The post-2015 development agenda

Argentina stakeholder perspectives on a water goal and its implementation

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Global Water Partnership

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Contents

1 Comments on the recommended SD Goal and Targets for Water

Since the discussion related to the Sustainable Development Goals taking place at the heart of the United Nations, in which the Nation States are participating, is at an early stage, the information presented in this document should be considered as a contribution to the effort made by GWP and should not be taken for granted regarding such discussion and their results.

1.1 Recommended goal and targets in relation to the local development aim.

Within the framework of Argentina's development aims, the water policy was established in the country in 2003 after a broad participatory process through its guiding principles on water policy. It was stated there that water must be used as "the engine of our sustainable development". From this vision it can be deduced that the sustainable use of water resources should be made by harmonizing the "social", "economic" and "environmental" values and it was recognized that the only way to achieve a sustainable use of water to the benefit of society as a whole is by striking the right balance in the implementation of these three values. Therefore, the recommended goal and targets -with the observations that will be made- are encompassed in the local development aims.

1.2 Approach for target setting and specific issues related to the targets and their elements

It was agreed that it is beneficial to set a specific goal for water, although water should also be considered in the other development goals, since the lack of a specific goal for water might imply a fragmented approach to its management.

It was considered not appropriate to add a new target encompassing the nexus with health, food, energy and the environment.

It was also agreed that the percentages which must be reached in the targets and their indicators should be set at a national level, and aggregated at a global level as well, so that the message can be disseminated internationally. The possibility of setting minimum percentages according to the current situation of sets of countries was discussed so that each country can establish -on that basis- their level of ambition according to the local circumstances. Thus, realistic but also ambitious percentages would be fostered.

In Argentina, the domain of water resources belongs to the provinces and their distribution and level of development vary significantly. Consequently, setting the percentages for the targets and their elements would require greater disaggregation, defining for each target whether they should be at basin or province level. However, the report should reflect the situation at country level.

1.3 Discussion on the goal, targets and their indicators.

Since countries have not globally agreed on the concept of water security and the use of the word "securing" might indicate a connection with the aforementioned concept, the participants proposed that the goal is expressed as "Sustainable water for all". Moreover, participants emphasized that the goal should be understood

Even though the goal for water is of great importance, it is comprehensive and easy to understand.

without detriment to the countries' sovereign right over their natural resources.

Targets mostly address the problems that must be solved mainly in relation to water resources; however, the importance of drinking water and sanitation should be highlighted.

Even though indicators are still being developed, some of them were dealt with and it was concluded that they must reflect the scope of each element; that many of them are hard or impossible to quantify; and that using assumptions to estimate some of their variables can make sense in a structural analysis, but -in general- the use of assumptions for the analysis of temporal evolution makes them less valid. In Annex 1, a detailed discussion on indicators is presented.

1.3.1 Target A. Achieve universal access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene

Participants pointed out that the target should only include drinking water and sanitation since hygiene has historically been associated with health.

Its elements take into account the priorities in the world today. The inclusion of universal access to drinking water and sanitation in schools and health facilities was recognized as positive.

The definition of a safely managed drinking water service at home, basic drinking water and basic sanitation whose excreta are safely managed should be included.

1.3.2 Target B. Improve by (x%) the sustainable use and development of water resources in all countries

Participants stated that it is impossible to establish a percentage that includes the target as a whole, since it cannot be measured. Consequently, they proposed changing it to "A substantial improvement in the sustainable use and development of water resources based on each country's possibilities".

Considering the need to change current consumption patterns, in element 3: Increase water productivity for all uses, efficiency should be incorporated.

1.3.3 Target C. All countries strengthen equitable, participatory and accountable water governance

It was agreed that a good governance to promote an enabling environment which allows making the necessary changes in order to achieve the goal is important.

In Element 1 (Implement integrated approaches to water management at local, basin and national levels including participatory decision-making), it should be specified that decision-making must be informed.

It is agreed upon what Element 2 states (Deliver all drinking water supply, sanitation and hygiene services in a progressively affordable, accountable, and financially and environmentally sustainable manner), but the reference made to hygiene should be removed so that it is consistent with the proposed change for target A.

