Road to the 2026 UN Water Conference

CPR sub-committee

15. October 2026



The 2026 UN Water Conference

1977 Water Conference

1st Water Conference

2023 Water Conference

Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development" (2018–2028)

2026 Water Conference

Accelerating the implementation of SDG 6)to ensure clean water and sanitation for all

2028 Water Conference

Final Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, 'Water for Sustainable Development,' 2018–2028



8-10 December
Abu Dhabi



Co-hosted by Senegal and the United Arab Emirates

- Water for the People
  - Co-conveners: UNICEF and WHO
  - Co-chairs: Ghana and Switzerland
- Water for Prosperity
  - Co-conveners: FAO, UNDP and UNIDO
  - Co-chairs: Spain and China
- Water for Planet
  - Co-conveners: IAEA, WMO and UNEP
  - Co-chairs: Japan and Egypt

- Water for collaboration
  - Co-conveners: UNECE and UNESCO
  - Co-chairs: Finland and Zambia
- Water in MEAs
  - Co-conveners: UN-DESA and UNDRR
  - Co-chairs: Germany and Mexico
- Investments for Water
  - Co-conveners: World Bank Group
  - Co-chairs: France and South Africa

Developing the Water for Planet concept note

Consultation and engagement during 2026:

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE C

Co-chairs

Japan · Egypt

CONCEPT PAPER

Developed by the IPWG and its co-convenors

IPWG: UN-Water Members, Partners & participating organisations

Co-convenors: UNEP · WMO · IAEA

Consultations & milestones



Why Water for Planet?

The concept paper starts from one central proposition:

7 **THEMES**

Climate · Biodiversity · Desertification · Environment · Source to Sea · Resilience · Disaster Risk Reduction

Water connects the planetary system

Changes in the hydrological cycle cascade across climate, ecosystems, economies and societies.

THE SYSTEM IS CHANGING

Climate change, land-use change and rising demand are disrupting water availability, quality and hydrological variability.

THE IMPACTS ARE CONNECTED

Freshwater ecosystem loss, floods, droughts, pollution, desertification and groundwater depletion reinforce one another.

THE RESPONSE MUST CONNECT TOO

Water management must move beyond fragmented sectoral responses toward integrated, adaptive and risk-informed action.

Five mutually reinforcing pathways for integrated and inclusive impact

1

UNDERSTAND

Hydrological science, monitoring, data & early warning

2

SET LIMITS

Science-based water budgets & ecological thresholds

3

RESTORE

Protect, connect & restore freshwater ecosystems

4

RESILIENCE

Risk-informed planning, DRR & resilient infrastructure

5

ENABLE

Water-positive finance, coherence & cooperation

What makes these pathways scalable

Capacity + institutions · Open, interoperable data · Inclusive governance · Science–policy partnerships

What changes the investment equation

Recognize freshwater ecosystems as natural infrastructure and align finance with water, climate, biodiversity and resilience outcomes.

Seven recommendations for action

1. **Advance international cooperation and global scientific understanding** of interconnected freshwater ecosystems, planetary water systems, water-related sectors and challenges.

2. **Define and implement science-based water budgets and ecological thresholds** to safeguard freshwater ecosystems and sustainably allocate water.

3. **Protect, connect and restore freshwater ecosystems at system scale** including environmental flows, water quality, connectivity and long-term restoration capacity.

4. **Leverage new and emerging technologies** to transform hydrological monitoring and early warning systems.

5. **Shift subsidies and finance** to safeguard water systems and deliver water-positive outcomes.

6. **Advance planetary water resilience through MEAs** and integrate water into national and local frameworks.

7. **Build a sustainable and resilient society** through water-related disaster risk reduction.

Other ways UNEP is engaged

Co-Chairs of the Water Conference's six interactive dialogues are working with the UN System on flagship initiatives to be launched during the Conference.

UNEP's FLAGSHIP PROPOSAL

> **"Nature's Infrastructure for Water"**
>
> A UNEP-led programme that mobilizes science, partnerships and collective action to strengthen understanding on the status, roles and contributions of freshwater ecosystems globally and supports countries to translate that evidence into national planning, investment, protection and restoration.

Leveraging UNEP's Existing Foundations on…

- ❑ Data & monitoring
- ❑ Governance & country support
- ❑ Building on UNEP's mandate and global connections

INVOLVEMENT IN PARTNERS FLAGSHIP PROPOSALS

UNEP is involved in a flagship led by the UN-WATER Expert Group on Water and Climate Change, titled:

"Roadmap for Mainstreaming Water in Rio Conventions"

10+ **SIDE EVENTS**

… in which UNEP will be involved as organizer, co-organizer or speaker

Thank you!