human family in order to promote a wise hierarchy of priorities for the use of water, especially where there are multiple and potentially competing demands for water.
- In teaching Sacred Scriptures and spiritual traditions, communicate that water is a precious and even a divine element. It is used extensively in liturgy. This should inspire us to use water with respect and gratitude, reclaim polluted water sources and understand that water is not a mere commodity. It is an essential gift of God, representing divine favor to humanity.

Given the above and in line with the contributions of all participants, the following next steps are suggested:

- i. Continue this dialogue in the coming World Water Week (2017) and potentially at the next World Water Forum to be held in Rio de Janeiro (2018).
- ii. Document, share and disseminate existing good examples and experiences of FBOs contributing to water, sanitation, and hygiene activities. Indeed, it is suggested that each participant could contribute to some knowledge sharing so that for the next World Water Week we can prepare a bold agenda. Through knowledge sharing we can build evidence that we can work positively on water as part of development.
- iii. Pursue the promotion of safe drinking water and sanitation as a basis for human dignity and development.
- iv. All participants are welcome to send to Elizabeth Yaari, Programme Manager, SIWI and Francois Brikké, Senior Network Officer, GWP <sup>3</sup> more background information and suggested next steps to help inform how to advance in the framework of World Water Week activities, events, and programming.

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## 1. BACKGROUND

### 1.1 Context

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted at the UN Sustainable Development Summit September 25–27, 2015 in New York, USA include a specific goal on water and sanitation and also recognizes the importance of consolidating global and local partnerships in the implementation of the SDGs by 2030.

However, development is not only about policies and investments, it is also about behavior change and cultural values. In that respect, the role of Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) becomes crucial given their presence and influence in local communities. It has therefore been suggested to better explore ways of aligning the work done by the Water Community (WC) with the activities carried out by FBOs locally and globally in order to optimize the possibility achieving the SDGs in just 15 years.

Taking the opportunity given by the World Water Week organized in Stockholm by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) to gather key development partners, the Global Water Partnership (GWP), SIWI, the Swedish Institute Alexandria and the Church of Sweden invited representatives of different faith communities on the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 2016, to discuss and reflect on the role of FBOs towards achieving water related SDGs, with the following main objectives:

- To recognize the existing role of FBOs in addressing global water challenges.
- To contribute to strengthening the relationship between the WC and FBOs.
- To mark a way forward for improved alignment of the contributions of FBOs and the WC to achieve the water related SDGs.

The gathering of FBOs together with the WC has been organized around two sessions: a) an Introductory Session during which a selected number of invitees have discussed their vision on a water secure world where FBOs are actively contributing; b) a Public Session where representatives of Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Jewish faiths have been able to debate around key questions.

### 1.2 The Central Role of Water

Water is at the core of sustainable development and is critical for socio-economic development as well as for the preservation of healthy ecosystems and survival itself. In addition, water issues often mirror debates around social ethics: water as a common good, water as a facilitator of well-being, water and social justice, water as a human right, water as a wealth generator.

Water is also at the heart of adaptation to climate change, serving as the crucial link between the climate system, human society and the environment. According to world leaders, most of the reasons we should be concerned about climate change are water related events such as floods, droughts, tsunamis and more. Yet relatively little effort is being spent on helping humans adapt to and deal with the impacts of such events which raised important ethical questions of public policy. Furthermore, water is critical for successful climate change mitigation, as many efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions depend on reliable access to water resources.

Water has also a profound symbolic meaning in religious and local traditions. Water can

symbolize life, liberation, purity, renewal, reconciliation, healing, regeneration in most, if not all, of humanity's faith traditions. Conscious of the potential impact of climate change on future generations, faith and spiritual leaders have written a common Statement for the COP21 of the UNFCCC held in Paris in December 2015. It stipulates that it is our obligation to respect, protect and sustain the earth by all means.

According to UN – Water<sup>4</sup>, SDGs covers a wide range of drivers across the three pillars of sustainable development, and include a dedicated goal on water and sanitation (SDG 6) that sets out to “ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”.

SDG 6 expands the MDG focus on drinking water and basic sanitation to now cover the entire water cycle, including the management of water, wastewater and ecosystem resources. With water at the very core of sustainable development, SDG 6 does not only have strong linkages to all of the other SDGs, but also the ability to underpin them: realizing SDG 6 would in fact go a long way towards achieving much of the 2030 Agenda.

SDG 6 contains six targets on outcomes across the entire water cycle, and two targets on the means of implementing the outcome targets:

- Targets 6.1 and 6.2 build on the MDG targets on drinking water and basic sanitation, providing continuity while expanding their scope and refining definitions.
- Targets 6.3 to 6.6 address the broader water context that was not explicitly included in the MDG framework, but whose importance was acknowledged at the Rio+20 Conference, such as water quality and wastewater management, water scarcity and use efficiency, integrated water resources management, and the protection and restoration of water-related ecosystems.
- Targets 6.a and 6.b acknowledge the importance of an enabling environment, addressing the means of implementation and aiming for international cooperation, capacity-building and the participation of local communities in water and sanitation management.

### 1.3 The Central Role of FBOs

Aligning the objectives and approaches of the WC and FBOs to support the achievement of the Water related Sustainable Development Goals is not without challenges – but it is a challenge that we must actively engage.

SDG 17 stipulates the importance of strengthening the means of implementation and the need of revitalizing the global and local partnerships complemented by multi-stakeholder networks that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources to support the achievement of the SDGs in all countries, particularly developing countries.

Nonetheless, there is a prevalent disconnect and lack of understanding between the WC and FBOs – both with regards to understanding religious values, practices and beliefs as well as understanding secular values, practices and beliefs.