It is suggested that Element 3 is stated as "Promote regulatory frameworks for water resources, infrastructure and services and enhance the performance of responsible public authorities and their water operators". Moreover, Argentina mentioned in its guiding principles on water policy that the

existing regulatory frameworks should be not only established but also updated so that they are in line with the integrated water resources management.

It is proposed changing the scope of Element 4 to "Implement education and culture programs, strengthen skills and transfer knowledge related to water and the environment". It is worth pointing out that Argentina's guiding principles on water policy give water culture a fundamental role in the transformation of the water sector.

1.3.4 Target D. Reduce wastewater pollution and improve water quality by reducing untreated domestic and industrial wastewater by (x%); increasing wastewater reused safely by (y%); and reducing nutrient pollution by (z%) to maximize water resource availability and improve water quality

Participants acknowledge the importance of incorporating this target to ensure water availability and ecosystem health, since -in general- their management is not given proper attention. In this regard, and in order to complete it, they point out that pollution caused by the use of pesticides in agriculture and pollution resulting from hydrocarbon and mineral exploration and exploitation processes should be incorporated.

For Element 1: Reduce untreated domestic and industrial wastewaters (including point source agricultural) by (x%), the need to include livestock sources (feedlot) was discussed. Since the meaning of the word *agriculture* in English includes livestock, it is recommended that the use of the word "*agropecuario*" (agriculture and livestock) in translations into Spanish should be considered.

In order to reduce pollution caused by agrochemicals, a new element should be included which considers the reduction of diffuse pollution by means of the rational use of pesticides and fertilizers.

1.3.5 Target E. Reduce mortality by (x%) and economic loss by (y%) from natural and human-induced water-related disasters

Since Argentina is also very affected by climate change -especially by the effects already observed in different areas of the national territory- both with respect to floods and droughts, the inclusion of this target is positively valued.

It is suggested that in the basis of the target more emphasis is made on droughts, since our experience shows that they are not given the same attention as floods do. In addition, humaninduced disasters should include dam breaks (and their connection with changes expected in rainfall and flow regimes and how these facilities are prepared to face them) which require emergency action plans.

Mortality reduction is directly related to social vulnerability reduction, that is, the improvement in living conditions and in the way social groups can anticipate and respond to extreme waterrelated events. Therefore, mortality reduction and economic loss strongly depend on the progress that can be made in the other sustainable development goals and in the other targets included for water (especially on the supply of basic services, the improvement in the sustainable development of human resources and the improvement in water quality).

It is suggested that Element 1 is broadened to "Greater knowledge about water-related disasters"; that Element 3 is changed to "Adoption and implementation by nations of early warning monitoring systems and contingency plans" since early warning systems are not effective without contingency

plans; and that Element 4 is formulated again to give it more clarity and differentiate it from Elements 1 and 2.

It is crucial that the vulnerable population is familiar with contingency plans so that they know what to do. Therefore, they must be widely disseminated and even tested by simulation.

2 Key implications and means of implementation identified for achieving the goal and targets over the period 2015 to 2030

2.1 Capacities

In order to achieve the goal and its targets, it is necessary to strengthen existing capacities, including the improvement in education at all levels to allow training to play its role. In Argentina, the Argentine Water Education, Training and Capacity Building Network for Integrated Water Resources Management (Red Argentina de Capacitación y Fortalecimiento en Gestión Integrada de los Recursos Hídricos - Arg Cap-Net) has played a key role in improving capacities. Therefore, its level of activity as well as that of other networks that make up Cap Net should multiply and be accompanied by the mobilization of international resources for funding through donations and cooperation among countries.

The agenda targets on education must anticipate that people are properly trained in water management-related topics in order to be able to get later training.

In order to promote training, a specialized scholarship program is required with employment possibilities in specific sectors of the government and training possibilities.

Countries will also be required to put in place Water Culture Programs to train society as a whole in water care which, in some Argentine provinces has been successfully welcomed.

2.2 Costs

The scope to be fulfilled in the different targets determines the estimates that can be made to define the necessary funds to achieve them. It is important that countries think carefully about the percentages they will establish for achieving the targets, taking into account costs involved. Otherwise, it will be impossible to achieve the proposed targets for water in the specified period of time.

