

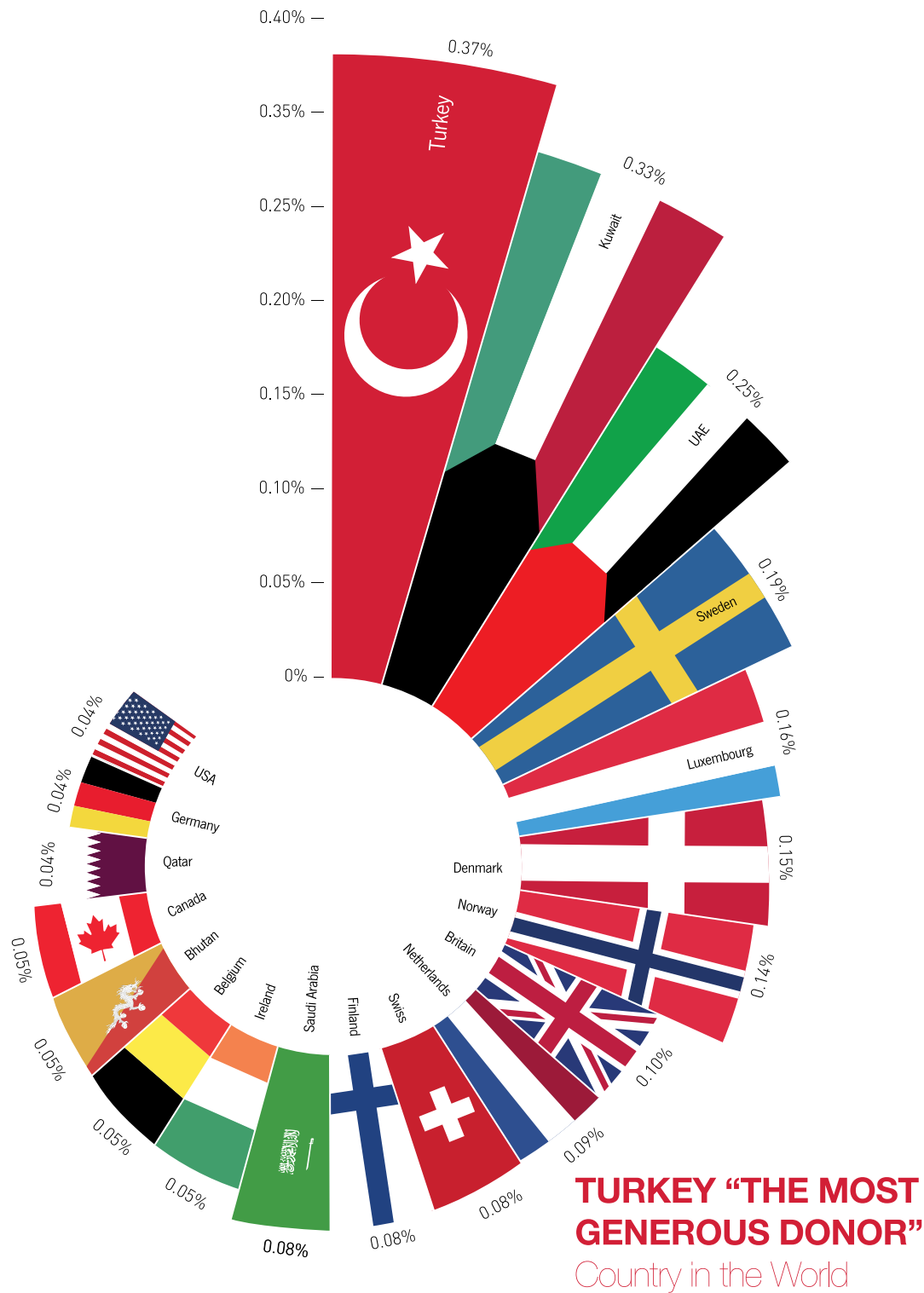


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# **TURKEY'S WATER AID PERSPECTIVE**

**A Vision for a Practical International  
Water Fund**



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## A Vision for a Practical International Water Fund

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## 1. Introduction

Today's global challenges intensify humanitarian needs worldwide. Despite the innovations in science and technology, emerging threats raise the number of people facing epidemics, water scarcity and famine also including displacement and violence in most cases. Prioritization of the water needs of vulnerable groups become essentially crucial in emergency context.

