



# SETTING THE SCENE: IMPORTANCE OF REGIONAL COOPERATION IN CLIMATE ACTION, ENVIRONMENT, RESILIENCE AND NEXUS INITIATIVES FOR SOUTH ASIAN TRANSBOUNDARY RIVERS

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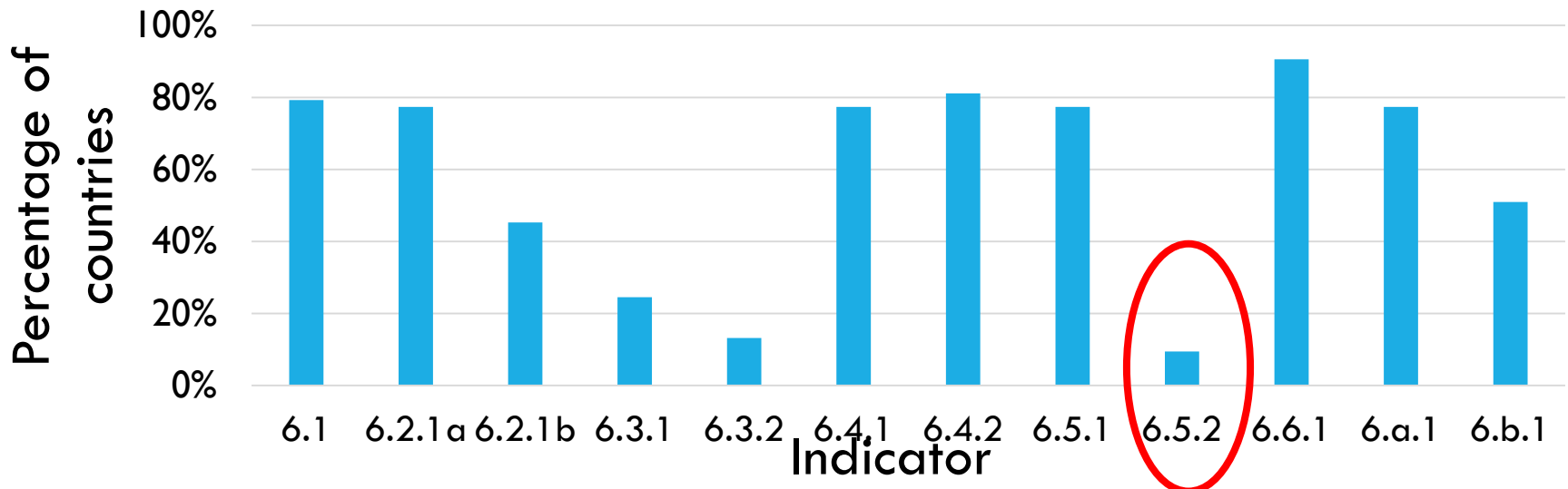


# ESCAP & ITS WORK ON WATER

- **Promotes regional collaboration** on various issues including the environment throughout Asia and the Pacific
- **Facilitates the UN-Water regional coordination group** on SDG 6 and contributes to global processes: global reports informing policy ,monitoring and follow-up, inspire action (World Water Day, Decade on Water for SDGs), etc.
- **Leads the regional follow-up and review** of all SDGs including SDG 6
- **Provides support for stakeholder engagement in water issues** (Bangladesh industrial water pollution)
- **Promotes integrated environmental approaches** (nexus) including for water

# ASIA PROGRESS ON SDG INDICATOR 6.5.2

- UNECE and UNESCO are the custodians of indicator 6.5.2. measuring transboundary water cooperation
- 2<sup>nd</sup> reporting cycle happening now, 1<sup>st</sup> cycle in 2017



- Better so far in cycle 2, but still urgent need to enhance data collection and better monitor SDGs and indicator 6.5.2 in the region
- Reporting will ultimately support more sustainable transboundary water cooperation and decision making on sustainable & inclusive growth, water conflicts managements, climate change adaptation, etc

# WATER ISSUES IN SOUTH ASIA

- ‘ high to extremely high water stress’
- Water scarcity (drinking and agricultural purposes)
- Uneven access
- Over-exploitation and fast depletion of groundwater
- Pollution and contamination of surface water resources
- High incidence of water-borne diseases and deaths;
- Impact of climate change on the volume and pattern of rainfall, river courses, sea level and ground water resource stress
- Frequent floods and droughts could cost South Asia as much as US\$215 billion each year by 2030.