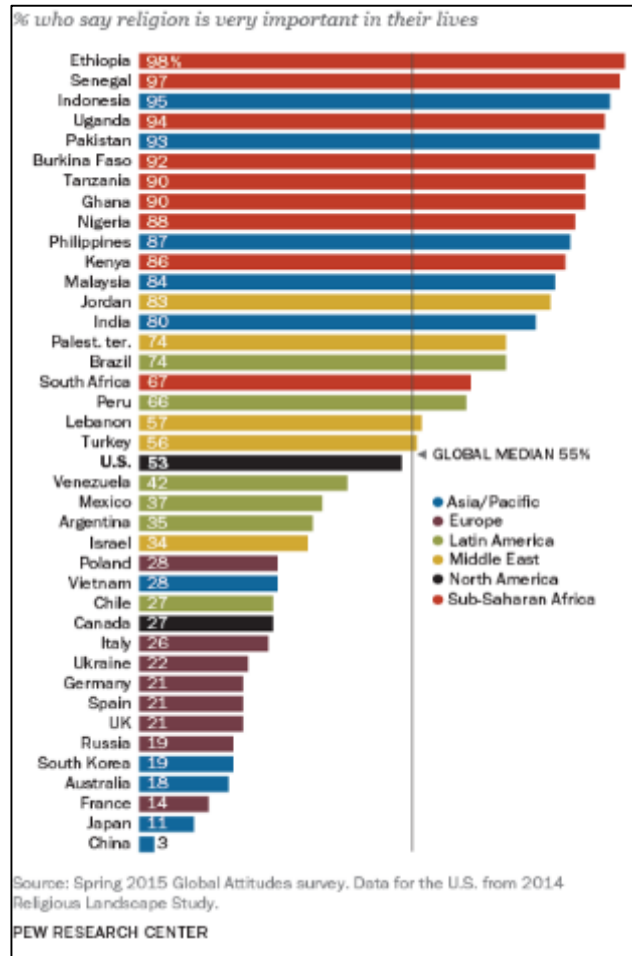
There are considerable potential gains in building bridges between the WC and FBOs at international, national and local levels. *FBOs often hold a foundational role in guiding community values, beliefs and behaviors.*

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<sup>4</sup> From UN-Water website

As community leaders, faith based leaders have a significant role in influencing both the national political representatives and the societies at large. Increased collaborative engagement to support faith leaders in championing sustainable development can contribute to creating a conducive policy environment and increased political commitment. Likewise, the WC can support faith leaders with networking and knowledge exchange platforms to provide up to date information with real world applications for the benefit of their communities.

Moreover, in areas of the world with the highest levels of water stress, religion often plays a definitive role in the daily lives of community members. As such it is incumbent upon the WC and its partners to increase understanding and partnership with FBOs to "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all", particularly in the world's most water stressed regions and socially vulnerable areas.



## 2. INTRODUCTORY SESSION

### 2.1 Overview

The Introductory Session brought together representatives of the four convening organizations, session speakers and panelists, and interested World Water Week participants (see Annex 1, for the list of the participants of the Introductory Session).

The Session was facilitated by Peter Weiderud, Director of the Swedish Institute Alexandria and aimed to focus on next steps to build on the World Water Week event. Participants were asked to introduce themselves and their work and to offer suggestions for increasing synergies and identifying opportunities to increase collaborations between water community and faith based communities towards the achievement of the SDGs.

### 2.2 Highlights of the Session

#### The relevance of engaging FBOs

- Water was recognized as a universal public good that needs to be protected, as it is central for life and development. Several participants commented on existing experiences and successes in engaging faith communities in water resource management, water law, and in influencing political will, by highlighting faith's relationship to water. The integration of faith leaders and communities in water issues at national, regional and local levels can broaden stakeholder engagement



and buy-in. It is clear that Faith communities are already engaged in water issues globally among other issues such as climate change, food and migration.

- **Examples where by internal declaration on climate change led to interfaith declaration on climate change. Good examples and pathways for interfaith work. Declarations are important to push the leadership and increase action on the grassroots levels. These experiences could be further documented, and it might be a challenge for faith based communities to increase documentation monitoring and evaluation, impact reporting which could be available to the Water Community.**
- **The group highlighted the commonalities in the goals of faith communities and water communities, especially on the issue of increasing dignity of the person. Some participants felt that ‘Right to Water’ could be an important central message of faith based communities’ engagement with water. Others saw synergies to broader Human Rights issues, migration (hospitality), justice, and peacebuilding (water conflict/cooperation issues).**
- **The group also highlighted the large networks that faith based communities have and the high significance those communities have in the lives of their members. Faith has a necessary implication in the social order. Not only what one believes but how we live and how we act, with significant potential for behavioral change.**
- **The group expressed the need of support for increased coordination between faith based communities and water communities. Noting that through this event many institutions and actors are further recognizing the importance of faith based communities towards achieving the SDGs and this recognition comes with an increased responsibility of the faith based communities to both speak out and act. There is call to the water community to be bold in its approach to increased partnership with faith communities.**

### Going Forward Suggestions

The participants were asked about possible next steps and the following was suggested:

- **Continue this dialogue in the coming World Water Week (2017) and potentially at the next World Water Forum to be held in Rio de Janeiro (2018).**
- **Pursue the promotion of safe drinking water and sanitation as a human right and possibly coordinate with the Special Rapporteur on the human right to drinking water and sanitation.**
- **Document, share and disseminate existing good examples and experiences of FBOs contributing to water, sanitation, and hygiene activities. Indeed, it is suggested that each participant could contribute to some knowledge sharing so that for the next World Water Week we can prepare a bold agenda. Through knowledge sharing we can build evidence that we can work positively on water as part of development.**
- **The Day of Prayer for Creation (Catholic and Orthodox) was suggested as an opportunity to connect the faith and social ministries. A specific day for world prayer for water could contribute to awareness building.**
- **All participants are welcome to send to Elizabeth Yaari, Programme Manager, SIWI and Francois Brikké, Senior Network Officer, GWP<sup>5</sup> more background information and suggested next steps to help inform how to advance in the framework of World Water Week activities, events, and programming.**

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<sup>5</sup> [elizabeth.yaari@siwi.org](mailto:elizabeth.yaari@siwi.org); [francois.brikke@gwp.org](mailto:francois.brikke@gwp.org);

### 3. OPEN PUBLIC SESSION

#### 3.1 Introduction

Speech by Karin Lexén, Director of World Water Week, International Policy and Prizes

Excellencies, dear colleagues and friends,

On behalf of the organizers I would like to welcome you all to this exciting event where we will discuss how the Faith and the Water Communities can increase collaboration and learn from each other in our shared efforts for a sustainable future.



