

The United Nations Water Conference 2023



UN
2023 WATER
CONFERENCE

NEW YORK
22-24
MARCH
2023

A HISTORIC
OPPORTUNITY
NOT TO BE
MISSED

THE THREE PROPOSALS OF THE FRENCH WATER PARTNERSHIP TO IMPROVE GLOBAL WATER GOVERNANCE



1 Organise intergovernmental meetings of the United Nations on freshwater on a regular basis, not once every two generations.

A mechanism for regularly scheduled intergovernmental meetings would allow Member States to:

- **regularly discuss** freshwater and sanitation issues and challenges;
- **promote** and review progress towards the water-related SDG Targets;
- **guide and impulse** the work of the United Nations on water and sanitation;
- **adopt** policy decisions and remedial action when necessary.

→ The secretariat of this permanent mechanism could be entrusted to a strengthened UN-Water. It should be supported by a group of independent scientists and experts to collect global knowledge and data on all major water and sanitation challenges.

→ The appointment of a Special Envoy of the Secretary General for Water and Sanitation will be an important step towards this goal.

Note: These topics are part of recommendations 65, 66 and 67 of the concept paper of the Interactive Dialogue 5 of the Conference

2 Drastically accelerate the actions to achieve the 20 global water-related targets.

Taking action on water and sanitation does not guarantee that the global targets will be met. The world is far behind on many of them.

- **Action plans** that explicitly address the 20 water-related SDG targets are needed at all levels of governance. These plans must entail the mobilisation of the necessary means: human capacities, financing, knowledge and measurements, innovations and governance, i.e. the 5 axes of acceleration recommended by UN-Water:
- **UN Member States** should regularly review their collective progress towards the 20 water-related SDG targets and take corrective action where necessary.

3 Break out of the sectoral 'silos' and integrate the central role of water and sanitation in the 2030 Agenda into all UN work.

- **Include** a 'freshwater' component in all thematic UN summits, whether they are related to Health, Food, Climate, Biodiversity, Energy, or Urban Development in the spirit of achieving the many ambitions of the 2030 Agenda in an operational way.
- **Organise** a UN World Summit dedicated specifically to the theme of «water, soil and agriculture for sustainable development» by involving the water and agriculture communities.
- **Mobilise** the water-using sectors (agriculture, energy, health, industry, etc.) to take effective action towards the global freshwater goals. Conversely, mobilise the water sector to achieve the global goals for these sectors.

Note: This topic is part of recommendation 68 of the concept paper of Interactive Dialogue 5 of the Conference.

french
water
partnership



partenariat
français
pour l'eau

THEMATIC MESSAGES

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



6.2

Access to safe water and sanitation

The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has highlighted the vital importance of access to water, sanitation and hygiene and the difficulties of those who lack it. More active policies are needed to:

- **accelerate the reduction in the number of people** without adequate access to safe drinking water (SDG target 6.1) or sanitation (SDG target 6.2: access to a safely managed toilet), in all contexts and for all parts of the population.
- **Identify all concerned people** regardless of their status, lifestyle or nationality and track them statistically.
- In some contexts with high population growth, the number of people without access to water and sanitation services is increasing: **it is imperative to reverse this trend.**



6.1

Cleaning up wastewater

Today, 45% of domestic wastewater is discharged into the environment with little or no treatment.

The global target for wastewater treatment (SDG target 6.3) is ambitious but necessary to ensure good human and ecosystem health. Achieving it **requires action along the entire wastewater chain (from collection to treatment and recovery)**, using appropriate systems in each case. These can be collective or individual.

6.3



6.5



Managing water in an integrated way: IWRM¹ (SDG target 6.5)

Water connects all of Earth's ecosystems: not only as a prerequisite for life, but also as an environment and a habitat. Freshwater ecosystems do not exist in isolation from other terrestrial and marine ecosystems. They are part of a continuum: rivers and lakes reach the sea through rivers, and the species they support depend on this continuum. Human activities upstream have an impact on the quantity and quality of water downstream, and can alter the availability of the resource for other users.

Responsible water resources management can therefore only be achieved through integrated and **concerted management at catchment scale, which takes into account the constant interactions between terrestrial and marine waters.** This management must be transparent, democratic, cross-border, inclusive and supportive, and based on knowledge, action planning and dialogue with all stakeholders in order to share the needs and necessary financial contributions of all actors in the catchment area.

1. Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)

Our commitment in the Water Action Agenda:

Water4allSDGs, a tool to assess the impacts of any water project/policy on ALL the SDGs
water4allsdgs.org





Water as an indicator of climate change

The water sector is under severe pressure to adapt adequately to climate change. **The members of the French Water Partnership are calling for the international community to take action to meet the targets of the Paris Agreement for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.** For each additional tenth of a degree of global warming, the cost of adaptation measures increases drastically for the already chronically underfunded water sector.

Water also has a crucial role in the fight against climate change. For the adaptation of our societies to the impacts of climate change on the one hand, it must be at the heart of national adaptation plans (NAPs). For mitigation and low-carbon trajectories on the other hand, water and freshwater ecosystems must be a structuring axis of nationally determined contributions (NDCs). In a context of climate-related transitions, this approach will allow the institutionalization within states of the dialogue between water and other sectoral policies around a common vision and long-term objectives.



Investing in Nature-based Solutions

Invest in living water! Nature-based solutions (NBS) are essential to solving the climate, water and biodiversity crises!

Nature-based solutions enable responses to societal challenges, often related to climate change, while protecting or restoring ecosystems crucial for biodiversity. They address the dual challenge of water resource protection and biodiversity loss, while generating numerous benefits for human societies such as adaptation to climate change.

While Nature-based solutions should become a reflex, they are still too often ignored by political decision-makers, both at local and national levels. It is time to invest, as a priority and as a complement to grey solutions, in these promising solutions and to multiply them by making public and private actors aware of the financial benefits associated with Nature-based Solutions, such as the valuation of ecosystem services.



Water, Soil and Agriculture

The water and agriculture communities must work together to ensure the water, food and climate security and, more broadly, to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Transitions in agriculture and agro-sylvo-pastoral systems that foster the progressive improvement of land and soil quality along with an increase in mobilizable water resources and irrigation, where useful and possible under good environmental conditions, are among the solutions to be promoted for progress.

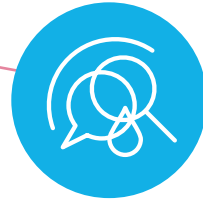
Achieving successful transitions at the desired level by restoring coherent and efficient public, community and private action requires adapting to each context, territorializing water and agriculture policies, acting on the local scale of «living territories»--where stakeholders can mobilize and «make a project»--and positively contaminating each other across hierarchies (local, basin/region, national).



WHICH FUNDING SOURCES?

- Governments should focus on the complementarity of possible forms of financing and allow project leaders easier access to financing. Various sources of financing should be favoured by choosing those that are best adapted to each situation according to the 3T principle (tariffs, taxes and transfers).
- The development of innovative «blended finance», which brings together funding from different sources (private, public, philanthropic) for projects that reconcile the need for a financial return with the need for an impact on sustainable development, must be at the heart of the strategies of project leaders and politicians. To achieve this, strong and clear legislation and efficient and transparent institutions must be put in place to capture the different modes of financing

CALL TO ACTION



... FOR SURVIVAL AND RESILIENT WASH RESPONSES

The convergence of multiple and protracted crises – the Covid pandemic, climate change, violent conflicts, geopolitical instability – has exacerbated fragility across countries and regions. When fragility increases, so do humanitarian needs.

The French Water Partnership, member of the [WaSH Road Map](#) (a coalition of international actors in the water, sanitation and hygiene sector) has signed and invites to sign a Call to Action. This calls on governments to:

- **Primarily focus** their efforts on people living in FCV settings.
- **Increase support** for humanitarian WASH responses and coordination to deliver predictable, effective (timely) and sufficient survival WASH responses and ultimately safeguard the lives and health of those living in FCV contexts.
- **Build** sustainable and resilient WASH services that can withstand crises (climate crises, conflicts, natural disasters).
- **Actively promote** the effective implementation of International Humanitarian Law obligations relating to the protection of WASH personnel and UN Security Council Resolution 2573 (2021).
- **Support** the request to the UN Secretary-General to swiftly nominate a UN Special Envoy for Water, in order to establish an ongoing UN-hosted intergovernmental mechanism to discuss global water issues and ensure the achievement of SDG 6 and all water-related SDGs.

READ THE CALL TO ACTION

- [Here](#)

Projects led by the French Water Partnership are possible thanks to the support of its donors