Main water related priority/emergency issues that require rapid global response can be listed as follows;

- Water Scarcity and Famine
- Waterborne Diseases
- Needs of Refugees

The world faces the largest humanitarian crisis since the end of the Second World War. There is a significant increase in the number of people fleeing wars and conflict zones around the world. Mass population mobility not only carries water issues to the global humanitarian agenda but also affects how water is used and managed. Emergency context intensifies already existing water problems in the water-scarce regions; both in the crisis zones and in the refugee hosting countries. Most of the host countries are the countries facing water shortages themselves. This is remarking a serious need of attention by the international community. Water scarcity and famine are direct threats to the lives of millions living in conflict zones, refugee camps and in the underdeveloped rural and urban areas. Waterborne diseases become widespread due to damage or lack of necessary water and wastewater systems. Refugees are in need of clean water supply and sanitation services either in the refugee camps or in the cities they live in.

Rapid response is required to meet water sanitation and hygiene (WASH) needs of the vulnerable groups under these conditions in fragile areas. Priority has to be given to immediate tasks such as assistance to refugees, including water and sanitation, and protection of water resources and installations. Safe drinking water and improved sanitation can save millions of lives in the short term. Increased water-use efficiency and water quality will enhance economic recovery for fragile countries in the medium term. Longer term tasks have to be pursued steadily and with a humanitarian perspective and also with a vision of their importance for the strengthening of global economy, international stability and peace.

**In this context, this report reflects Turkey's water aid perspective through existing mechanisms and activities, and envisages a model for an international water fund that focuses on urgent water related issues particularly in Africa and the Middle East.**



## 2. Emergency Topics: Country Cases

Catastrophic events are taking place in the regions that Turkey has deep historical, social and economic connections like the Middle East and Africa. The Middle East and Africa, have the largest number of water-stressed countries of any region, suffering from either physical or economic water scarcity (WWDR, 2012). Famine, drought and conflicts are affecting millions also adding refugee dimension to the existing crisis. Hereafter are some country cases facing these difficulties and in need of urgent water aid.

### Syria

Over 5 million Syrians fled their countries and settled in the neighbouring countries, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and beyond since the war in Syria started in 2011. Over 6 million people are internally displaced and more than 13 million people are in need within Syria (UNHCR, 2017). Turkey today hosts the largest number of refugees in the world with over 3,6 million registered Syrians. Over 110.000 Syrians live in 13 government-run temporary protection centres while majority of the Syrian population live outside the protection centres in rural and urban areas (Mol, 2019)

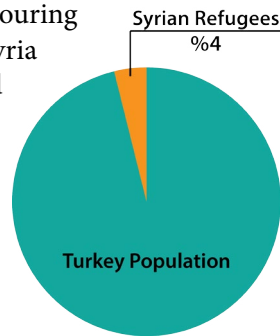


Figure 1. Suruç Temporary Protection Centre, Turkey

The rise in water demand induced by migration inevitably puts more stress on already scarce water resources. Investment requirements soar both for maintenance of the existing infrastructure and wastewater management. With the extensive infrastructure investments made by the Government and the municipalities and the appreciable efforts paid by the institutions working in the field to provide water and sanitation services to Syrians living both in the temporary protection centres and in the cities, Syrian refugees have equal opportunities with Turkish citizens at the point of access to water and sanitation services. Turkey allocated more than 30 billion USD to humanitarian relief actions for Syrians registered in Turkey. It is estimated that 4% of this amount has been spent for the water related activities (AFAD, 2018).

### South Sudan

Looming famine in Africa threatens African and Middle East countries like South Sudan, Yemen, Somalia and Nigeria. Across these four countries, nearly 27 million people are reliant on unsafe water. Dirty water and poor sanitation lead to fatal diseases for malnourished children.

As the escalating conflict is ravaging South Sudan, over 5 million people lack safe water and sanitation in the country. A cholera outbreak in June 2016 produced more than 5.000 cholera cases and over 100 deaths (UNICEF, 2017). People fleeing from war and famine in South Sudan seek asylum in neighbouring countries like Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic. These countries themselves face lack of access to adequate water and sanitation.



