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Social Affairs



United Nations 2023 Water Conference  
Global Online Stakeholder Consultation for the  
Proposed Themes of the Interactive Dialogues

# SUMMARY REPORT

October 2022



This summary report has been prepared based on inputs collected from stakeholders from several sectors by the Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA).

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The present report seeks to provide a summary of the inputs submitted by a broad range of stakeholders to an online consultation on the proposed themes of the interactive dialogues of the UN 2023 Water Conference. Linked sites are not under the control of the United Nations, and the United Nations is not responsible for the content of any linked site, or any link contained in a linked site. The inclusion of a link or reference does not imply the endorsement of the linked site by the United Nations. The United Nations reserves the right to review submissions and delete any input at any given time if any content/input is perceived as not aligned with the United Nations Charter and/or the principles and purposes of the UN 2023 Water Conference.

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# Background

The United Nations General Assembly, in its [resolution 73/226](#), decided to convene, in New York, from 22 to 24 March 2023, the United Nations Conference on the “Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, ‘Water for Sustainable Development’, 2018–2028” ([United Nations 2023 Water Conference](#)).

The Governments of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Kingdom of the Netherlands will co-host the UN 2023 Water Conference.

The General Assembly, in its [resolution 75/212](#), further decided that the Conference shall comprise an opening and a closing ceremony, six plenary meetings and five interactive dialogues. The interactive dialogues shall be collaborative and multi-stakeholder in nature, with due regard for gender and geographical balance.

After consulting with Member States, United Nations Entities and stakeholders, the co-hosts have proposed the following as [themes for the interactive dialogues](#):

- 1. Water for Health:** Access to safe drinking water, hygiene and sanitation (SDG 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 17);
- 2. Water for Development:** Valuing Water, Water-Energy-Food Nexus and Sustainable Economic and Urban Development (SDG 6.3, 6.4, 6.5 and SDGs 2, 8, 9, 11, 12);
- 3. Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment:** Source to Sea, Biodiversity, Climate, Resilience and DRR (SDG 6.5, 6.6, and SDGs 7, 11.5, 13, 14, 15);
- 4. Water for Cooperation:** Transboundary and International Water Cooperation, Cross Sectoral Cooperation and Water Across the 2030 Agenda (SDG 6.5, 6.b and SDGs 16, 17);
- 5. Water Action Decade:** Accelerating the implementation of the objectives of the Decade including through the UN SG’s Action Plan.

The themes are supported by the [five accelerators of the SDG6 Global Acceleration Framework](#) (Financing, Data and Information, Capacity Development, Innovation, and Governance) and the three principles of the Conference (Inclusive, Cross Sectoral and Action Oriented).

The themes of the interactive dialogues and other outstanding organizational matters pertaining to the Conference will be finalized during a [one-day preparatory meeting to be held on 25 October 2022](#) at the UN Headquarters in New York to be hosted by the President of the UN General Assembly. To ensure the meaningful participation of all relevant stakeholders, the President is also convening a [one-day stakeholder consultation on 24 October 2022](#). More information can be found [here](#).

This report presents the main outcomes of the [Second Global Online Stakeholder Consultation for the Themes for Interactive Dialogues of the United Nations 2023 Water Conference](#), which was open for inputs from all interested stakeholders. This summary report intends to reflect the main contributions presented throughout multiple submissions, by outlining views and suggestions from stakeholders.



# Global Online Stakeholder Consultation for the UN 2023 Water Conference

From 9 to 30 September 2022, UNDESA, through its [Division for Sustainable Development Goals \(DSDG\)](#), invited stakeholders to contribute inputs on the [five themes proposed by the co-hosts](#) for the UN 2023 Water Conference interactive dialogues through a [second global online stakeholder consultation](#).\*

mailing lists, UN official websites and social media channels.

Participants were also asked to propose additional inputs/suggestions to be discussed during the UN 2023 Water Conference, including the rationale for the proposals.

