

## Speech

by  
**Mr. Michel Jarraud**  
**UN-Water Chair**

### **Post-2015 Development Agenda Consultation on Water: Water Resources Management and Wastewater Management & Water Quality**

**Wednesday, 27 February 2013**

*Excellencies, Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is a great pleasure for me to take part in the meeting on the Post-2015 Development Agenda Consultation on Water: Water Resources Management and Wastewater Management & Water Quality.

I would like to thank the Government of Switzerland for the invitation to this important event, hosted at the Palais des Nations by the UN Economic Commission for Europe. This meeting plays a central role in capturing some key considerations that transpired from two of the three streams of the global Water Thematic Consultation (i.e. Water Resources Management; Wastewater Management & Water Quality; the third one being Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene).

\*\*\*

I will now give you an overview of the “World We Want” process from Rio+20 to 2015.

As you know, the post-2015 agenda and Sustainable Development Goals processes build on the mandates set by Member States at the MDG Summit in 2010 and the Rio+20 Conference in June 2012. In response to these mandates, the UN Secretary General has launched an inclusive consultative process involving all stakeholders, including Member States, the UN system, civil society organizations, businesses, academia and the scientific community. It is expected that this process will converge in a single and comprehensive UN-development agenda with sustainable development at its core.

Let me first provide you an update on progress towards developing a set of Sustainable Development Goals: The SDGs’ Open Working Group of Member States was established on 22 January 2013 by decision of the General Assembly. Most of the 30 seats in the Group are shared by 2-4 Member States with the country teams having to decide among themselves how they will be represented in the Open Working Group meetings. There are only five countries that are not sharing their seat: Ghana, Benin, Kenya, Congo, and Hungary.

The President of the General Assembly intends to convene the first formal meeting of the Open Working Group in early March. Participation is expected to be a mixture of representatives from the capitals and New York missions. In advance of the meeting, the President of the General Assembly is expected to appoint two co-

facilitators from among the members of the Group to conduct consultations on the format and scope of the first formal meeting of the Open Working Group. Consensus is emerging among the regional groups on having two co-chairs for the Open Working Group: one from the North and one from the South. Candidates include Brazil, Kenya and Hungary.

The programme and working methods of the Group are other important issues that need to be decided on. The Group will need to determine how often it will want to meet and how to ensure that scientists, NGOs and the UN system can engage in its work, as requested in the Rio +20 outcome. It is likely that the Group will meet approximately once a month to address different aspects of the SDGs.

Also, the timing of the Open Working Group report needs to be decided upon. One possibility would be for the Group to submit an interim report to the 2013 meeting of the General Assembly on the MDGs, which is an important moment when the SDG and post-2015 processes could converge. The Group's final report containing a proposal on SDGs could then be submitted towards the end of the 68<sup>th</sup> session of the GA.

It is important that the Group starts its substantive work as soon as possible. The first several months are likely to be devoted to stock taking, with actual consideration of the elements of a proposal on SDGs coming towards the latter part of the Group's work. The work of the Open Working Group is supported by an inter-agency technical support team, co-chaired by DESA and UNDP, which has been established under the umbrella of the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

You may also have heard about the SG's initial input to the work of the Open Working Group, which was released in December 2012. It is mainly based on a synthesis of Member States' responses to a Secretariat questionnaire. In this questionnaire, water and sanitation ranked number two among the most critical areas identified by Member States, even before other top priority issues such as energy, education or health. This is actually excellent news for us, as it confirms that there is a high demand on the side of Member States for an SDG on water.

As a side note, you may have also read the latest World Economic Forum's edition of the Global Risks Report, where water supply crises feature in the top-5 list of risks by likelihood and impact.

In summary, there needs to be close linkages between the Open Working Group and the ongoing work on the post-2015 development agenda to ensure cross-fertilization of ideas between these two processes. There can only be one development agenda beyond 2015 – with poverty eradication and sustainability at its core.

\*\*\*

Let me now turn to the post-2015 process. To support this effort, the UN Secretary-General has taken several initiatives by establishing a High-level Panel of

Eminent Persons and the UN Task Team on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, and by appointing his own Special Advisor on Post-2015 Development Planning.

The High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda has taken up its work and met three times: in New York in September 2012, London in November 2012 and Monrovia in January 2013. The next meeting is in Bali in March 2013. The High-Level Panel is expected to submit its final recommendations to the Secretary General at the end of May 2013. A team around the lead author has already started to draft the report.

In addition, the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda and the UN Development Group have initiated a large consultation exercise. National-level dialogues are being organized in around 100 countries. And there are the 11 Thematic Consultations among which the one on water, which is facilitated by UN-Water.

\*\*\*

Indeed, since UN-Water is the UN inter-agency coordination mechanism for all freshwater-related matters, we are uniquely placed in the UN to provide the coordination platform to address the water issues related to the post-2015 development agenda.

This is why UN-Water is facilitating the Global Thematic Consultation on Water, which is co-led by UNICEF and UNDESA and co-hosted by Switzerland, the Netherlands, Jordan and Liberia. The partly web-based consultation consists of a general consultation and three sub-consultations around 1) Water, Sanitation and Hygiene; 2) Water Resources Management; 3) and Wastewater and Water Quality, two of which will be discussed today and tomorrow. The results of the Thematic Consultation on Water will be finalised at a High-Level Meeting on 21-22 March 2013, hosted by the Government of the Netherlands in The Hague. This meeting also coincides with the official celebration of World Water Day, dedicated to Water Cooperation as part of 2013, the International year of Water Cooperation.

Moreover, a UN-Water Working Group was established in August 2012 to coordinate UN-Water's overall contribution to the SDG process and mandated to formulate concrete recommendations on targets/indicators for a possible SDG on water. Our next step is to consolidate this common position, across the whole UN-Water family, and present it to the Open Working Group and to the High-Level Panel.

\*\*\*

As I was mentioning, all these processes will converge in an intergovernmental decision, which is not expected before the end of 2014.

Let me conclude underlining that the delivery of a new framework for post-2015 is the prerogative of Member States. The role of the UN-System is to support Member States in fulfilling their task by providing evidence-based analysis and advice.

In this context, UN-Water stands ready to support Member States in the water-related discourse.