Figure 2. South Sudanese Refugees in Sudan (UN Refugee Agency)



The estimated number of South Sudanese refugees is 1,8 million. Children make up 62% of the refugee population and more than 1 million children are in need of protection and basic services. Refugees fleeing to neighbouring countries are facing a double catastrophe due to rainy season (UNHCR, 2017). Lack of healthcare facilities in South Sudan affects women and children the most. This is the largest ever refugee crisis in Africa.

## Yemen

Over 3 million people have been uprooted since the beginning of the conflict in Yemen in 2015. Malnutrition is very common among children and due to overcrowding and unsanitary conditions many have infections. 17 million of its 28 million people are food and water insecure and in desperate need of assistance (UNHCR, 2017).

The cholera outbreak in Yemen was announced by Yemen's Ministry of Public Health and Population in October 2016. Over 50.000 suspected cases of cholera, including 471 deaths have been reported across the country since the outbreak started. WHO estimates that 7,6 million people live in areas at high risk of cholera transmission (WHO, 2017).

## Somalia

Due to the ongoing conflict and drought in Somalia 5,2 million people corresponding to about a third of the population, need access to water, sanitation and hygiene (UNICEF, 2017). Drought displaced hundreds of thousands of people inside Somalia. The country was also confronted with a cholera outbreak. More than 40.000 cases of cholera and watery diarrhoea and around 700 deaths have been reported in 2017 (WHO, 2017).

Above cases reflect urgency of direct water related humanitarian assistance in fragile areas. The Middle East and Africa are the regions facing the greatest water crisis of our time.



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Figure 3. Girl in an IDP camp in Dharawan, Yemen

### 3. Current Turkish Water Aid Activities and Lessons Learnt

Turkey takes humanitarian responsibility and provides financial and technical assistance in the water sector with a particular focus in the Middle East and Africa. **The main target of the Turkish water aid is to ensure sustainable safe drinking water and sanitation for vulnerable people living mainly in the crisis areas without access to clean drinking water and improved sanitation.**

As simply illustrated in Figure 6, different governmental and non-governmental institutions carry out considerable international aid programs individually and/or collectively in the water sphere.

**The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA)** is the main international development agency in Turkey and in charge of coordination of all aid activities. TIKA's mission is to contribute to poverty eradication and sustainable development in partner countries. Turkey shares its own expertise and experience by tailoring them to fit specific needs and development priorities of partner countries. In 59 partner countries, TIKA has 61 Program Coordination Offices, which play an important role in TIKA's direct communication with local stakeholders, in the implementation of cooperation activities and the collection of country specific first-hand information. TIKA's activities are not limited to these countries with overseas offices, but reach more than hundred countries worldwide.

**General Directorate of Migration Management** under the Ministry of Interior currently runs a network of 13 state-of-the-art refugee camps in Turkey where over 112.000 Syrians enjoy regular access to housing, healthcare, education and psychological support. The agency remains committed to developing necessary strategies and serving people in need at home and abroad.

**State Hydraulic Works (DSI)** under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is the primary executive state agency for the planning and development of national water resources. The main objective of DSI is to develop all water and land resources in Turkey. DSI have many aid activities in Africa and Middle East from drilling well to dam construction. DSI has supplied water to more than 1,5 million people in Africa thanks to the bore drilling activities.



Figure 4. DSI Water Aid Activities in Africa

**Turkish Water Institute (SUEN)** is a national think tank established under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to develop national water policies, provide consultation to decision makers, and enhance scientific research and strategic ideas with a focus on creating a common platform for water management. SUEN works in cooperation with national and international water-related institutions on issues such as sustainable water management, developing water policies, sustainable energy and capacity building for solving local and global water problems. SUEN carries out capacity building programs on not-for-profit basis for Africa and other regions in need. SUEN trained more than 1,200 water and sanitation experts from 30 countries.



Figure 5. SUEN Capacity Building Programs in Istanbul



## Friendship Dam in Djibouti

The Turkish Government through the State Hydraulic Works (DSI) under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has initiated the construction works of a dam on the Ambouli river in order to provide domestic water to the capital city of Djibouti and protect the city from the potential floods.

The rock-fill type dam project, with a talveg height of 38 m and total reservoir volume of 14,37 hm<sup>3</sup>, is due to be completed in the year of 2019. The total project cost of €11 million is fully financed by the Turkish Government.