Information about the global online stakeholder consultation was broadly disseminated through

## Questions

Question 1	Considering the proposed [ <i>theme</i> ] can you specify the most important challenges and shortcomings that hinder progress in this area and that should be discussed during the UN 2023 Water Conference?
Question 2	What are the transformative actions that need to happen, and by whom, to overcome the challenges and to create better conditions to accelerate progress in achieving [ <i>theme</i> ] and that must be promoted at the UN 2023 Water Conference?
Question 3	Considering the [ <i>theme</i> ], what are the changes your organization can contribute to, and what other stakeholders would you need to collaborate with to bring about the needed changes for improved enabling conditions and accelerating progress in this area?
Question 4	Considering the proposed [ <i>theme</i> ], what evidence can you share of new ways of working/new approaches/partnerships that have proved helpful to support accelerated implementation of SDG 6? Please indicate name of the initiative/approach, and if possible, evidence of the results achieved, leadership provided, stakeholders involved and ways of collaboration. A few examples of initiatives are shared throughout the report.

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\*The summary report of the first global online stakeholder consultation can be found [here](#).

## Outcomes

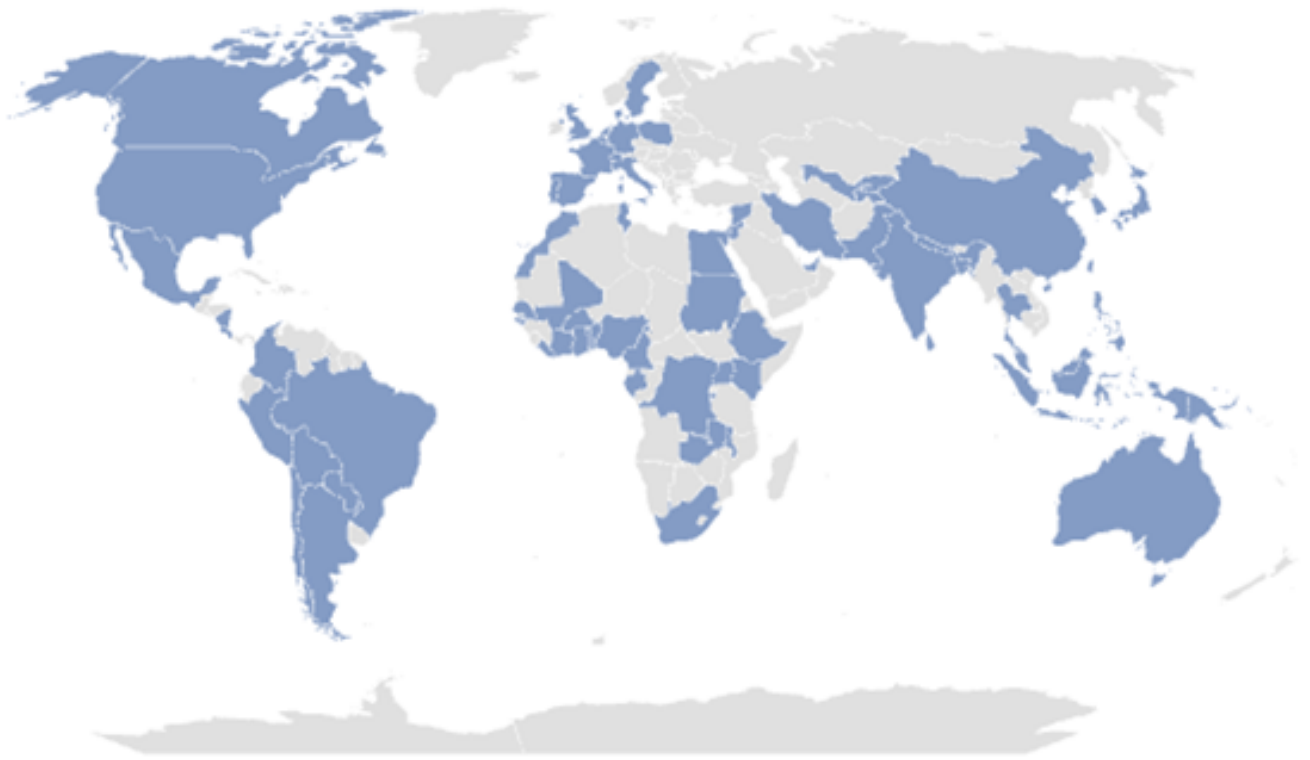
A total of **719 inputs\*** from interested stakeholders were considered for this analysis.