At present, the water issue in Argentina has been incorporated to political speeches but it is still not reflected in the budgets of the country's different jurisdictions. The incorporation of a goal for water will enable decision-makers to include funds for water management in the budgets apart from those for infrastructure works, and the mobilization of international resources for funding for water.
As regards irrigation, it is estimated that an improvement in efficiency will be made if funds for producers are raised.

2.3 Institutions

It must be pointed out that it is important to ensure that institutions at all levels -national, regional, provincial, municipal and basin- get involved in the achievement of the goal, targets and sustainable development agenda.

Participants from the provinces indicated the need to incorporate young specialists in order to ensure the transfer of specific knowledge that enables provincial institutions to fulfil their missions and roles; without them it will not be possible to cooperate so that the country achieves the proposed targets for water.

The participation of users in the management of all water uses must be encouraged.

2.4 Infrastructure

The achievement of the targets will require the execution of infrastructure works all over the country. In Argentina, most works are funded by the National State and many others are bid and carried out directly by it. Provinces and municipalities also carry out works of different sizes which are funded by the National State or the aforementioned jurisdictions.

Until 2029, the country has a specific fund -allocated by law- to solve water-related problems and contribute to the development of regional economies, by means of flood control carried out in areas with plains and steep slopes, urban storm-water drainage, sanitation and irrigation, multi-purpose dams and for erosion and sedimentation works. However, provinces need resources to design large-scale works and projects.

It is worth highlighting the lesson learnt with the flooding that took place in La Plata city (April 2013) as a result of extremely heavy rainfall in terms of the essential need of a hydrometeorological warning system and a contingency plan informed to the population, in addition to the foreseen infrastructure works since -had they existed- that would have only meant a small reduction of the affected area and the height reached by water.

Finally, the infrastructure solution of water-related problems requires the availability of funds for the entire work cycle, especially operation and maintenance of water infrastructure.

2.5 Monitoring

At present, institutions, especially provinces, have difficulty in measuring hydro-meteorological variables due to the lack of funding for the survey of water data. Moreover, improvement is required at provincial, national and private level to avoid overlapping of both material and human efforts.

In order to report on the requested indicators, censuses and other surveys carried out in the country, surveyed data should be enhanced together with the definition at institutional level of its collection, centralization, consistency analysis and release; this could require more human and financial resources.

Consequently, and taking into account the complexity of data collection and processing, it was concluded that the most convenient period of time to request reports to countries for monitoring progress made on the achievement of the targets would be every 3 years.

2.6 Other issues in relation to the post-2015 goal, targets and development agenda for water

In general, setting targets does not facilitate the management of coordination problems since attention needed for their identification and solution is diverted towards indicators -which might be controlled for a while- without addressing the real problems that need to be solved. An alternative to setting targets is fostering agreements among organizations devoted to the solution of water-related problems affecting the population.

Water management cannot be effective if the population does not understand the purpose of regulations and, particularly, the consequences if they are not observed when they are in place. Therefore, environmental education -or, if preferred, water culture to be more accurate- is essential in order to achieve any target related to those problems which are hard to solve.

Environmental education -or water culture- must transcend the fact that the knowledge of the water cycle and the complexity of ecological systems is transferred, communicating water and environmental management problems which have shown to be hard to solve, because their solution requires the coordination and cooperation among many autonomous organizations (for example, in Argentina, technical and governmental organizations set up by national or provincial administrations).

In order to ensure that all stakeholders get involved in the necessary integrated management of water resources and the achievement of the recommended goal for water, participants suggested that it would be necessary for countries to formulate their water policy principles through a broad participatory process.

To generate an enabling environment, the need to have transparency in the handling of funds and decision-making processes must be considered.

Even though countries have made progress in the formulation of their water resource plans, achieving the proposed goal for water will require updating and enhancing existing plans.

3 Concluding comments specific to the country

The workshop participants support the recommendation that the post-2015 Goals for Sustainable Development have a specific goal for water which transcends the one devoted to water and sanitation in the Millennium Development Goals.

The proposed goal for water is overarching and easy to understand. It is recommended that its wording should be changed to: “Sustainable water for all” in order not to use the word "securing", which does not imply changes in the goal message, and avoids a possible impact on the countries’ sovereignty.