Excavation works, Ambouli Dam, Djibouti

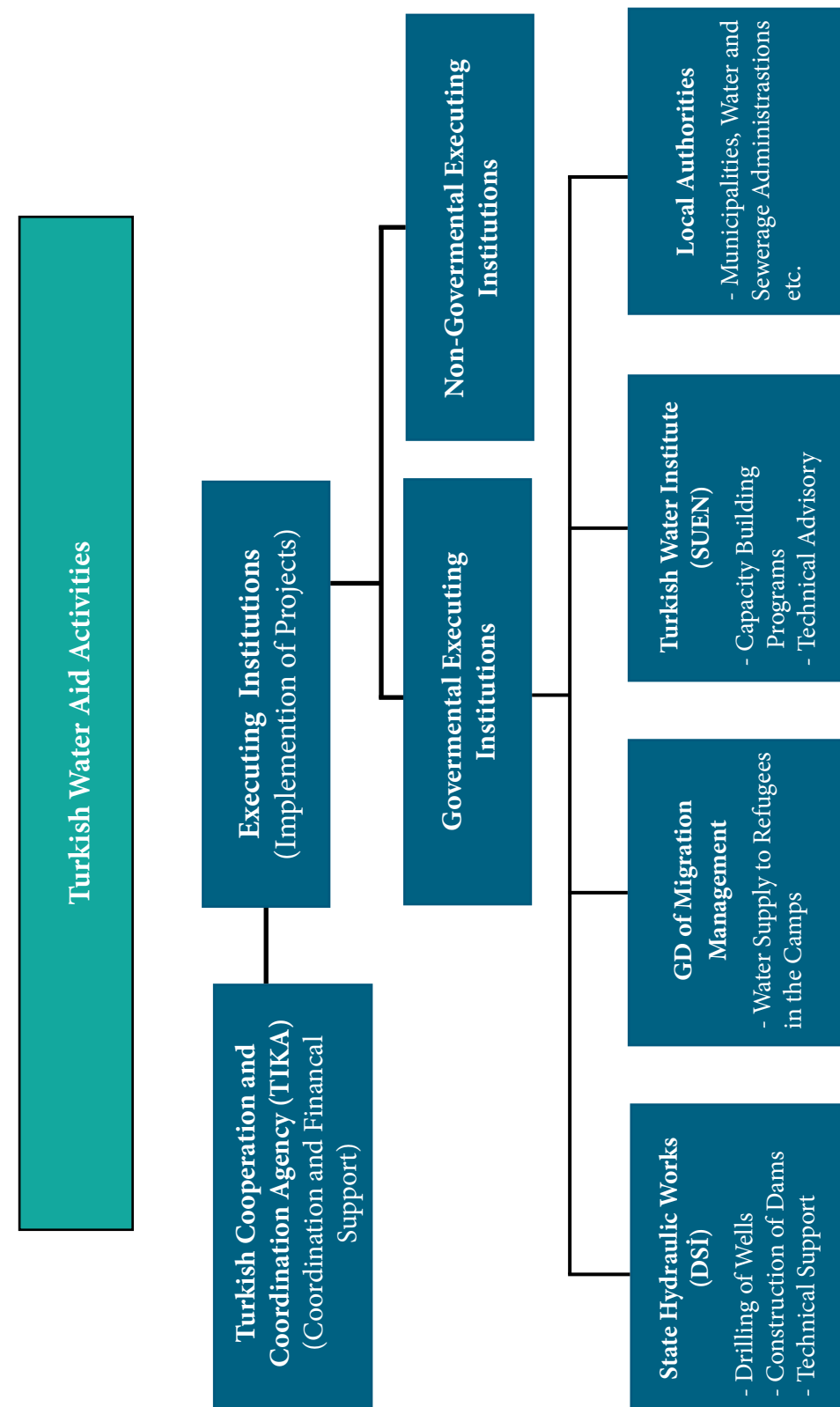


Figure 6. Illustration of Current Turkish Water Aid Actors

With their wide experience in water supply and sanitation, Municipalities and Water and Sewerage Administrations undertake water aid projects as well. Approximately 3,5 million of the 3,6 million Syrian refugees in Turkey live outside the camps and are settled in various provinces. Municipalities continuously develop projects to meet water and sanitation needs of this additional population.