Last year the UN General Assembly adopted 17 Sustainable Developments Goals. The agreements must now be implemented.

How well we coordinate this action; how effectively we work together, across different communities, economic sectors and boundaries will almost certainly determine whether or not we will achieve the global goals. This will require multi-stakeholder collaboration - at scale, and it will require us to take a holistic perspective.

Implementing the SDGs will be a social process. The measures taken must be anchored in participatory processes to create ownership, in partnership with diverse communities worldwide, to form long-term stable solutions. Communicating how the SDGs will benefit the broader public must be done in an open, inclusive, and transparent manner.

We therefore welcome this possibility for greater partnership and dialogue with Faith Communities to together translate our words into action, and deliver on water related SDGs, for the benefit of all.

#### The Key Role of Water for Sustainable Development

Water is at the core of sustainable development and is critical for development and healthy ecosystems. It is critical to human well-being and survival itself. Water is also a cross-cutting resource. Access to reliable and safe freshwater is essential for human health, food security, sustainable economic development, social progress and sound ecosystems. It therefore has the potential to act as a connector between policy areas, economic sectors, and nations.

The 2030 Agenda sets out a clear mission “to leave no one behind”. This means that in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, equity - a pro-poor approach – is vital; only 20% of the top twenty Fragile States met the MDG on water, compared to 62% of low and middle income countries. With these trends, few fragile states will be able to reach universal coverage by 2030.

Women continue to be underrepresented in water management, but suffer most from lacking services. While many local water management organizations have equal male/female representation, women remain underrepresented at levels of policy and decision making (UN, 2015). Empowerment of women is critical to improve services and reduce inequalities.

Urbanization puts water-scarce areas under pressure, and the rapidly growing urban centers

need to think carefully about how they manage their water resources, to keep current residents and companies, and attract new ones. Therefore, access to high quality water is a key condition for development and sustainable growth of urban areas.

In a world where there is increasing demand for freshwater and climate change induced water related hazards, integrating wise water resource management throughout the 2030 Agenda will be critical to its delivery.

### Our Shared Challenge

Implementing SDGs will be a social process. The measures taken must be anchored in participatory processes to create ownership in partnership with diverse communities worldwide, to form long-term stable solutions. Communications about how SDG implementation benefits the broader public must be open, inclusive, and transparent.

SDG 17 states the importance of strengthening the means of implementation and the need of revitalizing the global and local partnerships complemented by multi-stakeholder networks that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources to support the achievement of the SDGs in all countries, particularly developing countries.

Faith Based Leaders and communities often hold a foundational role in guiding community values, beliefs and behaviors. Now more than ever, we must ensure that our work for a sustainable future is undertaken in an inclusive and integrated manner, taking into account the rich knowledge and experience of faith based communities.

Both the water community and faith based communities have much to learn from broadening this dialogue and we at SIWI together with our partners at the Global Water Partnership, Swedish Institute of Alexandria and the Church of Sweden are proud to help facilitate this process.

We know that water has a sacred, symbolic and life giving meaning in most religious traditions. Religious leaders have an important role to offer guidance and inspiration for improved care and water management. We therefore welcome this possibility to enhance partnership and dialogue with Faith Communities to together translate our words into action and deliver on the water related SDGs for the benefit of all.

### 3.2 Welcoming Address

Speech by the Rt Revd Thomas Söderberg, Bishop Emeritus of Västerås, Church of Sweden

Excellencies, dear colleagues and friends!

It is my privilege and honor to welcome you all on behalf of Church of Sweden to this joint event on Water and Faiths, sharing thoughts and experiences on how faith based organizations can contribute to the water Sustainable Goals. We are very happy to be a part of this important work on how we, as faith communities, can show that we all are contributing to a more sustainable water usage.

As representative of Church of Sweden it is a special privilege to welcome His Eminence Cardinal Turkson, President of the Pontifical



Council for Justice and Peace. Our common causes to act for justice and peace have a long history. Through World Council of Churches, we have had good cooperation for a long time, and we can see that this will go on in the future.

One sign of our future cooperation as faith communities is The papal encyclical *Laudato Si* that was released last year. It is a gift to the ecumenical movement in order to work together around some of the most important questions of our time. The invitation in *Laudato Si* is even wider than just to our different Christian communities, since it opens up for an interreligious dialogue on the challenges we are facing as humanity. Climate change and water are some of the more urgent to work with and it is very well addressed in *Laudato Si*.

But it doesn't stop with the *Laudato Si*. Pope Francis have also stressed the importance of having a period called Season of Creation and to mark 1st of September Creation Day. For many years we have as faith communities in the Christian family highlighted the 1st of September as a starting point for a period lasting to the 4th of October as the Season of Creation. This year we see a strong commitment from the whole Christianity to do so. And this time there is also an invitation to all faith communities of different religions to manifest this as a period for safe guarding the Creation.

We are very glad and joyful that Pope Francis and the Roman Catholic Church open up to a new and genuine ecumenical and interreligious cooperation on the most urgent global challenges we are facing. I will also add that we are looking forward to the 31st of October when The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Roman Catholic Church will jointly hold an ecumenical commemoration of the Reformation. This will be locally co-hosted by the Church of Sweden and the Catholic Diocese of Stockholm. One of the subjects that will be on the agenda is the question of sustainability/climate and *Laudato Si* is a very inspiring document to accompany this conversation and our joint efforts in our Pilgrimage for justice and peace.