The targets cover current and future problems over the period 2015-2030. However, the need to make some changes in the targets and their related elements has been pointed out, in order to enhance their formulation and scope.

Indicators must be improved in terms of their scope and formulation, taking into account the possibilities countries have to survey, calculate and report the data involved.

It is recommended that the reports on the progress made on the achievement of the targets should be made every 3 years.

Annex 1 : Discussion on indicators

Target A. Achieve universal access to drinking water, sanitation and hygiene

Element 1

It is very hard to value[1] because open defecation mainly takes place within some ethnic groups in the north of the country due to cultural factors. For this reason and since its scope is minimum, it is very hard to measure.

Element 2

1: The processed indicators refer to water supply and source and not to its state (whether drinking or not).

2: The percentage of people living in households with access to tap water and toilet drainage to the public network (sewers) or to septic tanks and pit latrines is determined through a census.

3, 4 and 5: There are surveys, at least at school level, but in connection with the source of water and not with its use or quality and they require significant effort to be aggregated.

Element 3

1 and 2: There are surveys which require significant effort to be aggregated.

2: The percentage of people in households with toilet drainage to the public network (sewers) is determined through a census. Therefore, the same information as the one in the previous element would be obtained.

Element 4

It was considered that indicators are complex to be defined and that they make no reference to gender inequality reduction, which is mentioned in the expected results, and that there is a lack of indicators that allow measuring the reduction in the burden of disease from diarrhea and others related to drinking water and sanitation.

1: They are disaggregated in urban/rural population; the rest of the proposed disaggregations are not categories used by the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos). For the case of marginal areas/formal urban settlements; disadvantaged groups/general population, more accurate definitions would be required that allow analysing the possibility to obtain similar categories according to the information prepared.

It is worth pointing out that the information on access to services refers to “households” and not to “individuals”, as a result of which it would be necessary to analyze whether differentiating by gender is appropriate.

[1] When there is no specific reference, data refers to Argentina.

Target B. Improve by (x%) the sustainable use and development of water resources in all countries

In general, the proposed indicators cannot be easily measured and their definition must be reviewed. Finally, indicators measuring efficiency in all uses should be aggregated.

Element 1

It was suggested that a new indicator is incorporated, which considers the increase in rainfall storage capacity since it allows reducing withdrawals sustainably.

It was pointed out that it is necessary to include an indicator which takes into account maintenance of ecological flows.

Element 3

Indicators need to be redefined and include indicators to quantify efficiency improvement, which is only considered for drinking water. For example: the change in agricultural GDP per agricultural withdrawals (agricultural water productivity) depends on many factors besides water; the change in electricity production per water unit (energy sector water productivity) in hydroelectric developments depends not only on the flow but also on the fall.

Target C. All countries strengthen equitable, participatory and accountable water governance

There are many indicators within the different elements that refer to “percentage of countries” with certain characteristics, which are not indicators at national level but at supranational level. On the other hand, some indicators are formulated in a way that hinders their measurement since they contain expressions which can have more than one interpretation.

Element 2

1: The definition of “water and sanitation service providers registered with a regulatory authority” is required.
2: Information could be obtained from the surveys of the Institute of Statistics (Instituto de Estadísitica), but they do not provide such disaggregated information for rural areas.

Element 4:

2: It is proposed changing it to “Number of networks using multidisciplinary skills of their competent members to scale up capacity building and actively support education programs.

Target D. Reduce wastewater pollution and improve water quality by reducing untreated domestic and industrial wastewater by (x%); increasing wastewater reused safely by (y%); and reducing nutrient pollution by (z%) to maximize the availability of water resources and improve water quality

1: The information obtained from census data would be the same as the one for Target A, Element 2, indicator 2.

5: It should be changed to “Proportion of surface and groundwater meeting water quality standards for different uses”.

Target E. Reduce mortality by (x%) and economic loss by (y%) from natural and human induced water-related disasters.

