

Developing an International Water Convention In the United Nations Context

**Richard A. Meganck, PhD
OSU-IWW Fellow**

Developing an International Water Convention:

Definitions

- Global Environmental Governance (GEG) – A concept encompassing the people, processes and institutions guiding the management of natural resources.
- Global Water Initiatives (GWI) – Institutional frameworks, organizations, special events, and awareness-raising campaigns focusing on global water resource management & governance.
- Convention / Treaty (bi-national, regional, international) Government-negotiated set of principles that when ratified bind its signatories to comply.
- Framework Convention A model Convention (not approved to help organize negotiations and catalyze regional or basin-level agreements
- Protocol – Amends the terms of a Convention
- Compact – A set of negotiated but voluntary actions arrived with input from all sectors of civil society as an input to a Convention
- Plan of Action – List of negotiated actions and responsibilities (priorities and timetable) and finalized at the Ministerial level.
- Universal Laws and Instruments – global (eg., Biodiversity Convention)
- Specific Laws and Instruments – regional or basin level (Guarani Aquifer; IJC Great Lakes)

Why do we need an International Water Convention?

- Physical
 - International river basins - 263, half the world's surface area, 145 countries, 40% of world's pop., 60% of freshwater flow, shared water/shared responsibility
 - Frequency & intensity of flood/drought cycle & resulting health, security issues
 - Financing increasing tied to regional solutions
 - PCCP continuum (conflict or cooperation?)
 - Wasted or lost investments w/o water component
- Social
 - One + billion people without sufficient quantities of quality freshwater
 - Two + billion people without sanitation services
 - Five thousand children dying daily from diarrhea and dehydration (UNHCR 2006)
 - Forty million lost prod. days/year – water & fuel collection
 - Lost education opportunities
- Institutional
 - Mandates from UN Member States
 - Access to science growing - N-S, S-S, S-N sharing
 - Peace through investments, IBRD, IMF, EDB

International Processes Affecting Water Policy: Timeline

1965-74	UN Int' l Hydrological Decade	2001	Int' l Conf. on Freshwater (Bonn, Germany)
1966	Use of Water of Int' l Rivers (Helsinki rule)	2002	3rd Global Environmental Outlook (GEO)
1972	Stockholm Conf. on Env. and Dev. (UN) UNEP established		UN-ECOSOC water is a human right
1975	UNESCO Int' l Hydrological Prog. est. (IHP)	2003	WSSD/Rio +10 (South Africa)
1977	UN Conf. on Water (Mar del Plata, Arg.)		WWF3, Japan
1981-90	UN Int' l Water and Sanitation Decade		UN Int' l Year of Freshwater
1991	First Annual Stockholm Water Week		UN Water (Forum) established
1992	UNCED, Rio de Janeiro (Earth Summit)		1st World Water Dev. Report (WWDR)
	Int' l Conf. on Water & Env. (Ireland)		IHE transferred to UNESCO
1996	Global Water Partnership (GWP) created	2004-05	UNCSD mtgs. on Freshwater (NYC)
	World Water Council (WWC) est.	2005-15	UN Int' l Water for Life Decade
1997	UN Conv. Non-navig. Use of Int' l Water (ILC)	2006	WWF4 + 2nd WWDR, Mexico
	WWF1, Morocco	2008	Dft. UN Law Transboundary Aquifers
2000	Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)	2009	WWF5 + 3rd WWDR, Turkey
	World Water Assessment Prog. (WWAP)	2012	WWF6 + 4th WWDR, France
	WWF2, The Netherlands		Rio +20, Rio de Janeiro

Processes Affecting International Water Policy: Observations

1. International dialogue has been continuous since the 1970s, but very complex, even tedious
2. Prominence of water has risen steadily to reach the top of the international agenda (realization of economic importance)
3. There is no international/universal convention on freshwater; many regional/specific agreements (good starting point)
4. The number of institutions dealing with freshwater is growing. Everyone has a stake in the outcome (24 members in UN water)
5. Demand for specialists growing at all levels of expertise
6. Science has taken center stage - linkages between water management, development priorities, investment viability, ecological services have been strengthened - largely funding-agency driven.
7. International processes are converging on a clear set of key issues.

International Processes Affecting Water Policy: Key Issues

1. Health: safe drinking water and sanitation
2. Competition: water for food. energy and rural development
3. Special emphasis on women and girls
4. Water pollution prevention and ecosystem conservation
5. Stewardship: integrated water resource management, governance, benefit sharing
6. Financing and privatization of water services & costs
7. Risk management and disaster mitigation
8. Attracting investment (without water???)