I am also very glad to welcome this very distinguished panel that will be introduced later by the moderator but I will at this moment just thank you all for your commitment to an interfaith collaboration on the most urgent challenges that we are facing as humanity today;

That Water and Faith belong together is as old as the faith communities themselves. In all our traditions water plays a significant part. As is said in a interreligious document from 2013: "Water is the cradle and source of all life on earth, it is a sacred gift. We need to recognize that regardless of its utilitarian or commercial worth, water has a social, cultural, medical, religious and spiritual value. It is also a profound symbol within our scriptural and liturgical traditions".

For me as a Christian, water plays an important role in many parts of the bible. The creation stories tell us that water is a precondition for life as well as a threat to life.

The wells play an important part in the stories of the patriarchs and is a central text when Jesus meets with the women at the well of Sychar, the well of Jacob. The baptism of Jesus is in the water of Jordan and we baptize in water in our church. There are many more references to water in the bible and in our tradition.

I got a liturgical cope that has the inscription "Water for life". This is a reminder of my visits to the Anglican Diocese of Lebombo in Mozambique. This diocese has a thirty-year long friendship link with the Diocese of Västerås in Church of Sweden, the diocese where I was Bishop before my retirement. One of the main tasks in taking a social responsibility for Lebombo and my friend Bishop Dinis Sengulane (now also retired) is and has been just that: Water for life. It includes new wells and striving for clean water to all. It also includes efforts

to help out when water becomes a threat: in times of flooding as well as an effort to roll back malaria.

In my view, to work for this is a mark of showing spiritual leadership, as spirit, soul and body (including its water) is an entirety.

To reach goal 6 in the Sustainable Development Goals: Ensure access to water and sanitation for all, we need a mindset that faith communities can contribute to change or to keep. Water is a sacred gift.

Once again: welcome.

### 3.3 Keynote Address on Faith and Development

Speech by His Eminence Cardinal Peter Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace

Distinguished Representatives of various Religions, Organizers, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure to greet you in the name of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

Having been asked to speak on “Faith and Development”, I notice that many religions are represented here. This suggests that indeed there are many links between faith and development. Fruitful inter-religious collaborations and synergies have already started in several sectors, such as healthcare, food security, investment, education, stewardship of natural resources, and assistance to migrants.



From a Catholic perspective, our planet, its resources and ecosystems are a marvelous gift. So too, human life is a gift – we are not self-created, we receive our bodies and our first relationships through the same grand course of divinely-given nature. Hence, we readily understand that nature is intended to be shared between all the humans, one generation after the other, and that the whole human family is expected to take care of our common home. These fundamentals are easily found in other religions and spiritual traditions as well, regardless of their specific unique features.

Why is this shared fundamental understanding so important for development?

First of all, science can only explain concrete reality, its substances and causal relationships. Science can quantify the pollution in deep oceans or around a mining site, foreseeing its negative consequences and proposing remedies. But science cannot provide the motivation for virtuous action. The same holds beyond the realm of the natural sciences: sociologists, economists and lawyers can analyze and explain the negative effects of unemployment, speculation and corruption; they can warn us about rising inequalities, contradictory policies or geopolitical unrest. But in the end they cannot supply the motivation for virtuous action.

Pope Francis, in the Encyclical letter *Laudato Si'*, asks: “What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up? [...] What is the goal

of our work and all our efforts?” (§160). Observing numerous alarming environmental and social indicators leads us to the daunting question: why should I care? Science and technology will not help here. Any technical solution is powerless “if we lose sight of the great motivations which make it possible for us to live in harmony, to make sacrifices and to treat others well” (§200). Pope Francis shares his conviction “that change is impossible without motivation and a process of education” – and for those purposes he proposes “some inspired guidelines for human development to be found in the treasure of Christian spiritual experience” (§15), since “faith convictions can offer Christians, and some other believers as well, ample motivation to care for nature and for the most vulnerable of their brothers and sisters” (§64).

**Faith without action is dead.**

Simply put, motivation to virtue is the valuable contribution that religious faith and spiritual practices can and must bring to development, through their spiritual leaders and the multitudes of believers and adherents. They “must constantly feel challenged to live in a way consonant with their faith and not to contradict it by their actions” (200). They must contribute, for example, to the adoption and further extension of ambitious and ethically-rooted frameworks for development action such as those pertaining to the implementation of the new Sustainable Development Goals.

A second perspective grounded in faith touches on human dignity. We are much more than items or data to be measured and represented by GDP. We are not simply factors of production and consumption.

But where does their dignity come? For Christians we are created in the image of god. Dignity is not something that a government ascribed to an individual. Not something that a court of law ascribes to an individual. It is innate.

When human beings are just human resources, they cease to be the measure of success of policies. Instead, humans become disposable. Throw these people away in favour of better producers. Displace those people in favour of more profitable consumption of water.

Eliminate this section of people in the interest of development. Recognize every innate dignity in people. Poverty is not eradicated by eliminating the poor. Perspectives of this discourse are beginning to change. The talk of development must change to recognize that the center of development is the human person. Or else it will move away from understanding the character of the person. The person goes beyond GDP and other attributes that are not quantifiable. It is dignity, well-being and if you want transcending vocation.

Our vision of being human must be much more complex. Pope Francis teaches that we must integrate spirituality, social relationality, and our connections with nature. This lies behind his conviction that “what is at stake is our own dignity. Leaving an inhabitable planet to future generations is, first and foremost, up to us. The issue is one which dramatically affects us, for it has to do with the ultimate meaning of our earthly sojourn” (§160).

Since we are gathered during the World Water Week, I would like to conclude by giving a few examples of the contributions that Faith-based-organizations can provide concerning water.

