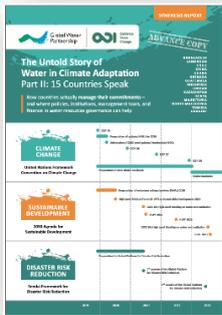


# The Untold Story of Water in Climate Adaptation

## Part II: 15 Countries Speak

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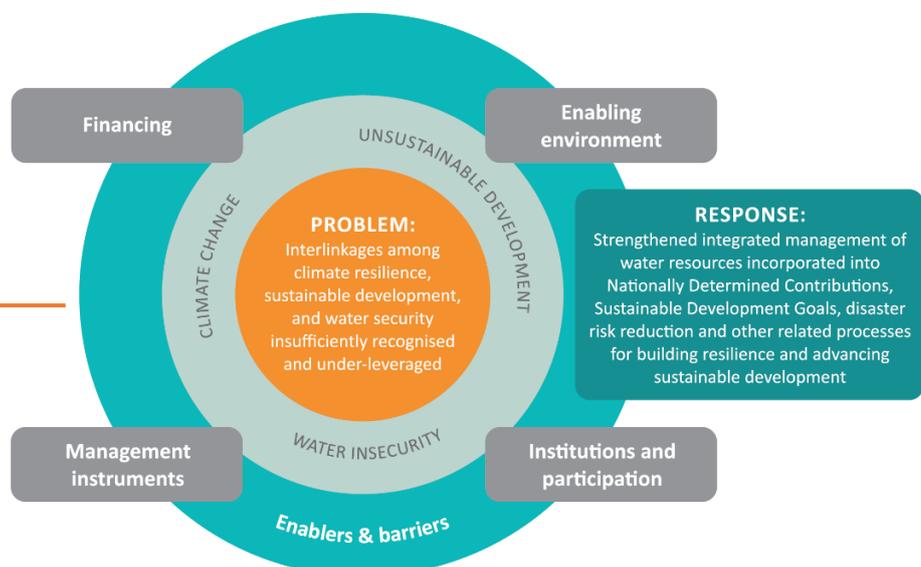
**In the 2015 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), 9 out of 10 countries prioritise action on water for adaptation.<sup>1</sup>**

Countries recognise that addressing the impacts of climate change means working on water – but are they on the right track? Looking to the next round of NDCs in 2020 and beyond, are countries on the path to build resilience and achieve their development goals through water resources management?

The Paris Agreement, as well as Agenda 2030 and the Sendai Framework, have set a compelling direction. But they have also created massive new complexities – even for the most willing countries. Everyone involved in this work on the ground is looking for “connectors” – for mechanisms to coordinate systematically and create win-win solutions. Water is a crucial connector: the need to use, allocate, and manage it – whether it’s too little, too much or too dirty – flows through the Paris, Sendai and Agenda 2030 commitments. In 2019, the Global Water Partnership (GWP), in collaboration with the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), listened to 15 countries to discover their ambitions and – importantly – actions for building resilience and advancing development via water: **Bangladesh, Cameroon, Chile, China, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Indonesia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Mauritania, North Macedonia, Tunisia, Ukraine.**

The lessons gathered in the report lead to recommendations for four key groups: national policy makers; other national stakeholders such as civil society and business; development partners, including bilateral donors, multilateral institutions and the climate funds; and transboundary and regional organisations.

### 4 DIMENSIONS guiding the analysis



<sup>1</sup> *The Untold Story of Water – Emerging Insights*, GWP (2018)

# 15 COUNTRIES have spoken

The analysis identifies gaps and missed opportunities, as well as examples of success on which to build, across four dimensions:

## Enabling environment

- Countries recognise the importance of water in their strategies for sustainable development and climate change – but often superficially
- Climate strategies are beginning to see the value of water resources management in resolving climate and development trade-offs but there is little detail on needed institutional measures; water's potential for climate change mitigation is a blind spot
- Strategies relating to particular SDGs are also missing the opportunity to harness water resources management – including those for energy, agriculture, cities, and even water
- Development and climate strategies from the countries generally overlook the water-related climate change impacts that they share with their neighbours, and the potential for cooperative solutions

## Institutions and participation

- There are gaps in the institutional frameworks that would enable integrated water resources management to support multiple development outcomes, even before considering climate change
- Structures to integrate and coordinate work on sustainable development, climate change, and water have been initiated in some of the countries; a bigger challenge may be finding the right level and extent of representation to make these function effectively
- Barriers to coordination and collaboration on climate, sustainable development, and water in the countries mostly arise from domestic political disruption or crises, as well as the competing demands of the different global policy frameworks themselves
- Examples from the countries suggest that an incremental approach to building political commitment, and inclusion of different stakeholders, can enable and enhance institutional integration on water, climate, and SDG issues
- Transboundary institutions, including basin organisations and agreements, can play a crucial role in enhancing adaptation across borders; where they do not yet exist, climate change may incentivise their establishment

## Management instruments

- The instruments and tools for managing water resources are missing or inadequate in many of the countries studied, and do not fully reflect the climate-related risks being faced
- Water management instruments that are prioritised and in use in the countries can help build preparedness to climate change, but may not adequately build other characteristics of resilience (like robustness to withstand change and shocks)
- Inadequacies in water and climate data and evidence-based decision-support exist against a backdrop of gaps in technical infrastructure and human resource capacity
- Where water and climate information does exist, barriers to evidence-based decision making in the countries include politicised decision-making and fragmentation among responsible organisations
- There are examples of information-sharing initiatives and management instruments at regional or transboundary scale, but their uptake and application does not seem to reflect cross-border water and climate risks

## Financing

- Mechanisms for financing water resources management need to be strengthened across the countries if they are to make a full contribution to development goals in the face of climate change
- The dedicated climate funds are recognised as an increasingly important source of finance for water resources management in support of climate-resilient sustainable development, but many of the countries do not appear to be looking at a wider range of financing sources and policy options
- Climate-related external development finance for water already supports a range of SDGs in the countries, underscoring a need for integrated approaches to ensure cost-effective spending
- Some countries are moving to track climate finance internally as a step to sourcing and allocating finance efficiently to water and other purposes, while maximising co-benefits for climate and other SDGs
- Countries' efforts to develop adaptation financing strategies present an opportunity to coordinate and integrate their ongoing efforts on project preparation for water resources management within a wider framework
- Emerging models for investment – from circular economy to nature-based solutions – can help set a value on water's contribution to climate resilience, mitigation, and other development goals, and help to tap new revenue streams
- Financing transboundary cooperation on climate change and water raises particular challenges and opportunities that need to be considered from the earliest stages of project development



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