Developing an International Water Convention: “Logical” Concepts & Pathways in a Bureaucratic World

Concepts

1. It must be government driven
2. The UN is the only decision forum that governments will consider (apolitical forum?)
3. IHP is the logical pathway to the UNGA (fed by UN-Water, governments, NGOs, academic and private sectors)
4. The UNGA has mandated that the debate be in the CSD and MDG contexts but convoked by the IHP
5. The SG's Science and Policy Committee (Science driving policy, UNESCO lead)

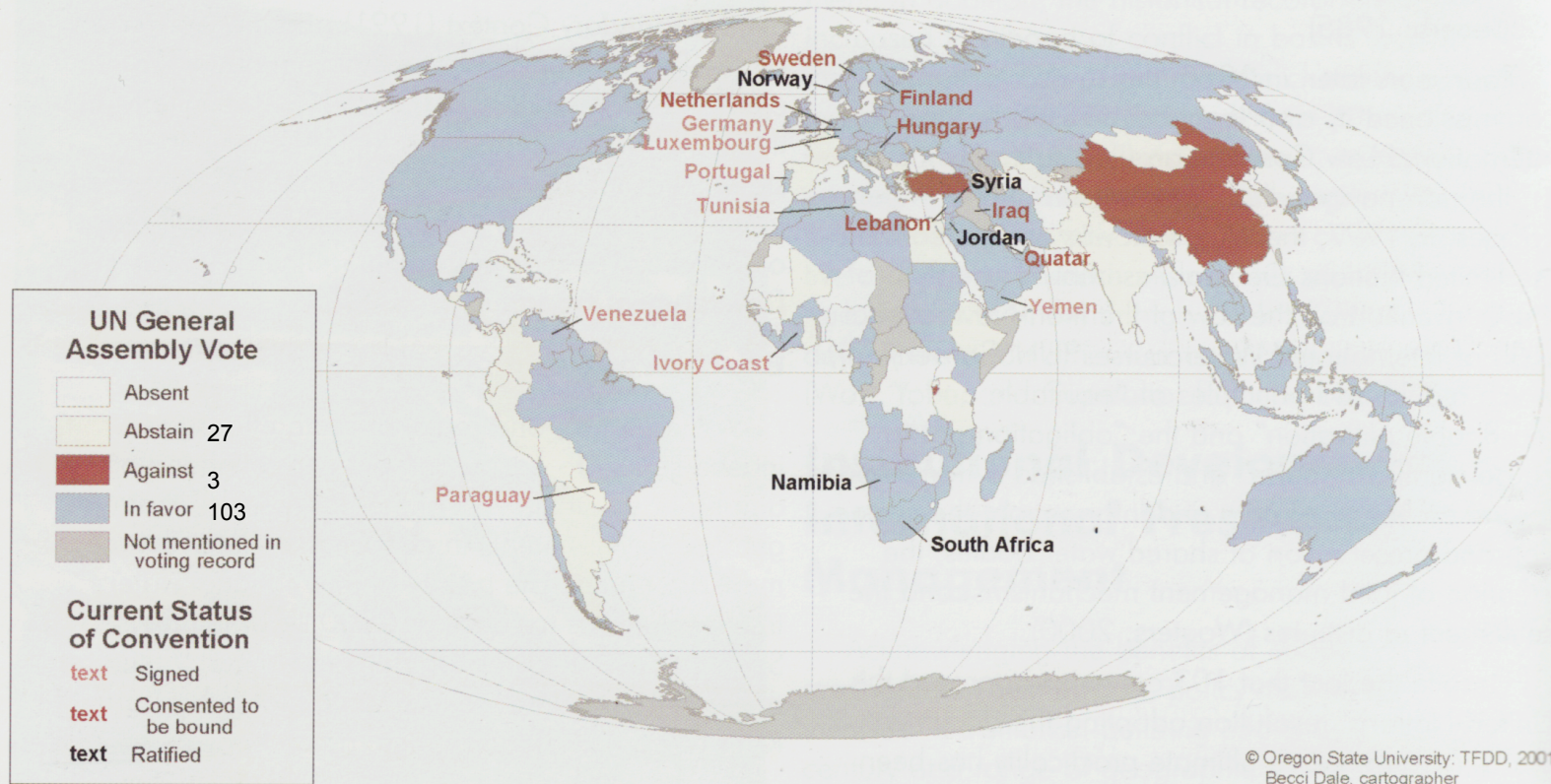
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Pathway