Turkish water-related aid is not only limited to governmental organizations but is also carried out individually by many NGO's which is supported directly by the citizens.

#### *Need for High Level Involvement and Case-specific Solutions*

Turkey's experiences showed that assistance has been gravely disrupted due to internal political instabilities where sustainable water-related assistance is closely dependent on. Therefore a different approach in tackling water-related problems is needed. Valuable results have thus far been achieved, however, to have overarching results a more collaborative initiative including **high-level involvement** is deemed to be needed. More than physical water scarcity, political, economic or security reasons create lack of access to water therefore, there is a need to have a high level intervention in such cases.

For instance, the fragile political situation in Somalia makes access difficult to safe drinking water and available freshwater cannot be stored due to security reasons leading people to suffer from lack of water leading to famine (UNICEF, 2017). Therefore, the case specific conditions should be considered and root causes of the water problems have to be identified:

- Only 45% of population in Somalia can access to improved water sources and only 25% of Somalian people can have improved sanitation facilities. The diarrhoea in Somalia as a waterborne disease is the major cause of deaths among 23% of children under five and is strongly correlated with child malnutrition (UNICEF, 2017).
- Similarly, the urgent water need in South Sudan is to provide clean water especially to increasing numbers of the refugees that 1,8 million people fleeing their homelands as a result of the conflicts, droughts and famine (WFP, 2017).
- As a result of the ongoing conflict in Yemen, 18,8 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance and the cholera outbreak starting in October 2016 has caused 420 deaths between 27 April 2017 and 24 May 2017. Almost 14,5 million people lack access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene services and under the severe risk of infection (WHO EMRO, 2017).

In case of a high level group involvement in the above cases, the consequences could be alleviated by fostering the political will.

## 4. Turkey's Current Efforts to Extend Water Funding: The OIC Case

Turkey has initiated a process to establish a fund allocation system toward solving water problems in the least developed countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) since the 2<sup>nd</sup> Islamic Conference of Ministers Responsible for Water (ICMW). After the United Nations (UN), OIC is the second largest intergovernmental organization with 57 member states for international cooperation.

A significant number of OIC member states are facing different water problems, especially in Africa and the Middle East which are part of the Asia region of the OIC. The Second ICMW underlined the significance of international cooperation for addressing water issues and challenges. By consensus, OIC member states adopted a common Water Vision to increase the capacity of the Islamic countries for solving water issues. The Third ICMW approved a new body, OIC Water Council, to formulate policies and discuss the progress of cooperation in the water field. Turkey was elected as one of the members of the OIC Water Council until 2022 as a pioneer of establishing the Council and the host of the ICMW meetings from 2009 to 2016. Creating a new funding mechanism led by the Turkish Government to solve water issues is still on the agenda of the OIC Water Council.

**The long-lasting aim of Turkey is to create a solid and effective funding system which is flexible, independent and non-profit and may allow urgent intervention to demanding or suffering countries as a result of water scarcity, waterborne diseases or refugee influx.**



## 5. A New Perspective to Join Forces Globally

To create synergies both nationally and internationally, the Turkish Government is ready to start an initiative to establish an international water fund (IWF) with a particular focus in Africa and Middle East regions' urgent water-related issues by joining the forces and collaboratively expanding the ongoing water aid activities globally. Any country is welcome to contribute to this joint collaborative action.

The Working Principles of the Fund is to be transparent, flexible, operational, accountable, economic, effective, efficient, catalyser, financially sustainable and needs-based allocative. The fund should be accompanied with a case-specific high level group that works in close cooperation with the fund leadership to facilitate the use of Fund effectively.

The supported projects to solve urgent water problems in the field may be based on grants from developed countries. Each willing developed country is expected to commit a certain amount of aid under the Water Fund. Turkey, for instance, granted 11 million € in Djibouti in order to build a water supply and flood protection dam (Box, page 8).

The sources of finance for the fund can be the following;

- i) Voluntary Contributions by the UN Member States as well as by the Governments of any other country;
- ii) Grants from the semi-government, commercial, industrial and financial institutions and organizations;
- iii) Donations and bequests from philanthropists, industrialists, business people, NGO's and any individual interested in advancement and spreading of water cooperation.

