

Korea International Water Week 2019

WATER LEADERS ACTION DECLARATION 2019

Sustainable Water Management for Humans and Nature: Smart Solutions for Integrated Water Management

We, as the heads of ministries, local authorities, international organizations, corporations, academia, civil society, and high-level representatives in the water community, having met at the KIWW WLRT 2019 in Daegu, Republic of Korea on September 4th, 2019;

Recalling the significant contributions made in the past three years since the first Korea International Water Week in 2016 held in Daegu, Republic of Korea, a period in which there has been noticeable progress towards the water-related targets of the SDGs across different regions;

Emphasizing continued concern over the remaining gaps between the ambition to deliver internationally agreed upon post-2015 water-related goals included in the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development, and the increasing threats to water security, such as climate change and disasters;

Recalling the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 71/222 of 21 December 2016, which proclaimed 2018 to 2028 as the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”;

Reaffirming the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming Our World : The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” which reiterates the importance of ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all as a Sustainable Development Goal to be achieved by 2030, and the underpinning importance of water related issues in other goals and targets in order to reach the overall agenda and the heart of the “No One Left Behind” principle;

Emphasizing continued concern over the remaining gaps between the ambitions to deliver internationally agreed upon post-2015 water-related goals included in the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development, and the increasing threats to water security, such as climate change, natural disasters, and increased rates of urbanization and population growth;

Reemphasizing the dynamic role of every stakeholder in water for development and management based on the participatory approach taken over the past three years of discussion in the KIWW on “Water Partnership for Sustainable Development,” involving users, planners, and policymakers, engineers at all levels, and recognizing that women have a pivotal role in the provision, management and safeguarding of water;

Continuing the recognition of the need to move from solutions to implementation with balanced, sound and well-functioning accountability mechanisms of local and water management;

Encouraging the global water community to pave the path forward together for “Sustainable Water Management for Humans and Nature” for the upcoming three years through smart and sustainable

strategies for water management and meaningful cooperation through KIWW gatherings;
Hereby declare that countries should:

Universal and equitable access to safe drinking water

Assign high priority to water and sanitation in national agendas and allocate proper resources to the water and sanitation sector

Commit to reducing inequalities in access to water and sanitation and ensure affordability of safe drinking water and sanitation services, which are basic human rights and essential to the well-being of all segments of the population, including rural and marginalized communities, in order to avoid any kind of discrimination or inequality in terms of access to water and sanitation

Nature-based solutions for water management

Promote sustainable lifecycle for water resource management, while considering basic human rights of safe drinking water, preservation of ecosystems and urban, industrial and agriculture water uses

Carry out efforts to preserve and restore water-related ecosystems and promote sustainable integrated water resource management in the development agenda including, wastewater management, reuse, green infrastructure and nature-based solutions for disaster risk reduction and restoration of water ecosystems

Economic, social, and ecological resilience

Enhance the process of incorporating integrated water resources planning and management within the framework of national and regional (basins) and socio-economic development planning processes, while supporting eco-friendly good practices

Promote actions to address water-related disasters by significantly decreasing costs attributed to loss of life and damage as a percentage of gross domestic product, treating investment in disaster risk reduction as an integral part of expanding capacity for socioeconomic development, integrating science into policy, substantially increasing investment in disaster risk reduction and sustainable finance and investment

Smart water management for sustainable communities and natural habitat

Increase access to technology, enhance capacity development and knowledge sharing to promote various uses of water and reduce adverse impacts from water-related risks and disasters on livelihoods and environments

Promote sustainable consumption and production patterns by individuals and across all economic sectors by raising awareness through different means

Integrate sustainable water resource management practices in the education curricula of the different disciplines

Promote water accounting as a tool to enhance the sustainable management of water resources

Combine efforts to develop tools based on ICT, foster technology exchange and development, share knowledge, data and skills and enhanced scientific and technical know-how to contribute to a more

efficient and sustainable water management system

Establish basic operational guidelines for Smart Water Resources Management at the national level, considering country-tailored means of implementation which ensure sound water cycle that supports social and economic development

Strengthen the interface between science, technology and policy, and provide inter-sectoral bridge between water-energy-food-land-health, etc. to local and regional water actors to improve their water management, adopting a comprehensive integrated water management approach