1. Educate youth to embrace solidarity, altruism and responsibility. Later on, these virtues will help them to be honest administrators and politicians.
2. In teaching Sacred Scriptures and spiritual traditions, show that water is a precious and even a divine element. It is used extensively in liturgy. This should inspire us to

use water with respect and gratitude, reclaim polluted water sources and understand that water is not a mere commodity. It is essential gift of god, representing divine favour to humanity.

3. Organize interreligious campaigns for cleaning rivers or lakes, in order to foster mutual respect, peace and friendship among different groups.
4. Religious communities should encourage their governments to align with their commitments. This means that governments can come to the UN and sign on to conventions and come back and not support national implementation. In Ghana we have a lot of gold, the gold mining is taking place in rivers. Now many rivers are dead. Why go to the UN and then go back home and advance a counter agenda?
5. Reaffirm human dignity and the common good of the whole human family in order to promote a wise hierarchy of priorities for the use of water, especially where there are multiple and potentially competing demands for water.

All this will help in making universal and sustainable access to drinkable water a reality. This most vital challenge has been a focus for the Catholic Church for many years.

It is a continuing shame that so many of our brothers and sisters are systematically thirsty or compelled to drink unsafe water; that their needs are secondary to industries which take too much and that pollute what remains; that governments pursue other priorities and ignore their parched cries.

We already know, speaking again as a Christian, how Jesus judges these matters. In the Gospel of Matthew (25:35), Jesus teaches what we are supposed to do: “I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink”. I pray that this conference will help the world to be more alert to the thirst of Jesus and give him sufficient, clean water to drink! Thank you.

We commit to supporting the implementation of the SDGS.

### 3.4 Panel Exchange

Panel Moderator, Dr Jerome Delli Priscoli, GWP Technical Committee Chair

As moderator Dr Delli Priscoli explained the agreed to procedures. Each panelist was given a few minutes to express 1 or 2 main messages on how FBO's might help the world water community efforts in achieving water security worldwide and in bringing safe water and sanitation to all.

Following panelists short introductory messages, the moderator helped animate dialog among panelists and then with the audience. He asked panelists to react to each other's' messages and in turn asked the audience to react to the dialog among the panelists.

Panelists talked about whether water encouraged conflict or cooperation and how FBOs actual operated on the ground and difficulties often encountered. Members of the audience expressed great interest in the practical examples of FBOs worldwide and in potential political reactions to their activities. The audience also noted that FBOs often are able to reach far into interiors and could be useful to help train communities in basics of water, health, and hygiene.



**Mr Dinesh Suna, Coordinator, Ecumenical Water Network, World Council of Churches, presenting a Christian perspective**

**There is a great potentiality of the faith based organization in addressing the SDGs. A concrete call related to water in the SDGs.**

**If the UN mechanisms and institutions such as SIWI don't tap the resources and networks of the FBOs it is an opportunity lost. Next to the governments there is no other institution that has such reach. That meets once a year. We are very happy that the UN has recognized such potentialities of FBOs to address issues and fulfill goals of SDGs. We remember fondly the COP 21 when we handed over signatures demanding a legally binding treaty. We have been engaged since the 1970s on ecological justice. If we don't tap the resources of the theological work and networks, it is a loss. Thanks to SIWI for hosting this conversation.**



**What are we doing? Water as a public common good. We cannot neglect sanitation. It was a challenge for us not only to celebrate world water day but also world toilet day. Even a hymn was created and spread. Lots of activities such as – billions of dollars spent on addressing the SDGs. One example – Norwegian church aid raised 36 M USD in one day totally dedicated to providing water to 1M people. Lutheran World Federation runs the second largest refugee camp in the world. Our call to eliminate bottled water. World Council of Churches made a call to our partner churches to become a blue community. Eliminating bottled water as bottled water negatively affects our human right to water.**

**Ms Kiran Bali JP, Global Interfaith Group Leader, presenting a Hindu perspective**

**Why is faith important to the SDGs? 80% of population identify with a faith tradition. Religious leadership is mobilizing and inspiring hundreds of thousands each day including environmental action.**

**It would be good to see more women in the leadership. From a Hindu perspective, we have unique teachings of water – rivers are referred to as mothers due to the providing of all life. No hierarchy in Hindu communities (no leader) allows for innovation. Places of worship have become educational hubs in terms of environmental action. What can we do and what can we share without communities?**



**Green certification is granted if your place of worship meets some criteria. We are quite lucky in the developed world, and we are not always aware of the burden for a woman in India to carry water.... we have to recognize that it is not so easy to access water, and there are numerous health implications linked to water. We follow the practice of action in deed and thought.**

**We follow a vegetarian lifestyle, eating just to live. We work closely with animal welfare organizations. So important to extend love and compassion to all of the creation. Green worship – rituals carried out in our practices made ecofriendly through water reuse and**



sustainable practices. Partnership around climate action is vital and there is an Hindu declaration on climate change, followed by the interfaith declaration on climate change. People at the grassroots are impacted by the leadership.

Rabbi Awraham Soetendorp, Human Rights Advocate and Environmental Activist, presenting a Jewish perspective

**'Na asah adam'. Why 'doing' is plural? When it came to the creation of man who has the possibility of doing right and wrong...let us create the human being in cooperation. Together. Plural. God has given us the possibility of choosing for life.**



I was a child survivor and saved in World War 2 by Christian persons. I once told my story to a classroom. One girl approached me and said 'You say you were lucky to survive, but God wanted you to survive'. I immediately responded that God wanted us all to survive, I got lucky to fall into the arms of others that understood that.

Among the diversity of all, we have one destiny. Some of the energy felt when the Earth Charter was elaborated, is felt today. There is a rising together. We join with all, we are learning. On the 2013 World Water Day, for the first time that WASH issues came together, and a Global Interfaith WASH alliance was created that inaugurated two blocks of toilets.