The projects and activities should alleviate urgent and severe health risks arising from poor water infrastructures, and facilitate transfer of knowledge and technologies to strengthen capacities to effectively address challenges faced in the countries in highest need.



Figure 7. IWF Possible Target Geographies

A simple illustration of this initiative is presented in Figure 8.

As mentioned, each region has its specific conditions requiring tailor-made solutions. Most of the issues need high-level attention to ensure a secure environment to make sure the assistance is sustainable. In this structure, High Level Policy Groups are envisaged as part of the International Water Fund (IWF) to enable an environment for policy dialogues and facilitating emerging water issues.

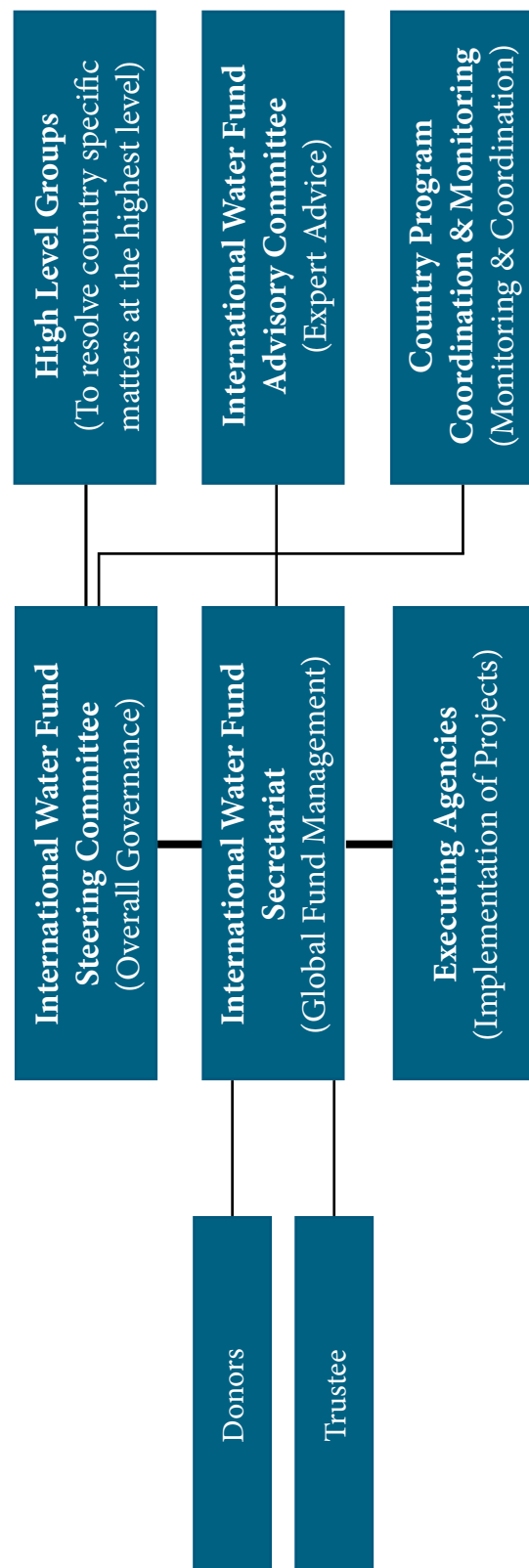


Figure 8. Illustration of the Proposed International Water Fund

**The Steering Committee (SC)**, the body who shall decide the way of support and projects, is to consider the risk areas or hotspots and urgencies impartially and ensure the grants from the developed countries reaching directly to the selected projects to be implemented in the context of the priority areas of the Water Fund (water scarcity, waterborne diseases and refugees etc.). In case of a failure to solve water problems with the IWF mechanism, SC should call the High Level Policy Groups to intervene which requires further negotiations. The Steering Committee will be in charge of prioritization of countries and projects as per urgency and fatal consequences.

**The Fund Secretariat** will be reporting to the SC and running the day-to-day operations to ensure correct resource allocation and effective use of resources.

The Steering Committee may appoint in each supportive country an Executing Agency (or Implementing Agency) that is willing to act as a champion in assessing the needs, developing project proposals and implementing them. For instance, Turkish Water Institute (SUEN) is ready to act as an Executing Agency (EA) on non-profit basis in its region in capacity building activities whereas Turkish State Hydraulic Works (DSI) would likewise be willing to be an EA in investment projects. Assembly of an extensive network of strong EAs is critical for the effective implementation of projects.