**All inputs are available.** The detailed responses received under each theme are made available through the links listed below:

Themes	Outcomes of the consultation
1. Water for Health: Access to safe drinking water, hygiene and sanitation (SDG 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 17)	<a href="https://bit.ly/Water4HealthResponses">bit.ly/Water4HealthResponses</a>
2. Water for Development: Valuing water, water-energy-food nexus and sustainable economic and urban development (SDG 6.3, 6.4, 6.5 and SDGs 2, 8, 9, 11, 12)	<a href="https://bit.ly/Water4DevelopmentResponses">bit.ly/Water4DevelopmentResponses</a>
3. Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment: Source to sea, biodiversity, climate, resilience and disaster risk reduction (SDGs 6.5, 6.6, 7, 11.5, 13, 14, 15)	<a href="https://bit.ly/Water4ClimateResponses">bit.ly/Water4ClimateResponses</a>
4. Water for Cooperation: Transboundary and international water cooperation, cross-sectoral cooperation and water across the 2030 Agenda (SDG 6.5, 6.b and SDGs 16, 17)	<a href="https://bit.ly/Water4CooperationResponses">bit.ly/Water4CooperationResponses</a>
5. Water Action Decade: Accelerating the implementation of the objectives of the Decade, including through the UN Secretary-General's Action Plan	<a href="https://bit.ly/WaterActionDecadeResponses">bit.ly/WaterActionDecadeResponses</a>
6. Additional inputs	<a href="https://bit.ly/WaterAdditionalInputsResponses">bit.ly/WaterAdditionalInputsResponses</a>

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\*The consultation registered 732 entries, a few duplications were identified and not considered for the analysis.

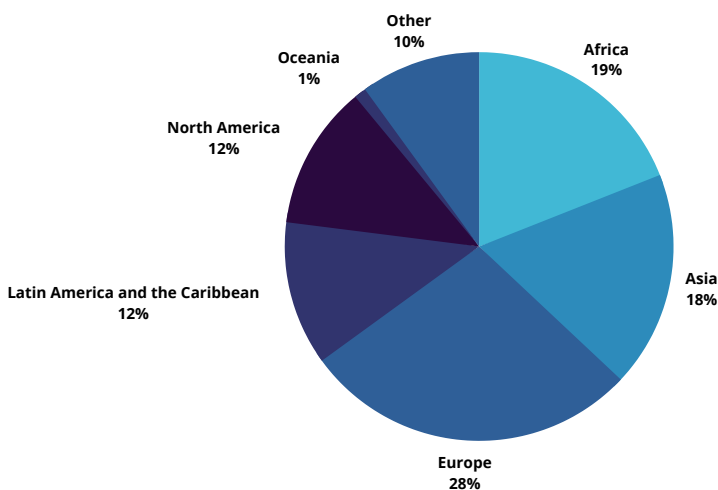


Geographic distribution of submissions. Source: UN DESA

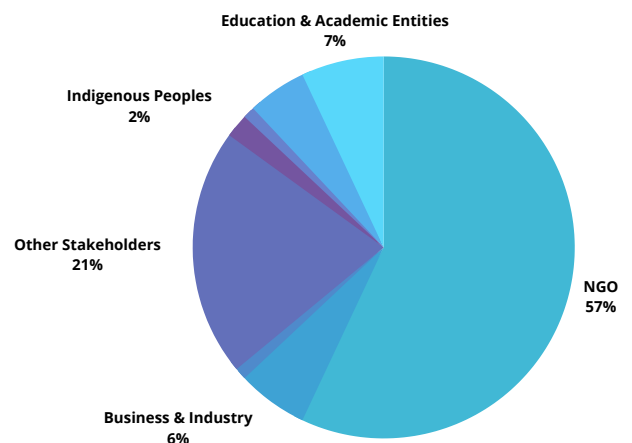
Contributions originated from all **regions** of the world, with the following distribution: Europe – 28%, Africa – 19%, Asia – 18%, Latin America and the Caribbean – 12%, North America – 12%, Oceania – 1% and Other – 10%.

Stakeholders from **73 countries** submitted inputs: Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Gabon, Germany,

Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, The Netherlands, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Senegal, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uzbekistan and Zambia.