Water is life. When we go from here. In my moment of life, I don't know how many years, how much time is left from me, and others. I see the world with two faces, the refugees, the thirst, the crisis, as well as the tremendous capacity of the human soul to declare by 2030 an eradication of poverty. That is not hubris. Two man in a boat on the water parable. No luxury of despair. World governed by love, truth and justice. We are starting to understand and with the faith community together with science and politics in this 15 years in front of us we will perfect God's world.

H.E. Khamba Lama Professor Doctor D. Natsagdorj, First Lama of Mamba Datsan of Mongolia, presenting a Buddhist perspective

Our planet is colored blue because it is covered by blue water. If we love our blue planet we must treasure our water. The earth and the human body are both made of five elements, and they should be in a balanced state. Water is one of these five elements.



Water is called the precious treasure in Mongolian Traditional Heritage in which it is saved and respected by Mongolian people. According to ancient sutra and textbooks, information is received and transferred by water. Water is the vital vessel of the earth. The global vital challenge is water, and it is therefore important to teach the people on how to treasure and save mother earth and water.

All countries have to take serious responsibility on the water issue globally, and not only consider it on their own. As a human being is connected with blood vessel, the earth is

connected with water vessel network. The responsibility to intelligent mankind is to treasure it, as a means of loving a life of ours. Water is life to all sentient beings, water is alive, water is supreme peace, water is a universal treasure.

Professor Houria Tazi Sadeq, President of the Water Alliance of Morocco, presenting a Muslim perspective

I am a water law lawyer, and will mainly speak about water in Islamic law. I am involved in drafting and developing rights to water issues, and using also as a reference our Islamic texts. Very connected to other rights, rights of human dignity. When I started to speak on this issue I received resistance, now progress has been made. The right to water is the basis for environment and human dignity.



If you remember just a few months before the SDGs, it took quite some time to have water included as a specific goal, but through continuous dialogue and lobbying, it has progressively been recognized as a specific goal now.

Water can be a private appropriation, and in some cases we can also sell water. In all these concepts are found in modern law in Morocco and also in French law. Islam has a protection vision around water, as well as respecting the concept of cycle of water.

Very interesting to reflect on traditional management of water and some principle of Islam and link to governance. Today governance must give a possibility to make effective the principles of non-discrimination and dignity. Reference to traditional management and principles of Islam can be used in planning and education but also the possibility to have a dialogue between religions and communities, particularly at the point where you have to share water, especially transboundary waters and encourage exchange.

Panel discussion



Cardinal Peter Turkson: Confirms and supports what has been said by the panelists. Education and motivation are key to generate action. This can best be based on brotherhood, and it becomes a principle for action. That would suppose that we all recognize the same dignity from the same womb, and a principle of solidarity that flows from that the pursuit of the common good. The origin of the human family provides the principles of humanism. In pursuit of the common

good in this case access to clean water in line with the SDGs.

Ms Kiran Bali: At the grassroots level there is so much going on – those things don't always reach the media but it is important to highlight that that work is happening.

Rabbi Awraham Soetendorp: Water is a source of conflict that everyone is talking about. It

is also a source of peacebuilding. I was at the Jordan River where Palestinians, Jordanians, and Israelis tried to restore and bring water back to the river. What a tremendous experience. I want to say to my Palestinian brothers and sisters to have all the right to access water. And to my Israeli brothers and sisters to have every right to security. Water helps this, water for life. It gives hope. Hope propels us to action.

**Mr Dinesh Suna:** Challenge that our work can be labeled as proselytizing. Examples: the World Council of Churches is organizing 7 weeks for water – last year focused on Israel and Palestine water disparities. Palestinian suffering on water issues. This year will focus on Africa.

**Khamba Lama D. Natsagdorj:** It is the time to make a contribution – government, religious leaders. In Mongolia religious people and organizations can work with the government closely and we are teaching the public how to understand water. Also we are translating information about water from very old Sutras to revive them. Giving them to the young generations. In addition, in Mongolia we make a special ceremony how to respect land and water spirits. It is very important for religious, how to teach for many people. Call to declare our rivers and lakes as national protected areas.

**Rabbi Awraham Soetendorp:** Agreed that we can reach very far places. Places of worship have become very practical centers for teaching. In Europe there have been attacks. It is important that we speak with one voice, immediately, together, condemn this violence and give resources and create an alliance. This is growing and it becomes a kind of protection. We also have to be self-critical. We have been late. We have to learn. Humanists are part of that. I am learning also from here, this session on Water and faith, that we are all involved. There is a spirit, motivation to continue to involve oneself for living water.

**Professor Houria Tazi Sadeq:** The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a soft law, it doesn't talk about the Human Right to water directly but indirectly through the sub principles. Water is a political economic, and financing issue, and you have the big lobby. The water convention needed 25 years to be ratified. When we asked for the right to water to be included in the water convention, the resolution spoke about safe drinking water. I hope to have a convention on right to water and the right to sanitation. The work is made by the Council of Human Rights in Geneva. Perhaps it can be an objective to make a compilation of all this new text and documents and to have a unified document.

**Cardinal Peter Turkson:** It is true that we have a far reach in rural areas. It is true that different groups don't have the same faith or formulate their faith in the same way. You can think of it as an accumulation of acts. We accept to come together to do something common in society. Sure there has been division but there is the possibility that we come together on a common social project. I belong to some of the dialogue groups. We are not here to discuss theology but what we can do together is the level of the social order. This is the premise if we were to come together. We cannot talk about theology that discussion will never end. But we can act together.

**Moderator Dr Delli Priscoli:** The moderator concluded the lively discussions among the panelists and audience and turned to Peter Weiderud for concluding remarks. In doing so, he also noted the work done for UNESCO on Water and Civilizations that mention poets across time and space of thousands of years, from ancient China to modern Europe, referring to water as: *'humanity's carrier of collective memory.'*

### 3.5 Closing Address

Speech by Peter Weiderud, Director, Swedish Institute Alexandria

Your Eminence, Your Grace, Your Excellencies,  
distinguished experts and dear friends

Water has a sacred, symbolic and life-giving meaning in all world religions. Water is used in baptism, in cleaning or in purification rites in Christendom, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism. Water is Holy.