Country Programs Monitoring may be established in order to monitor the implementation as well as results of undertaken projects.

### Capacity Building Activities as a part of IWF

There are 3 main pillars for effective water conversation: technology, economy and training. Among these, trainings are particularly important in facilitating the process in the demanding site. A Fund should never neglect the strength of capacity building activities. Turkey has been not only donating the water wells in order to provide safe drinking water for Western and Eastern African countries as Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti but also has been organizing hands-on trainings for technicians and communities in the field in order to ensure efficient and proper use of the water wells. Today, nearly 2 million people from those African countries have access to safe drinking water by the donation of 500 water wells from Turkey (MoFWA, 2018). It is important to recall that donating such a system is one side but significant part is to use those technologies or assistance effectively especially in terms of water. Donation is a one-time support whereas building capacity is a long term achievement.



Besides technical and operation skills as given in running water wells, water management and planning skills are also a must in the long run. Turkish Water Institute (SUEN) has given trainings in water and wastewater management issues to more than 1,200 professionals from all over the world with the financial support from the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA). Having gone through the same difficulties in the past, seasoned Turkish practitioners and academicians share their experiences in solving major water issues in Turkey, particularly in Istanbul.

Despite of all endeavours, the international water aid activities may fail in the field because of inadequate capacity building activities and lack of long-term monitoring when solving urgency is a primary target.

Not only do capacity building activities provide knowledge transfer but also creates an environment for continuous peer-to-peer knowledge exchange. Moreover, it has been experienced that these activities are highly instrumental in building trust among countries.

## 6. Conclusions

Global pool of water funds are growing steadily, yet still cannot keep pace with demand and there are noticeable problems with effective management of the sources. Causes of water crises vary drastically across regions; while in some regions the issue is mostly a matter of scarcity, for others it may be shortage of institutional or technical capacity. In most of the cases, fixing the symptoms of the problem can be done correctly, but providing the solution and making sure that the solution is channelled properly to the ones in need is in the centre of the debate. Below list describes five essential features of the proposed international funding mechanism:

- A well-structured funding mechanism is needed directly and only for the WASH needs of vulnerable people. Water, sanitation and hygiene are not the only water-related issues but certainly the most pressing of human needs. A direct and collective water fund will respond emergency cases faster than a fragmented structure. By locating itself in the domain of WASH, the funding mechanism can focus on infrastructure development, service provision and capacity building matters for improving water supply, treatment, reuse and sanitation activities in deprived regions.
- Eradicating water problems by 2030 globally is an ambitious, yet achievable goal that requires financing accompanied **by political will**. Not all water related problems are caused by scarcity or technical incapability. There are many instances where the problem mainly stems from collision of interest across sub-sectors and social groups. In such cases, facilitative role of reliable political actors can be a valuable asset for problem solving. Engagement of high level political actors in the country specific decision-making process may increase legitimacy of the process and help reaching a consensus in controversial cases. Furthermore, high level involvement with **High Level Groups** enable long-lasting decisions in policy implementation, which can increase people's resilience to crisis.
- Cases where aid action will be conducted need to be chosen on the basis of non-discrimination. Regardless of geographical, political and economic interests, the sole criterion should be the number of lives at stake. However, considering the fiscal and other constraints, a **prioritization** is inevitable in choosing activity area. Effective prioritization requires a case specific approach. An international advisory committee cooperating with local actors can be instrumental to provide expert advice when determining the priority areas and needs.

- The share of administrative costs (staff, transportation, security, stationary, etc.) in the total funding pool should be minimized. Largest share by far must be allocated to provide better support for more people in need. Permanent staff of executing agencies may be employed where possible in order to avoid extra personnel costs. Likewise, transportation and security needs can be met from in-kind and external sources where available to minimize non-relevant costs.
- Transparency, accountability and financial sustainability of the funding mechanism should be assured by regular monitoring. Transparency and accountability at high standards are complementary for establishing confidence towards the funding mechanism at global level. Increased confidence in turn can lead gradually growing number of financial contributors to the fund, which is essential for the financial sustainability.

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