## 6

### CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

#### I. SUMMARY

Asia and the Pacific has only 36 percent of the world's water resources, its per capita water availability is the lowest in the world. More than 80 per cent of the wastewater generated in the region's developing countries is not treated, and wastewater remains an under tapped resource. Around half of the rural population in Asia and the Pacific has no access to improved sanitation, while the region's urban population has more than doubled between 1950 and 2000, creating a huge demand for water and wastewater treatment systems. Persistent organic pollutants and other hazardous chemicals are making their way into water sources, polluting ground and surface water resources and water-related ecosystems. The region is one of the most disaster-prone in the world, and its major economic sectors, such as agriculture and energy, are largely dependent upon a reliable supply of freshwater. Due to the population growth, urbanization, and increased industrialization, water competition among sectors has become more severe in the region, which has been threatening agricultural production, food security and which affects water quality. These conditions, compounded by the impacts of climate change, will hamper the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 if left unaddressed. Water scarcity, poor water quality and inadequate sanitation affect the health of ecosystems, societies and economies and will negatively impact the achievement of the other SDGs as well.

UNITED NATIONS  
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

ESCAP



UN  
environment

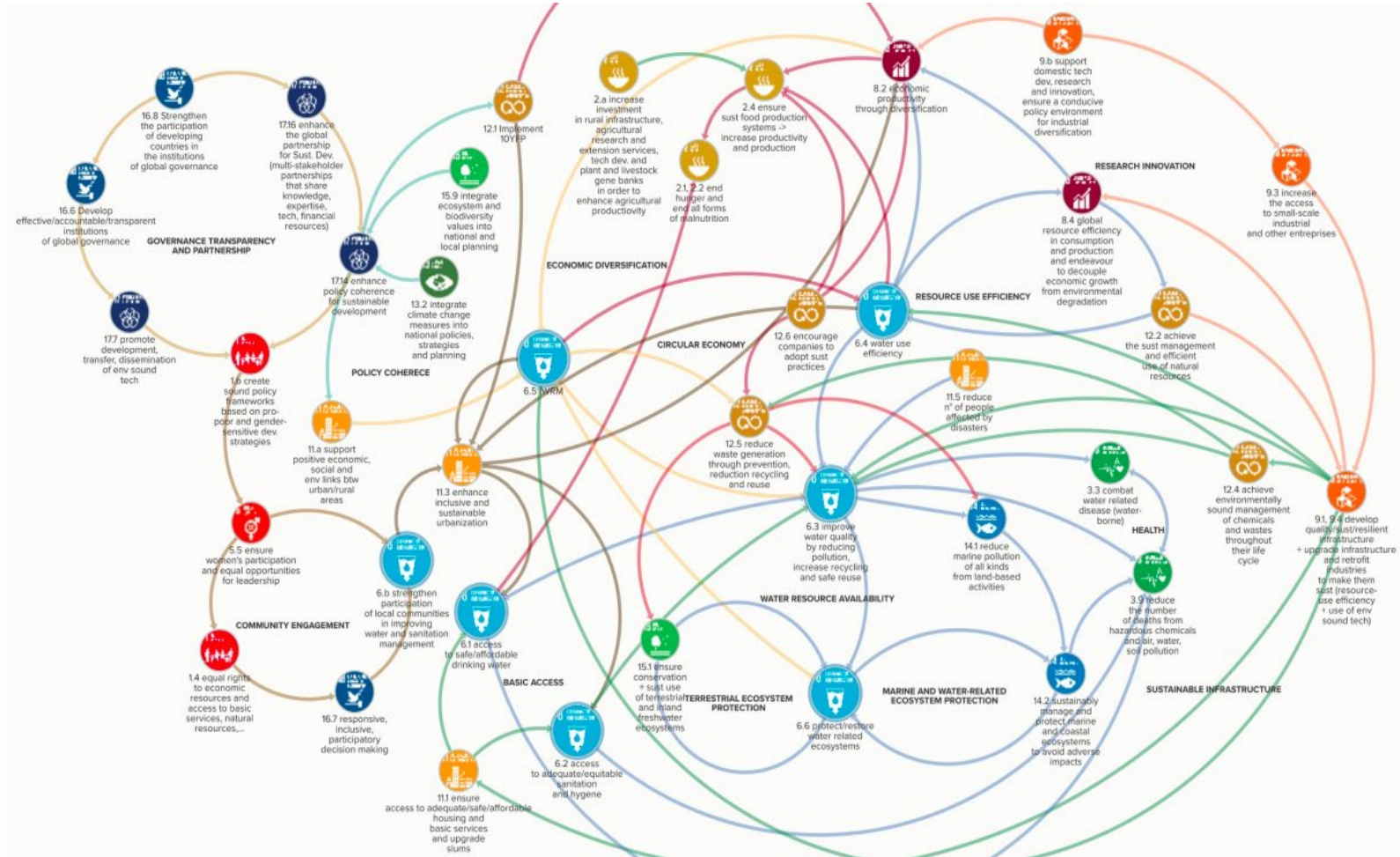
SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS

UN WATER

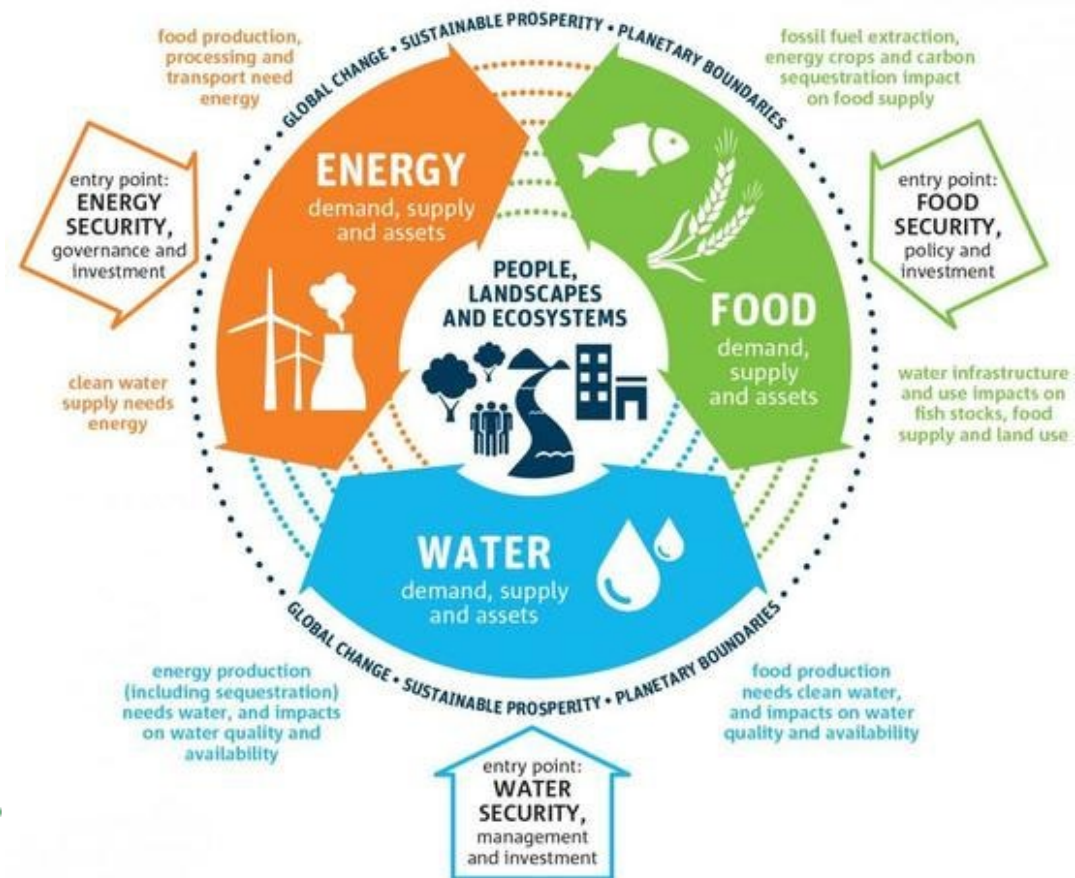
# IMPORTANCE OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATER COOPERATION

