**IAHR’s Participation in the 30th UN Water Meeting**

**and Opportunities of Greater Engagement with the Global Water Community**

by Angelos Findikakis

This report identifies opportunities for greater engagement of IAHR with the global water community. The suggestions made in the report are based on contacts and discussions during my participation representing IAHR in two meetings:

* The 30th meeting of the UN Water program held On January 31 – February 1 at the headquarters of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in Rome, Italy
* The open session of the GEMI Steering Committee meeting held on January 30 in the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome.

**Background**

IAHR has been a Partner of UN Water since 2014, but did not participate into any of its activities until very recently.

In December 2018 the UN Water Secretary sent a letter to IAHR noticing the lack of participation and contributions and asked that IAHR designates a point of contact. In response to this letter Peter Goodwin designated me as the point of contact which led to an invitation to participate in the 30th meeting of UN Water.

The role of the UN Water program is to coordinate the activities of different organizations and agencies on the UN working on water related issues and problems. A great part of UN Water’s work is on [Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg6) of [Agenda 2030](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf).

**Key Points of Discussion in the UN Water Meeting**

The 30th UN Water meeting was attended by people representing three general groups: different UN agencies and organizations, individual countries, and UN Water partners.

* Presentations and discussion on the collection of data on the 11 indicators for monitoring progress towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 (ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all) completed in 2018. These data were used to produce the [SDG 6 Synthesis Report 2018 on Water and Sanitation](http://www.unwater.org/publication_categories/sdg-6-synthesis-report-2018-on-water-and-sanitation/). UN Water produced also 7 Global Environmental Management Initiative (GEMI) [SDG 6 indicator reports](http://www.unwater.org/launch-of-sdg-6-indicator-reports/) last year.

The next data collection drive will be 2020.

* Discussion of World Water Day (WWD) and the World Water Development Report (WWDR) launched on that day which is focused on that year’s theme. The WWDR report is prepared with contributions from different UN agencies and organization and many UN Water partners. The themes of the next 4 WWDs are:
  + 2019: Water for All – WWD is on March 22; the WWDR on its theme is ready
  + 2020: Water and Climate Change – The WWDR on this theme will be finalized at the end of March. A document with outlines of its chapters is attached. There is still opportunity to contribute
  + 2021: Valuing Water – The subjects of individual chapters have not been decided yet.
  + 2022: Groundwater – The subjects of individual chapters have not been decided yet.
* Discussion of the [2018-28 International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”](http://www.un.org/en/events/waterdecade/). A midterm review will be conducted in 2023.
* Discussion on the engagement of UN Water partners. [IAHR is a partner]. In response to a survey the partners recommended that UN Water allow for more substantive, transparent and inclusive interaction and discussion on broad and overarching issues during the meetings.

In response to this recommendation there were two “open space” sessions each of which allowed the participants to join the discussion of one of five different topics, running in parallel. I attended the session on water and energy, and the one on how to expand the contribution of scientific societies to UN Water. In the latter it was agreed that different associations, including IAHR, will initiate some action before the next UN Water meeting.

* Discussion on Water and Climate Change. The 2020 WWDR will be on this subject. UN Water will launch an updated version of a Policy Brief on water and climate in the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2019. UN Water will participate in the 25th United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP) in Chile, later this year
* Other topics discussed included the world water quality assessment, the toilet day (November 19), the UNESCO International Water Conference (May 13-14 in Paris), a side event at the next United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification COP (October 2019 in New Delhi), and different other events.

**Opportunities for IAHR Contribution**

1. Contribute to the World Water Development Report 2020 prepared by UN Water and whose tentative title is “Water and Climate Change”. I am attaching the list of chapters with a brief outline and the list of contributing organizations to each chapter. Contributing to this report and future WWDRs would increase IAHR’s visibility if its name would show as a contributor to some chapters.

I am suggesting that we communicate this information to the chairs of the Technical Committees and encourage them to contribute if they could. This report will be finalized by the end of March. So, the time window for IAHR’s contribution is limited.

1. Contribute to the World Water Development Reports for 2021 and 2022. The theme in 2021 will be “Valuing Water”, and in 2022 will be “Groundwater”. Work on these reports has not started yet, which gives us the opportunity to participate in the formulation of the contents of these reports from the beginning.
2. Participate in the Expert Groups of UN Water, which are open to anyone interested and willing to contribute. UN Water has now Expert Groups on the following subjects:

Drinking-Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Transboundary Waters

Water and Climate Change

Water Quality and Wastewater

Water Scarcity

the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

New Expert Groups may be formed in the future.

I am suggesting that we communicate this information to the TC chairs and ask them to solicit expressions of interest.

1. Work with IAHS and other scientific and technical associations to explore ways for greater contribution to the work of UN Water, especially in support of Agenda 2030. A group of Associations, including IAHR could make a presentation on this topic in the next UN Water meeting in August.
2. Continue participating the UN Water meetings. The next meeting will be on August 23-24 in Stockholm.
3. In the meeting I met Tomás Sancho who represented the World Council of Civil Engineers (WCCE) in the UN Water meeting. Tomás invited IAHR to contribute to a report on “Managing Floods and Droughts: Best practices and Engineering Contribution”, prepared by the World Federation of Engineering Organizations, as an initiative of the Instituto de Ingeniería de España, the Ordem dos Engenheiros de Portugal and the World Council of Civil Engineers.

I am suggesting that we communicate this information to the chairs of the Technical Committees and encourage them to contribute if they could.