

A quarterly update on the topic of water and Sustainable Development Goals by Melisa Cran, deputy director and coordinator of the SDGs working group at the French Water Partnership

# 2018 – YEAR OF THE SDG ON WATER & SANITATION

The High-level Political Forum is an annual United Nations meeting to take stock of the progress made on SDGs. Every year, five or six SDGs are analyzed in detail, and this year one of them is SDG6. We can therefore expect an eventful year from the water community. Numerous international initiatives are set to take place from now to July 2018:

- Official launch in March 2018 of the United Nations resolution: "International Decade (2018 2028) for action Water for Sustainable Development";
- Publication of a UN-Water report on SDG6;
- A study by End Water Poverty and the Dutch partnership Watershed on SDG6 accountability mechanisms applied to national governments, based on case studies in 30 countries including France.

The French government will present its traditional annual status report on SDGs, this time with a more detailed focus on SDG6.

# FRENCH SDG ROADMAP STILL IN THE PIPELINE

Despite being announced several times, the national SDG roadmap has still not been published. Is the delay due to a lack of political support at the top? Or a political focus on climate change that works to the detriment of other environmental themes? Numerous speculations have been made to explain the hold-up. Yet the roadmap is absolutely vital as a shared tool to facilitate the move to sustainable development around a common project. Players on the French field still know very little about SDGs.

The greatest awareness of the Goals tends to be in the field of international solidarity. SDGs are to some extent a continuation of the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015 framework for projects to aid international development) and so the MDG-SDG transition seems to have been assimilated by NGOs, funding partners and international cooperation stakeholders. On 25 February, Coalition Eau organized an SDG training day for its member NGOs; AFD has totally reworked its priorities around SDGs; and the Burgundy-Franche-Comté region is making SDGs the theme of its regional conferences on cooperation and international solidarity.

Other French stakeholders, including local decision-makers (municipalities, companies, farmers, etc.) currently seem to be less familiar with SDGs, despite the fact that they concern every sector, are based on the three pillars of *economics – society – environment*, and firmly apply to the national territory. Stronger efforts are therefore needed to convince these parties to accelerate their transition towards sustainable development by using the SDG "tool kit". Fortunately, networks are already active: Comité 21, Coordination Sud, 4D, the FWP, etc. Other significant progress includes Coordination Sud's recent publication of its recommendations to members of parliament for easier implementation of SDGs on the national territory.

#### THE WATER CONFERENCES, AN OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE AWARENESS OF SDGs

Following the latest Mayors' Congress, the French President announced a major national consultation on water management in 2018. This will be the perfect occasion to raise awareness and link up national issues to Sustainable Development Goals.

# CICID: GOOD MOVE FOR SDGs; VIGILANCE FOR WATER

The next inter-ministerial committee on international cooperation and development (CICID) will take place on 5 February to establish the strategic direction of French policy on international cooperation and development aid. The latter is set to increase from 0.38% of GDP in 2016 to 0.55% in 2022. The current draft legislation takes clear consideration of SDGs, which is an encouraging move. However, water is absent from the text. Coalition Eau and the French Water Partnership have lobbied to get water incorporated, increase the emphasis on decentralized cooperation, and encourage a specific strategy from the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. The verdict is due in ten days' time.

# **SDG INDICATORS: THE WORK GOES ON**

At international level, the 232 international indicators to follow up on SDGs were officially adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 2017. 40% of these indicators are already monitored in most countries, 30% of them exist but are not yet implemented in most countries; 30% are still being developed in terms of method.

At European Union level, in November Eurostat published a monitoring report on SDGs (in <u>short</u> and <u>long</u> versions) that describes progress through a set of 100 indicators. The graph below, taken from the study, ranks the SDGs from the slowest to the greatest progress. Note that SDG6 on water is one of the four goals whose trends have not been evaluated.

In France, a working group at the National Council for Statistical Information (CNIS), involving the state and civil society, is developing an national indicator framework for France (planned for end May 2018) that will feature 100 indicators adapted to the French context. This subject was the object of a letter from the chairman of the SDG working group to the chairman of the CNIS working group.

The French Commission on Sustainable Development launched a data visualization competition, #DatavizODD, which ran from September to November 2017. First prize went to a project for a website that presents data associated with the indicators of the 6 priority SDGs featured at HLPF 2018. The pilot project, which will be online soon, uses a catalogue with different data-visualizations (mapping, infographics, graphs, etc.). This platform for visualizing SDGs is likely to be a highly useful tool for all interested parties. Note that similar media already exist in other countries: the United States has launched a platform at https://sustainabledevelopment-uk.github.io/

#### WHAT ABOUT THE FWP?

This year, the FWP will be publishing two "SDG guides": one general version relating the experiences of French water stakeholders in reaching the SDGs, and another aimed at local authorities. The Partnership will be present at the High-level Political Forum in July 2018 to convey messages from the French and international water communities.

#### **ABOUT FWP**

The French Water Partnership, presided by former French deputy Jean Launay, is a public and private platform gathering 140 internationally active members into 6 groups: the state and public bodies, NGOs, associations and foundations, local and parliamentary authorities, economic actors, training research institutes and qualified personalities. For a decade, it has been lobbying at international level to make water a policy priority and promoting French expertise in the field.

#### http://www.partenariat-francais-eau.fr



#### THEY ARE THE MEMBERS OF THE FWP



Check out the FWP water and SDGs toolbox here !