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Proposals for the United Nations Conference on the mid-term comprehensive review of the implementation of the goals of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018-2028

Background information:

The Permanent Mission of Uruguay to the United Nations informs that in resolution 73/226, the General Assembly decided to convene in New York, from 22 to 24 March 2023, the United Nations Conference on the mid-term comprehensive review of the implementation of the goals of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018-2028.

2.- This Conference will focus on the **sustainable development and integrated water resources management for the achievement of social, economic and environmental goals, the implementation and promotion of related programmes and projects, as well as the promotion of cooperation and partnerships at all levels.**

3. Also, in resolution 75/212, it was decided that five interactive dialogues would be held in parallel to the plenary sessions. In this regard, the membership is invited to submit proposals on possible themes for such interactive dialogues, together with a brief justification and any background material that may be provided. With prior consent, the full text of each State's contributions will be posted on the Conference website: <https://sdgs.un.org/un-2023-conference-water-action-decade>.

4.- The organisation requests that texts in English be sent to: Mr. Tomoyuki Okada (tomoyuki.okada@un.org) and Ms. Eun Hee Lee (eunhee.lee@un.org) with a copy to Ms. Madhushree Chatterjee (chatterjeem@un.org) by 22 February 2022.



URUGUAY'S PROPOSAL FOR THE 5 INTERACTIVE TECHNICAL DIALOGUES

For Uruguay, the national water policy is structured according to closely related concepts that enshrine an integrated and sustainable approach to water management. Integrated water resources management as a guiding principle of the national water policy is defined as a process that promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land and natural resources, in order to maximise the resulting human well-being in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems (GWP 2000). This implies the coordinated action of water, environment and land use policies as well as other sectoral policies such as agriculture, industry, tourism, among others. (Law 18.610 and Decree 205/017). In this sense, in order to contribute to the achievement of social, economic and environmental objectives, as well as the implementation and promotion of programmes and projects related to the promotion of cooperation and partnerships at all levels, it is proposed to engage in a dialogue on the following topics that are associated with the main programmes of the National Water Plan (NAP 2017) linked to these objectives:

1. **WATER FOR HUMAN USE**

Brief rationale: Ensuring the availability and proper management of water for human use is essential for the world's population. Water supply in quantity and quality, adequate sanitation and hygiene are necessary for human life and health and therefore access to safe drinking water and sanitation are fundamental human rights. Uruguay is very close to achieving universal access to safe drinking water and has a high sanitation coverage that continues to improve. The main challenges in this area are to ensure the availability of drinking water in cities and among the dispersed population, protect water sources, improve the efficiency of water management, improve connections to existing sewerage networks and expand collective sanitation services. As well as deepen the proper treatment and disposal of wastewater, and environmentally sustainable and economically efficient static sanitation solutions.

In addition, it is necessary to work on the proper management of water within the home, promoting hygiene and having tools to monitor and evaluate the impact on people's health linked to the availability and quality of water and sanitation systems in their daily surroundings and in exceptional situations.

See documentation in:



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<https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-ambiente/politicas-y-gestion/planes/plan-nacional-aguas>

<https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-ambiente/politicas-y-gestion/planes/plan-nacional-saneamiento>

2. CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF WATER

Brief rationale: It is relevant to protect aquatic ecosystems and minimise impacts on the hydrological cycle and water quality caused by natural phenomena and human activities in watersheds and aquifers.

Water is a determining factor for the development of a country. Such development must be harmonious and take into account environmental, social and economic aspects. The deterioration of water quality and aquatic ecosystems, which intensifies the limitations of water resource availability, generates concern in society and conflicts among users. Anthropogenic activity in the territory, changes in land use, modification of the hydrological regime, and erosion (both natural and anthropogenic but mainly the latter) have an impact on the morphology of watercourses, the quality of watercourses and the structure and performance of aquatic ecosystems. Likewise, land use in aquifer recharge areas and abstraction regimes can impact on the quantity and quality of groundwater. Water policies should emphasise the prevention of water quality deterioration and the conservation of aquatic ecosystems. In this sense, it is necessary to apply management tools that offer solutions to the problems of loss of ecosystem services that affect water quality and availability, seeking to prevent and reverse degradation processes, establishing measures for preservation, restoration and impact mitigation in the basins, protection of aquifers, environmental flows, and efficient water use.