The word Holy, might not have been used before in the World Water Week, as this is the first time there has been an interaction between the Water Community and Religious leaders in this context. But the understanding of water as holy has been present from the beginning.



The World Water Week is instrumental in pointing to the critical situation for water in the world – the risk and consequences of droughts, the connection to economic development, climate change or extreme poverty. The risk for conflict and war as a result of mismanagement of water resources or inability to care for the needs of the neighbor. And the potential for cooperation in order to avoid or prevent violent conflict.

The words used are different between the Water Community and Religious leaders, but the aim and goals are the same. One is basing the arguments on new findings in science, while the other is using language based on thousand years of human wisdom and faith.

Can leaders of faith and water management learn from each other and inspire the other? We believe so, and this seminar is a proof of that. Religious leaders should feel that their ancient traditions are more modern than ever and that SDG's and recent research can give new energy, meaning and inspiration in their communication.

Water scientists and advocates should feel that religious leaders is a channel to reach out to billions of people – as we heard about 85 percent of humanity who identify themselves as religiously affiliated - in all cultures and traditions about the importance of water management and respect for this key in fulfilling many of the Sustainable Development Goals.

During this plenary and in a more closed seminar earlier today, the need to stimulate an improved interaction between the water community and the faith communities has been discussed. A number of concrete suggestions have been raised in this dialogue.

One is the need to have an interfaith approach. Water is one, shared by all human being, and for faith communities to recognize this unity by working together would add credibility to their approach. Another is the need for more organized interaction where water policy issues are discussed. The initiative by SIWI (*together with GWP and the Church of Sweden*) to open up for this dialogue was praised and should serve as an example for other policy meetings. A third idea was the need for a common world prayer day for water, which could build on something already existing, like the Christian orthodox prayer day for creation on December 1 or the UN water day on March 22. Other possible ideas mentioned was to recognize water as a human right or the connection between water and migration, an area where faith communities are strongly involved.

To explain the potential of the interaction between the faith. And water communities, let me

remind you about the wisdom expressed by TS Eliot in his poem *The Rock*: Where is the life we have lost in living. Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?

We have enough information. The structure for turning that in to knowledge is well in place, not least in the World Water Week. Still we need more keys to transform information and knowledge into wisdom. Some of these keys might be provided by leaders of faith communities.

I am most grateful for having been part of this inspiring afternoon. On behalf of the Swedish Institute in Alexandria, I want to thank the other co-conveners the Stockholm International Water Institute, the Global Water Partnership and the Church of Sweden.

Thank you also to the distinguished panel and all attendees.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The Water and Faiths Sessions of the World Water Week held in Stockholm on the 29th of September 2016 have been an attempt to gather representatives of the Faith Community together with the ones of the Water Community in order to explore possible collaboration on water development and the implementation of water related SDGs.

This initiative follows the call of the International Community to recognize partnerships at Global and Local levels as key means of implementation for the achievement of the SDGs (SDG 17). It is also in line with the recent Interfaith Declaration on Climate Change developed at the occasion of the recent COP 21, and also with the widely publicized Encyclical letter of Pope Francis, “Laudato Si” that stipulates the following:

*“The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can **change**... I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone... We require a new and universal **solidarity**... (Pope Francis)”*

These sessions have allowed to show that FBOs play a significant role in development issues, including water, sanitation and hygiene. The presence of FBOs and their outreach on people’s lives, cultural values, and behavior represent a formidable asset that the Water Community does not sufficiently engagement with to date, especially if we aim to implement the SDGs in just 15 years.

We have also noted the fact that FBOs benefit from vast and well-structured networks that could simplify and amplify the transmission of key messages, in an efficient and cost effective way. It would be important that FBOs share their experience and successes with the WC, which would demonstrate the clear added value of working together.

The participants recalled the fact that water is a fundamental basis of human dignity and development, and that it carries also a duty for people to protect it and preserve it. In addition, the call for a day of prayer for the environment could help to foster the attention on the importance of water as a common good for people and the environment. Some examples were given of the contributions that Faith-based-organizations can provide concerning water:

- Organize interreligious campaigns for cleaning rivers or lakes, in order to foster mutual respect, peace and friendship among different groups. Educate youth to embrace solidarity, altruism and responsibility.
- Encourage governments to align national policies with international commitments.
- Leverage FBO’s broad networks to reach remote communities to provide critical information, training and resources related to water, health and hygiene.
- Encourage places of worship to serve as educational hubs of environmental action.
- Reaffirm human dignity and the common good of the whole human family in order to promote a wise hierarchy of priorities for the use of water, especially where there are multiple and potentially competing demands for water.
- In teaching Sacred Scriptures and spiritual traditions, communicate that water is a precious and even a divine element. It is used extensively in liturgy. This should inspire us to use water with respect and gratitude, reclaim polluted water sources and understand that water is not a mere commodity. It is an essential gift of God, representing divine favor to humanity.

Finally, the Sessions have allowed to show that a dialogue among different faith communities on the issue of water is not only possible but also encouraged and desired by the participants. Water in a way becomes a converging point, a channel for increased understanding and partnership.

Given the above and in line with the contributions of all participants, the following next steps are suggested:

- Continue this dialogue in the coming World Water Week (2017) and potentially at the next World Water Forum to be held in Rio de Janeiro (2018).
- Document, share and disseminate existing good examples and experiences of FBOs contributing to water, sanitation, and hygiene activities. Indeed, it is suggested that each participant could contribute to some knowledge sharing so that for the next World Water Week we can prepare a bold agenda. Through knowledge sharing we can build evidence that we can work positively on water as part of development.
- Pursue the promotion of safe drinking water and sanitation as a basis for human dignity and development.
- All participants are welcome to send to SIWI and GWP more background information and suggested next steps to help inform how to advance in the framework of World Water Week activities, events, and programming.