Promote innovative processes and technologies and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance efficiency in use and allocation of water in the different sectoral activities

Promote sustainable agriculture systems that enhance water use efficiency and profitability including irrigation systems, draught resistant crops, and the introduction of precision agriculture

Introduce regulations that ensure that all water service providers, whether private or public, include human rights sensitive standards

Financing the implementation of solutions to water challenges towards SDGs

Maximize the value of existing assets by improving the operational efficiency and effectiveness of existing infrastructure in order to promote water security

Invest in long-term financing maintenances and necessary measures for climate change adaptation as well as soft measures, including governance and management capacities

Ensure synergies and complementarities with investments in other sectors, especially urban development, food, energy, land, health and education

Promote sustainable consumption and production for the efficient allocation and use of water resources

Promote policy coherence including regulatory framework and incentive measures

Promote the adoption of circular economy as a tool for sustainable water management

Water partnership and cooperation at all levels ensuring good governance

Catalyze partnerships at all levels among different stakeholders, including public authorities, the private sector, civil society organizations and academia, with the engagement of women, youth, and local and indigenous communities to develop and implement actions that address problems related to water and sanitation, and to promote all societal engagement necessary to achieve the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development

Allocate and distinguish roles and responsibilities for water policymaking and implementation, operational management and regulation, and foster coordination amongst the responsible authorities at the different levels

Promote the adoption and implementation of innovative water governance practices across relevant agencies, levels of government and relevant stakeholders

Support the integration of scientific and engineering approaches with sociological, economic, and environmental perspectives, and the harmonization of well formulated policies with local and traditional knowledge, in water related activities

Encourage water governance frameworks that help manage trade-offs across water users, rural and urban areas, and that benefit current and future generations

Emphasize transboundary water cooperation in line with the appropriate principles of international law by strengthening inter alia the means of information and data exchange, encourage open and inclusive multi-level and inter-sectoral dialogue in order to foster mutually beneficial solutions and institutional arrangements, such as basin commissions and plans, among riparian countries, for the development of transboundary river basins, lakes and aquifers and for protection of ecosystems and recharge ecosystems

We, the leaders gathered today at the Korea International Water Week, agree to the above mentioned targets and pledges to make every effort towards achieving ‘Sustainable Water Management for Humans and Nature’

We support our collective voice and shared vision discussed during the Water Leaders’ Round Table this year in the Korea International Water Week 2019 and encourage the global water community to join our efforts to realize our vision with implementation

We express our sincere appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Korea for hosting the Korea International Water Week 2019 and the Water Leaders’ Round Table with a warm welcome extended to all participants.

Daegu, Republic of Korea
September 4, 2019

Since its inception in 2016, the Korea International Water Week Water Leaders’ Round Table (KIWW WLRT) has consistently been recognized as the signature gathering of influential water leaders from around the world. Through annual meetings, it has produced strong commitments on implementation measures to resolve global water challenges by identifying 12 action priorities. Based on the 12 priorities identified in 2016, there have been in-depth discussions the following two years on four focus areas. In 2017 the areas were: 1) the importance of science and technology in water management, 2) the improvement of sanitation and water reuse, 3) socio-economic development for implementing IWRM, and 4) strengthening partnership. In 2018 the areas discussed were: 1) develop financing systems, 2) enhance capacity building and raise awareness, 3) develop integrated smart water management, and 4) facilitate partnership. From 2016 to 2018, under the overarching three-year theme of “Water Partnership for Sustainable Development,” all of the participating leaders in KIWW have collectively made significant contributions to the different initiatives in their respective regions and shared their cooperative action plans.

The conclusion of the Korea International Water Week Leaders’ Round Table (KIWW WLRT) 2019 signifies the dawn of a new three-year period for KIWW, and the collective effort will refocus on the new overarching theme of “Sustainable Water Management for Humans and Nature.” From 2019 to 2021, discussions will center on sustainable, healthy and integrated water management for both people and the planet through commitment and action. Building upon the insight and experiences from different parts of the globe and diverse sectors, approaches to sustainable water management will aim to galvanize mutual cooperation amongst different stakeholders and offset any challenges that may arise.