1. The IHP process “recommends” to the UNESCO GC that a special session of the UN-CSD be held
2. The UNESCO-GC “instructs” the IHP to prepare a draft text, which is approved by the UNESCO Executive Board
3. The IHP prepares a draft text and forwards to the UN-CSD
4. UN-CSD recommends that the UNGA call a special session – requires a “champion countries”
5. The UNGA debates, edits, the text and forwards to the UNSC with a recommendation that a Convention and Convention Secretariat be agreed-to (input from all sectors private, public, NGOs, academic)
6. The UNSC (as water has been declared a “strategic and vital” resource) agrees
7. The Convention is drafted and opened for signature
8. The minimum number of countries agree, sign, ratify, fund
9. After that “simple process” we have a Convention

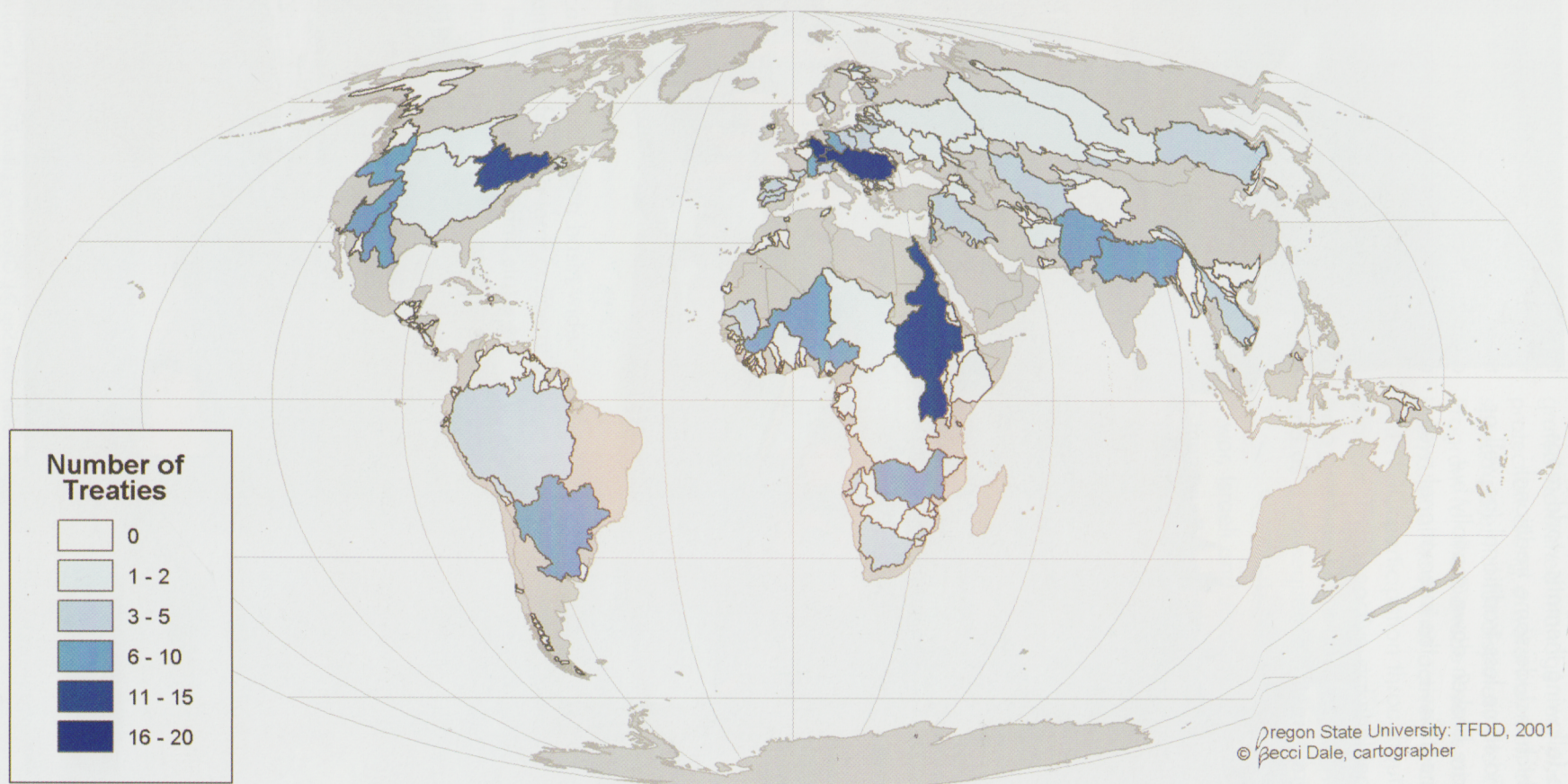
UN VOTE (1997)

