



6th World Water Forum

Thematic Commission and Regional Commission

Concept Note

E - Multi-stakeholder Panel and Synthesis Sessions

General Principles:

- *The International Forum Committee (IFC), in conjunction with the Thematic, Regional and Political Processes, will organize under each Priority for Action (PFA) and Condition for Success (CS) a number of Multi-stakeholder Sessions that will collect, integrate and bring to a higher level the main outputs from the individual technical and possibly political sessions with a view to allow for gradual progress throughout the week towards consolidated outcomes and commitments.*
- *Justification.* The design of the 6th World Water Forum Week aims to ensure greater integration across the Forum's four processes in order to progressively build up momentum and consensus around concrete solutions and commitments. This "value chain" approach requires that appropriate spaces be set up along the road so as to pull together the various sessions' outputs and process them into valuable and workable contributions that can be fed into the Forum's Commitments Day (Friday) and its related policy declarations. For each PFA/CS, the idea is to organize these spaces in the form of Multi-Stakeholders Sessions (MSS) that will sum up, debate and prioritise the key solutions and commitments coming out of thematic, regional and likely political and roots/citizens sessions that are tied to the same theme. These MSS will allow the works of the sessions to culminate at the end of each day into meaningful events which have the potential to generate strong momentum and media attention.
- *What:* Given that thematic and regional sessions linked to each PFA/CS are spread back-to-back over two days during the three central days (Tuesday to Thursday), there will be 2 MSS per PFA/CS (30 in total). The idea is to split these sessions into two successive sets, serving two different but yet complementary purposes:
 - the first set of MSS will take place on the first day of each PFA/CS and will offer the opportunity to engage an active dialogue amongst prominent water actors (opinion leaders, policy-makers, practitioners, researchers, civil society representatives, etc.) around the most significant topics/solutions covered during sessions. This MSS will take the form of **a PFA/CS-based panel debate** that will build on the results of the first round of related sessions delivered during the day while taking these discussions to a higher level by elevating the level of participation and by giving more political weight and visibility to the topics and solutions selected.
 - The second group of MSS will occur on the next day and will be more **PFA/CS-based synthesis sessions** where the various sessions coordinators and other invited speakers will come together to wrap up on all completed sessions, including the former MSS, and produce on this basis consolidated materials and contributions towards the Forum's "Commitments Day" and beyond.

It is still to be decided whether the above sequence should be made prescriptive or left at the discretion of each PFA/CS Core Group (CG) who may decide to have either the two types of MSS or two synthesis sessions instead (one at the end of each day).

- *When.* The MSS will be scheduled at the end of each of the three central days from Tuesday to Thursday 13-15 March during the 17:00-19:00 time slot. The panel-type MSS will take place on the first day of each PFA/CS (Tuesday and Wednesday) whilst the synthesis-type MSS will occur

on the next day (Wednesday and Thursday). There will be 8 MSS in parallel on Tuesday, 15 on Wednesday and 7 on Thursday. Particular attention will be paid to programming the MSS in a way that avoids competition between related PFA/CS (water-sanitation, risks-climate change, governance-IWRM) and between other prominent events such as Political conferences, High Level Panels and Hard Talks. This will help maximize the chances of high-profile speakers to take part in the MSS.

- *Who.* The participants of the panel-like MSS will be the CG members associated with medium to high ranking speakers, meaning Ministers, Parliamentarians, Local Authorities, heads of NGOs, CEOs, heads of UN agencies/departments, etc. The synthesis-type MSS will be attended mostly by CG/TSG coordinators with invited keynote speakers as deemed relevant.
- *Structure.* To head the panel-type MSS, an estimated 4 to 5 high ranking panellists would be chosen by the Thematic Process Commission/Regional Process Commission on the basis of a list suggested by the PFA/CS Coordinators and the Secretariat together. Panellists could be members of the Target and Solutions Groups (TSG), or any other relevant contributors from regional, political and roots/citizen sessions who are heading a particularly promising solution, perspective or commitment. This might even be a key criterion for participation. They can also be high-level representatives of key organisations. The sessions will be moderated and should try to be as lively and interactive as possible and avoid rigid orchestration and prepared speeches. The panellists will be invited to react and confront perspectives on the preliminary outputs of the sessions of the day which will be briefly presented as an introduction. Alternatively, the panel could focus on one particular topic/target under its given PFA/CS. During the synthesis-type MSS, Target and Solution Groups' coordinators will bring together the culmination of outcomes from the sessions that took places previously and will collectively reflect and wrap up on the most significant solutions and commitments to the achievement of their theme's goals/targets and necessary follow-up actions. After this section is over, interaction with the public attendance could proceed. The potential use of technology and "voting" systems via handsets or mobile phones may also be envisaged.
- *Topics.* The topics chosen for these sessions will arise from the thematic and regional targets as well as related discussions taking place under the political and roots/citizen sessions. They will cover the Thematic Framework's 12 Priorities for Action and 3 Conditions for Success:
 - Guarantee access to water services for all and the Right to Water
 - Improve access to integrated sanitation services for all
 - Contribute to hygiene and health through water and sanitation
 - Prevent and respond to water-related risks and crises
 - Contribute to cooperation and peace through water
 - Balance multiple uses through IWRM
 - Contribute to food security by the optimal use of water
 - Harmonize water and energy
 - Promote Green Growth and value ecosystem services
 - Improve the quality of water resources and ecosystems
 - Adjust pressures and footprints of human activities on water
 - Respond to climate and global changes in an urbanising world
 - Good governance
 - Financing water for all
 - Enabling environments

During the panel-type MSS, organizers may chose to focus on one particular topic/target within each of the above themes. The thematic scope of the synthesis-type MSS will need however to reflect that of the PFA/CS addressed.

- *How.* The primary responsibility for organizing these sessions will rest with the PFA/CS coordinators. They will identify potential panellists and will suggest a final list of panellists in partnership with the Secretariat. Final lists of panellists will be submitted to the Thematic Process Commission/Regional Process Commission for approval. The IFC will provide targeted support but will not lead the preparations. Where possible, partnerships should be made outside the PFA/CS CGs/TSGs and ad hoc working group/committee set up to facilitate the organization of these panels, especially the mobilization and briefing of high-level speakers. The various coordinators/leads of the contributing technical, regional, and political and roots/citizen sessions should be included in these working groups.

- *Facilitation.* As with almost any session, the key will be to have above average facilitation. Depending of the level of participation, desired visibility and complexity of the topic addressed the panel-type sessions will be mostly moderated by a high-calibre professional facilitator (or journalist) who will be well-briefed on the objectives of the session, and ideally engaged in its design and communications plan from an early stage. Synthesis-type MSS could be moderated either by a facilitator or by volunteer CG/TSG coordinators with excellent facilitation skills and experience.
- *Briefing.* The professional facilitator and PFA/CS CG and TSG Coordinators will brief each participant prior to the MSS. The briefings should be initiated as soon as possible once the MSS outline and list of panellists have been approved by the IFC Secretariat, and should be complemented during the week with the outputs of each contributing session.
- *Expected outcomes.*
 - Strengthened technical and political synergies between related thematic, regional, political and roots/citizen sessions
 - Interest/commitments in support of the PFA/CS and their related targets and most promising solutions to build up to the Commitment day
 - Joint messages and policy recommendations based on multi-stakeholder discussions to be taken and consolidated for the Strategic Direction synthesis and Commitments sessions
 - Concrete proposals on monitoring/follow-up beyond the 6th World Water Forum and strategic partnership building
 - Press releases, Press conferences and media reports