## Annex 1: List of Participants of the Introductory Session

- Dr. Moez Allaoui, Programme Manager, WaterLex
- Ms Kiran Bali JP, Global Interfaith Group Leader
- H.E. Ambassador Cecilia Björner, Swedish Ambassador to the Vatican
- Mr. Francois Brikké, Senior Network Officer, Global Water Partnership
- Pastor Jason Brooks, Senior Technical Advisor WASH, Program Manager, ADRA International
- Mr. Rudolph Cleveringa, Executive Secretary, Global Water Partnership
- Mr. Steven Downey, Head of Communications, Global Water Partnership
- Reverend Henrik Grape, Officer on Sustainable Development, Church of Sweden
- Ms Lamarti Narjiss, Head of Public Water, Loukkos Basin, Morocco
- H.E. Khamba Lama Professor Doctor D. Natsagdorj, First Lama of Mamba Datsan of Mongolia
- Dr Jerome Delli Priscoli, Technical Committee Chair, Global Water Partnership
- Professor Houria Tazi Sadeq, President of the Water Alliance of Morocco
- Rt Revend Thomas Söderberg, Bishop Emeritus of Västerås, Church of Sweden
- Rabbi Awraham Soetendorp, Human Rights Advocate and Environmental Activist
- Mr Dinesh Suna, Coordinator, Ecumenical Water Network, World Council of Churches
- His Eminence Cardinal Peter Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace
- Dr. Peter Weiderud, Director, Swedish Institute Alexandria
- Ms Elizabeth Yaari, Program Manager, Stockholm International Water Institute
- Dr Sarantuyaa Zandaryaa, Program Specialist, Division of Water Sciences, UNESCO

## Annex 2: Agenda of the Public Session

|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>16:00 – 16:05</b> | <b>Introduction</b><br>Lead Moderator: Karin Lexén, Director of World Water Week, International Policy and Prizes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>16:05 – 16:15</b> | <b>Welcoming Speech</b><br>Rt Revd Thomas Söderberg, Bishop Emeritus of Västerås, Church of Sweden                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>16:15– 16:25</b>  | <b>Keynote Address on Faith and Development</b><br>His Eminence Cardinal Peter Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>16:25 – 16:30</b> | <b>Invitation to the Panel</b><br>Panel Moderator, Dr Jerome Delli Priscoli, GWP Technical Committee Chair                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>16:30 – 17:10</b> | <b>Panel Discussion on Faith and Water related SDGs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Professor Houria Tazi Sadeq, President of the Water Alliance of Morocco, a Muslim perspective</li> <li>– H.E. Khamba Lama Professor Doctor D. Natsagdorj, First Lama of Mamba Datsan of Mongolia, a Buddhist perspective</li> <li>– Rabbi Awraham Soetendorp, Human Rights Advocate and Environmental Activist, a Jewish perspective</li> <li>– Ms Kiran Bali JP, Global Interfaith Group Leader, a Hindu perspective</li> <li>– Mr Dinesh Suna, Coordinator, Ecumenical Water Network, World Council of Churches, a Christian perspective</li> </ul> |
| <b>17:10 – 17:25</b> | <b>Discussion with the Audience</b><br>Questions on Faith and Water related SDGs from the participants                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>17:25 – 17:30</b> | <b>Conclusion and Closing</b><br>Peter Weiderud, Director, Swedish Institute Alexandria                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |



## Annex 3: The Water SDG6

### Introduction

In September 2015, heads of state from all around the world gathered in New York to adopt the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), an ambitious “plan of action for people, planet and prosperity”, with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets, aiming to nothing less than “transforming our world”. Building on the UN Millennium Declaration and its eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (2000-2015), the 2030 Agenda expands the MDG focus on poverty reduction to now cover all aspects of sustainable development in all countries of the world, calling for peace and partnership, and the need to leave no one behind.

The SDGs covers a wide range of drivers across the three pillars of sustainable development, and include a dedicated goal on water and sanitation (SDG 6) that sets out to “ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”. SDG 6 expands the MDG focus on drinking water and basic sanitation to now cover the entire water cycle, including the management of water, wastewater and ecosystem resources. With water at the very core of sustainable development, SDG 6 does not only have strong linkages to all of the other SDGs, but also the ability to underpin them: realizing SDG 6 would in fact go a long way towards achieving much of the 2030 Agenda.

### SDG 6 and targets

[SDG 6 contains six targets](#) on outcomes across the entire water cycle, and two targets on the means of implementing the outcome targets:

- Targets 6.1 and 6.2 build on the MDG targets on drinking water and basic sanitation, providing continuity while expanding their scope and refining definitions.
- Targets 6.3 to 6.6 address the broader water context that was not explicitly included in the MDG framework, but whose importance was acknowledged at the Rio+20 Conference, such as water quality and wastewater management, water scarcity and use efficiency, integrated water resources management, and the protection and restoration of water-related ecosystems.
- Targets 6.a and 6.b acknowledge the importance of an enabling environment, addressing the means of implementation and aiming for international cooperation, capacity-building and the participation of local communities in water and sanitation management.

### More info on SDG 6

The [UN – Water](#) Analytical Brief called “[Water and Sanitation Interlinkages across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)”, analyses the central role of water and sanitation to describe the links and interdependencies between the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 6 on water and sanitation and those of other Goals. It aims to stimulate United Nations Member States’ consideration of the water-related linkages within the Goals to facilitate an integrated approach to implementation. The Brief highlights the importance of mainstreaming water and sanitation in the policies and plans of other sectors, and how the management of interlinkages supports the social, economic and environmental dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Learn more about water’s role in the 2030 Agenda and UN-Water’s involvement in the process: [a brief description of the process towards the SDGs](#), [an introduction to SDG 6](#), [suggestion of indicators for global monitoring of SDG 6](#), and [an exploration of the means of implementing SDG 6](#).

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<sup>6</sup> From UN Water