See documentation in:

<https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-ambiente/politicas-y-gestion/planes/plan-nacional-aguas>

<https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-ambiente/biodiversidad-servicios-ecosistemicos>

3. WATER AND ITS ASSOCIATED RISKS

Brief justification: Tools and knowledge must be generated to manage water risk and minimise the impacts caused by floods and droughts. The variability in the water regime at a global level determines situations of excess or scarcity of water that impact and constrain the social and economic development of the population,



which is why it is opportune and necessary to develop water risk management. Risk management is a complex social process through which the aim is to achieve a reduction in the existing levels of risk in society and to promote processes for the construction of new opportunities for production and establishment in the territory under acceptable conditions of security and sustainability. The use of natural resources and the environment, in general, must be developed in safe conditions within the possible and acceptable limits for the society under consideration. Risk is conceived as the relationship between a hazard and the vulnerability of the impacted society, i.e. as a latent or potential condition, the degree of which depends on the likely intensity of the hazard and the existing levels of vulnerability. In this vision, risk is a dynamic, changing and theoretically controllable condition. Therefore, it is necessary to deepen the instruments for flood and drought risk management, considering adaptation and mitigation measures to climate change and variability. It is also necessary to promote the continuous improvement of water resources' monitoring and assessment programmes.

See documentation in:

<https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-ambiente/politicas-y-gestion/planes/plan-nacional-aguas>

<https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-ambiente/politicas-y-gestion/inundaciones>

<https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-ambiente/politicas-y-gestion/mapa-riesgo>

4. INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING AND COORDINATION

Brief rationale: There is a need to strengthen the institutions involved in water planning, management and control and to increase institutional coordination (national and international) to carry out integrated and participatory water management in line with the Development Goals. This implies developing processes to consolidate technical and human resources in line with the functions entrusted to each institution, as well as readjusting structures and technical capacities in correlation with the advancement of knowledge and technology. On the other hand, the areas of participation, such as the Regional Water Resources Councils (*Consejos Regionales de Recursos Hídricos*), the Basin or Aquifer Commissions (*Comisiones de Cuencas o Acuíferos*), among others, help to analyse the situation in each basin and generate agreements to improve integrated water management. This is a very complex issue and as a result there are many aspects to take into account. It is necessary to train people for inter-institutional and interdisciplinary work, as well as to work on aspects related to social and institutional communication. It is necessary to work to generate flexible



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governance systems in the territories, from the local to the national level and vice versa, that are closely linked to the guidelines established in public policies and national budgets.

See documentation in:

<https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-ambiente/politicas-y-gestion/planes/plan-nacional-aguas>

<https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-ambiente/politicas-y-gestion/participacion-gestion-del-agua>

5. WATER AND GENDER

Brief rationale: In the current global scenario, climate change disproportionately affects low-income countries, especially women living in rural areas. Therefore, the human right to access water and sanitation becomes even more pressing. In households where in many cases it is necessary to walk to fetch water, it is usually women and girls who carry out these tasks, and they are susceptible to contracting preventable diseases in normal situations, as well as "stress, musculoskeletal trauma, sexual assault, and time loss". At the same time, the region could experience significant changes in water availability and quality due to climate change, which would increase the vulnerability of women's incomes, impacting their food security and quality of life, especially for indigenous women.

In order to achieve gender equality, the under-representation of women in positions of responsibility at the water governance level must be taken into account. This in turn reflects the fact that women "are virtually invisible in transboundary water governance". Following Unesco WWAP, numerous factors can be listed as preventing too many people from accessing safe water, too many women from holding positions of responsibility in water management, and too many communities from having the tools and support to advance gender-equitable water resources management and rights.

Some of the possibilities that can make water management more democratic and sustainable are: the creation, articulation, and strengthening of gender equality policies between countries; as well as the promotion of women's participation and leadership roles in water governance institutions; the promotion of equality in the exercise of power, in mechanisms and instances of social and political participation and representation; and the insertion of the gender issue as a component of programmes and projects.



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See documentation in:

<https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-ambiente/politicas-y-gestion/planes/plan-nacional-aguas>

<https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-ambiente/politicas-y-gestion/participacion-gestion-del-agua>

<https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-ambiente/sites/ministerio-ambiente/files/2021->

[10/Plan%20de%20Acci%C3%B3n%20y%20G%C3%A9nero%20de%20CC%20Comp.pdf](https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-ambiente/sites/ministerio-ambiente/files/2021-10/Plan%20de%20Acci%C3%B3n%20y%20G%C3%A9nero%20de%20CC%20Comp.pdf)

<https://es.unesco.org/wwap/water->

[gender#:~:text=The%20efforts%20of%20UNESCO%20WWAP%20of%20concrete%20and%20audacious%20actions.](https://es.unesco.org/wwap/water-gender#:~:text=The%20efforts%20of%20UNESCO%20WWAP%20of%20concrete%20and%20audacious%20actions.)