Law of non-navigational use of international water courses

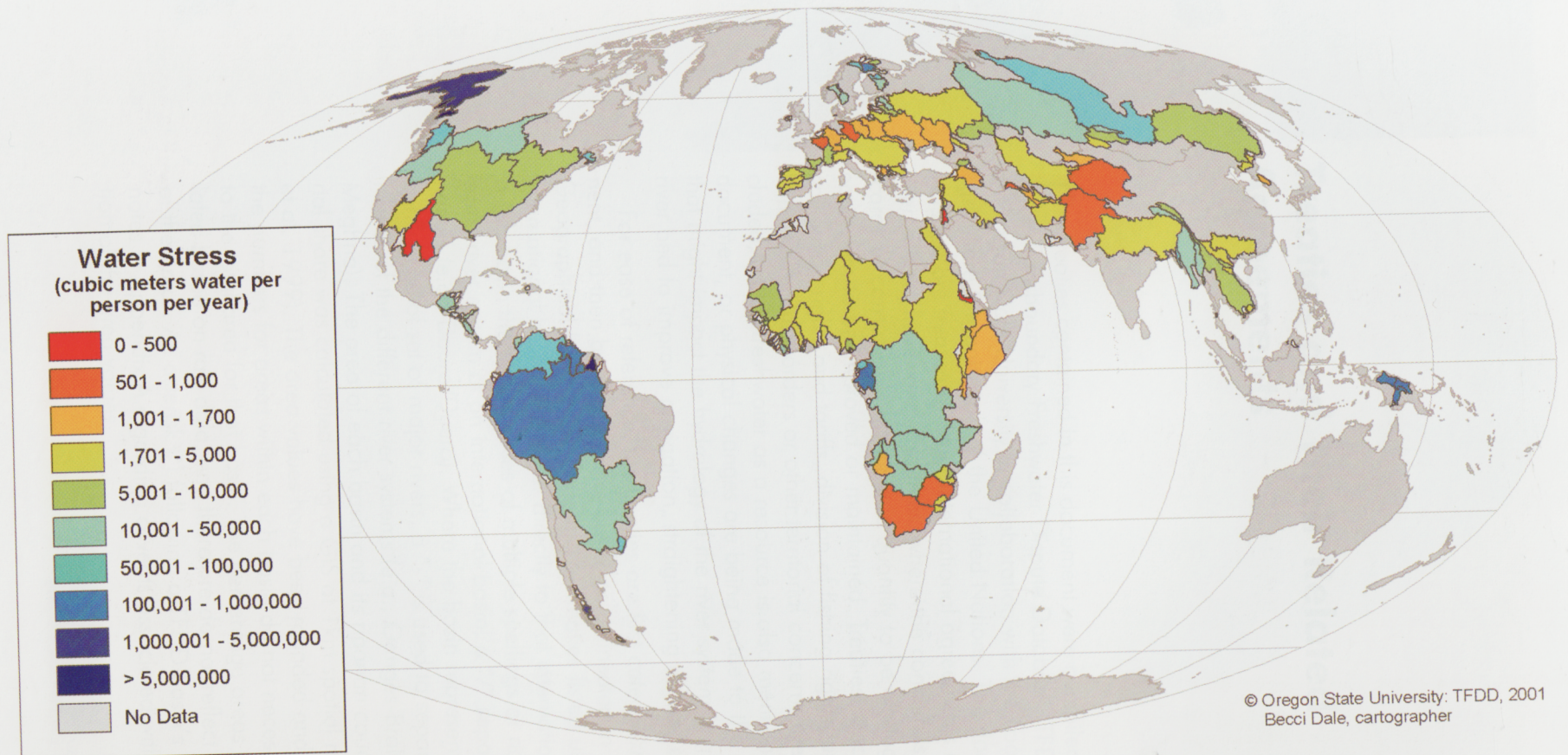


To date, only 16 countries have ratified or consented to be bound by the agreement, out of 35 necessary to enter into force. (United Nations, 2011)