- 60% of global freshwater is in shared basins and needs to be managed collaboratively for transboundary rivers (in South Asia, e.g. Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna and Indus basins)
- In a region that has the lowest per capita water availability/person, water stress and pollution, integrated water resources management is exceedingly vital especially when dealing with climate change, increasing populations and economic growth, as well as competing uses of water
- Depleted transboundary water supplies have the potential to cause social unrest and spark conflict within & between countries but can also be a **catalyst for cooperation among** nations for peace and sustainable development
- **Integrated SDG 6 planning and implementation is essential**, at the local, national and transboundary levels and to address upstream and downstream dynamics

# THE WATER NEXUS THROUGH THE LENS OF THE SDGs



- The achievement of some of the SDGs depends highly on the achievement of the others.
- Water, climate/disaster risk reduction/resilience, poverty, agriculture and food security, ocean/fisheries, and energy are closely linked, as well as gender, finance and integrated policy issues
- Need to arbitrate the synergies and trade-offs in a nexus and transboundary approach when making decisions on water, especially in shared river & aquifer basins



# URGENT ACTION & COOPERATION NEEDED AT TRANSBOUNDARY SCALE

- Very urgent need to **adopt adequate and adaptive integrated water resources management approaches**, supported by political commitment for transboundary cooperation and at the national levels, appropriate governance, effective financing and effective monitoring.
- This will **enhance action SDG6 and related SDGs** on international trade, climate change adaptation, resilience, economic growth, and food security
- **Hydro-diplomacy**: cooperation over water can prevail over conflict over water. Example of the 1960 Indus Water Treaty between India and Pakistan that has survived disputes between the two countries, providing a framework for resolving disagreements over water use).
- **Transboundary water agreements & institutions** can help to facilitate cooperation and support larger diplomacy and peace building efforts at different scales.





# WATER CONVENTION



A legal and institutional framework for **transboundary water cooperation** contributing to **sustainable development**, international **peace** and **security**.



A **unique platform** to discuss progress of **transboundary water cooperation** worldwide under the umbrella of the **United Nations**



Opened to all interested countries, with **more than 100 countries** exchanging experiences and knowledge to prompt progress in cooperation



# WATER CONVENTION: A PLATFORM FOR TRANSBOUNDARY COOPERATION

*“The global opening of the Water Convention, the accession of the first countries from outside the UNECE region and the momentum in support of the Convention are promising developments. Along with the Watercourses Convention, the world has the ability to strengthen the rule of law in transboundary cooperation worldwide. I call on Member States to join both Conventions and to strive for their full implementation.”*

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in October 2018 at the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties of the Water Convention



# ESCAP RESOURCES

- Join the UN-Water Expert Group on Regional Level Coordination
- Join water-related regional lesson and best practices sharing platforms/workshops
- Online learning through the SDG HelpDesk: <http://sdghelpdesk.unescap.org/>
- Ask for specific capacity building support



**THANK YOU**

