

The French Water Partnership's water & SDGs news digest



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

SDGs: AN ESSENTIAL OPPORTUNITY FOR RETHINKING PUBLIC POLICY IN FRANCE

The new directions and policies under way in France bring the hope that effective measures will be put in place to reach the Sustainable Development Goals, because if France is to maintain its international influence, our country needs to lead the way.

Two weeks after his appointment, the new Minister for the Environment inaugurated Sustainable Development Week (30th May to 5th June) and focused his first speech since assuming office on the issue of SDGs. An encouraging signal that nevertheless needs turning into action.

Civil society has had several occasions to address the government on SDGs recently (Collaborative Day on 18 April, Sustainable Development Week, online consultation on SDG indicators to which FWP contributed). One of the main messages that emerges from these exchanges is the need for genuine political mobilization at the highest level. Like in numerous other countries, France's 2030 Agenda should come directly under the President or Prime Minister to guarantee cross-cutting implementation that goes beyond a sectoral ministerial approach.

In addition, the new government needs to react to water-related challenges, which were largely forgotten by the past government. We should not forget that much remains to be done in France to reach the SDG6 targets; as shown by the current studies from French Scientific and Technical Association for Water and Environment (ASTEE), the main challenges in France are: access to water and sanitation in French overseas territories and for vulnerable populations (the homeless, travellers, migrants, etc.), pollution in small towns, good ecological status of rivers in terms of the European Water Framework, etc.

In the meantime, on the sidelines, the government is preparing a report to send to New York in July for the High-level Political Forum (HLPF), which will this year make a detailed analysis of 6 SDGs: 1 Poverty, 2 Nutrition & Agriculture, 3 Health, 5 Gender, 9 Infrastructure & industrialization, and 14 Oceans. SDG 6 on water will be analyzed in 2018.

GLOBALLY, REFLECTION ON CREATING AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE IS MAKING LITTLE PROGRESS

On an international level, discussions continue on creating a United Nations intergovernmental committee on water and sanitation capable of following and framing the progress on the SDGs related to water. Following a

second technical dialogue on water which took place within the United Nations on May 30th, positions do not seem to be changing fast, with a strong European consensus favourable to the initiative (apart from the United Kingdom), and support from China and numerous African and Latin American countries, but with opposition or scepticism from Russia, the United States, Turkey, Brazil, etc. However, discussions are being pursued and the bare bones of the initiative should be set out soon.

France actively defends this proposal, because achieving the 2030 Water targets will not be possible without a forum for dialogue where governments can agree on priorities.

INTERNATIONAL PROGRESS ON SDGs LACKS NEW INPUT ON WATER

The [2017 report by the United Nations Secretary-General](#) has been published, concerning progress towards implementing the SDGs. Nothing new in terms of water: the figures mentioned date from several years ago. However, new figures should be available soon with the publication of the next Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP) this summer.

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 our Water & SDGs toolbox here