Number of Agreements per International River Basin

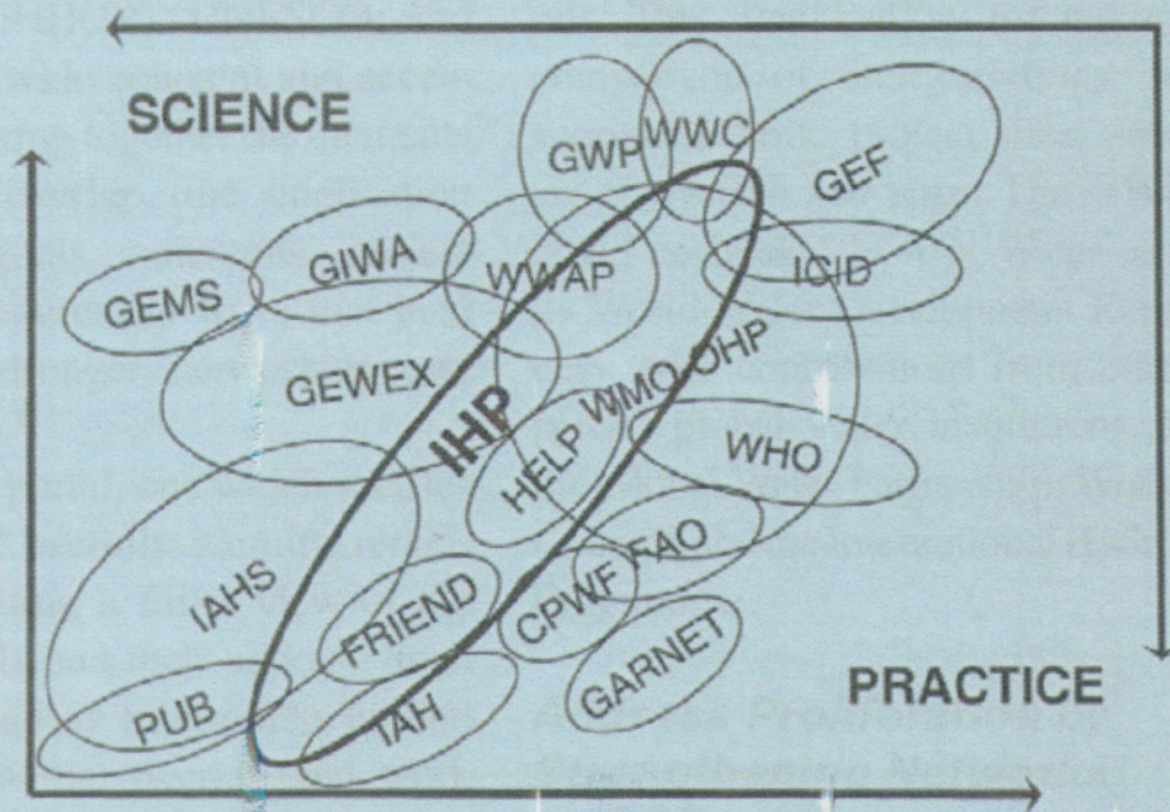


Water Stress per International River Basin



Data sources: Runoff- Fekete et al. (2000); Population- Dobson et al. (2000); Water stress by basin- Fiske and Yoffe (2001).

Evolution of global water management frameworks



Strategies for sustaining global water initiatives

Tasks	Options
Transform overlap into a resource	
Characterize overlap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use inventory and institutional mapping to assess overlap • Incorporate policy and program evaluation techniques in water governance
Manage overlap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek examples from GWI programmatic evaluations to identify “productive” overlap opportunities and possible incentives structures
Use nontraditional settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Internet-based portals, listservs, search engines, other modes—especially drawing on examples from global initiative networks • With assistance from key GWIs and donors, develop GWI portal; include budgets, reports, events schedules, news summaries, interactive elements
Address proliferation by strengthening networks	
Devise collaboration strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage financial resources to promote cooperation • Compile online database of programmatic and organizational gaps • Add “GWI Assessment” chapter to future World Water Development Reports • Strengthen information flows that encourage collaboration within and across specialties
Mitigate conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempt to involve potential adversaries on joint projects or initiatives
Support donor decisionmaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use institutional overlap repository to help donors screen, select, and fund programs
Seek multiple ways to assess and influence outcomes	
Involve participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold GWI forum with assessment goals
Seek examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey models by successful GWIs and other global initiatives • Consider available tools for measuring impact, contributions, and shortcomings of GWIs
Develop tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess impacts via qualitative/quantitative, historical/prospective, and process/outcome approaches • Identify most/least successful GWIs: indicators, benchmarks, milestones, criteria, reviews, and investment levels • Quantify GWI accomplishments, such as number of sites, training programs, and participants • Assess degree of GWI impact on regional/national policies and global investment in water
Create incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop incentives for GWIs to merge or dissolve when they no longer meet objectives
Engage donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage donors to support GWIs whose impacts are most significant and effective

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