Although these indicators could be manageable, Argentina lacks data to meet the proposed indicators. There is no official, reliable and systematic data with respect to mortality associated with water-related disasters. When mortality is mentioned, on the other hand, a differentiation should be made between those who lose their lives directly as a result of the event (maximum vulnerability conditions) and those who die due to complications after the event. There is no reliable and systematic data either to account for indicator 2 (economic loss associated with the disaster).

Annex 2 : List of Participants

Full Name	Organisme	Position
Ackermann, Gabriela	National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos)	Geographic Information System Coordinator
Andrés, Fernando Oscar	Interjurisdictional Committee of Colorado River (Comité Interjurisdiccional del Río Colorado)	Technical Manager
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Bustamante, Alejandra	Argentine Water Forum (Foro Argentino del Agua) National Water Institute (Instituto Nacional del Agua)	Water, Environment and Society Program Coordinator
Casillo, Baldomero	General Directorate of Environmental Affairs (Dirección General de Asuntos Ambientales) Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores)	Advisor
Caso, Patricia	Argentine Association of Sanitary Engineering and Environmental Sciences (AIDIS Argentina)	Special Projects Director
de Gracia, Angela	Ministry of Agriculture (Ministerio de Agricultura)	Environmental Management Coordinator
Díaz, Leandro	Argentine Water Forum (Foro Argentino del Agua)	President
Duarte, Oscar Carlos	Federal Water Council (Consejo Hídrico Federal) Hydraulics Directorate of Entre Rios province (Dirección de Hidráulica de la provincia de Entre Ríos)	Head of Hydrology and Basin Department
Dufort, Miguel Osmar	Federal Water Council (Consejo Hídrico Federal) Water and Environment Institute of Corrientes (Instituto Correntino del Agua y el Ambiente)	Administrative Management Coordinator/ Specific Programs Coordinator
Fioriti, María Josefa	Argentine Institute of Water Resources (Instituto Argentino de Recursos Hídricos)	Prosecretary
Gabay, Mónica	Argentine Institute of Water Resources (Instituto Argentino de Recursos	Treasurer

Full Name	Organisme	Position
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Josch, Iris	National Water Resources Undersecretariat (Subsecretaría de Recursos Hídricos de la Nación) Directorate of Projects and Water Works (Dirección de Proyectos y Obras Hídricas)	National Director
Lozeco, Cristóbal	Arg Cap Net School of Engineering, National University of the Litoral (Facultad de Ingeniería de la Universidad Nacional del Litoral)	Secretary of University Extension
Magnani, César	National Water Resources Undersecretariat (subsecretaría de Recursos Hídricos de la Nación) Directorate of Resource Conservation and Protection (Dirección de Conservación y Protección de los Recursos)	Legal Advisor
Magnano, María Cristina	Provincial Water Administration of Chaco province (Administración Provincial del Agua de la Provincia de Chaco)	President
Medina, Oscar Alberto	Energy Secretariat (Secretaría de Energía)	Consultant
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Full Name	Organisme	Position
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Annex 3: Meeting Agenda

Argentine National Consultation on Water in the post-2015 Development Agenda
Argentine Water Forum (Foro Argentino del Agua - FADA), with the support of the Argentine Water Resources Institute (Instituto Argentino de Recursos Hídricos - IARH)

Hall "Luis Parteur", AIDIS, 1580 Belgrano Av. 3º Floor Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, March 19th, 2014

Time	Topic	
Morning		
9:00	Participants enrolment	
9:30	Inauguration	Eng. Víctor Pochat (IARH President) Eng. Leandro Díaz (FADA President) Eng. Edgardo Bortolozzi (Undersecretary of National Water Resources)
9:45	Presentation of participants	
10:00	Introduction	Eng. Ana Mugetti
10:15	Coffee break	
	Importance of SD Goal and Targets for Water:	
10:30	Discussion on the recommended goal and targets for UN-Water	
11:15	Discussion on the approach for target setting	
12:00	Target indicators	
12:45	Agreement on comments	
13:15	Lunch break	
Afternoon	Implication of proposed goals:	
14:30	Funding, capacities, infrastructure, monitoring, reports and institutions (15 years)	
15:30	Feasibility of measuring proposed indicators and monitoring and data availability	
16:30	Coffee break	
16:45	Conclusions on goals and implications	
17:45	Closure	

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