Distribution of submissions per region. Source: UN DESA



Distribution of submissions per sector. Source: UN DESA

The majority of stakeholders contributing to the online consultation self-identified as **representing Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)**- 57%. Other sectors contributing inputs include: *Education & Academic Entities* - 7%, *Business & Industry* - 6%,

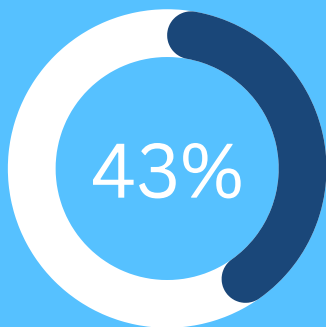
*Science & Technological Community* - 5%, *Indigenous Peoples* - 2%, *Women Organizations* - 1%, *Children & Youth* - 1% and other stakeholders active in areas related to sustainable development - 21%.



21%

of the participants were youth between 18 and 24 years old

With regards to **age**, 21% of submissions were provided by youth (between 18 and 34 years old), represented in different sectors.



43%

312 stakeholders out of 719, who submitted inputs to this consultation, self-identify as female



With regards to **gender**, 54% of the contributors self-identified as male, followed by 43% as female, 2% preferred not to say and 1% as others.

# Summary of the Second Global Online Stakeholder Consultation

The following section seeks to present the main highlights of the inputs that were received under each proposed theme.







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PROPOSED INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE THEME 1

# **Water for Health: Access to safe drinking water, hygiene and sanitation**

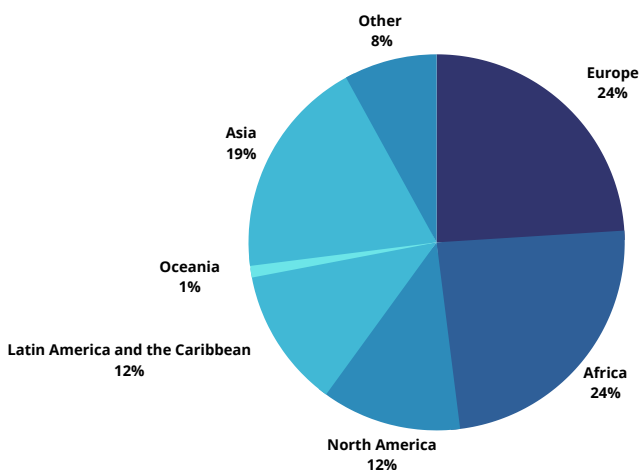




# Proposed Theme 1: Water for Health: Access to safe drinking water, hygiene, and sanitation

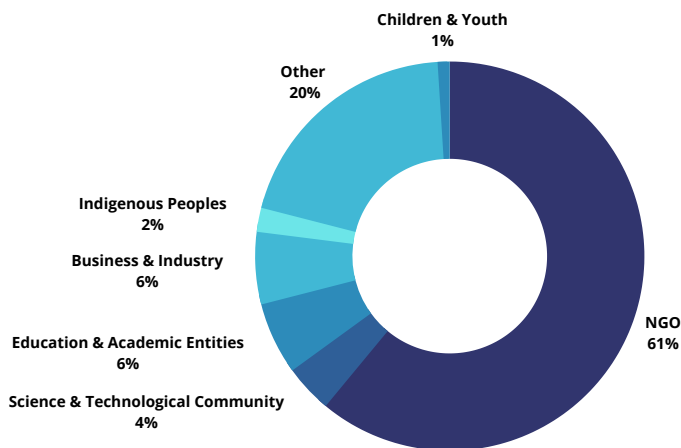
A total of **165 inputs** were received from stakeholders on the open, online form for Proposed Theme 1: “Water for Health”. All inputs are available [here](#).

Stakeholders representing a wide range of **sectors** submitted inputs with the following distribution: *Non-Governmental Organizations - 61%, Business and Industry - 6%, Education and Academic Entities*



Distribution of submissions per region. Source: UN DESA

Inputs to this form were received from all **regions** of the world with the following distribution: Europe - 24%, Africa - 24%, Asia - 19%, North America - 12%, Latin America and the Caribbean - 12%, Oceania - 1% and other - 8%.

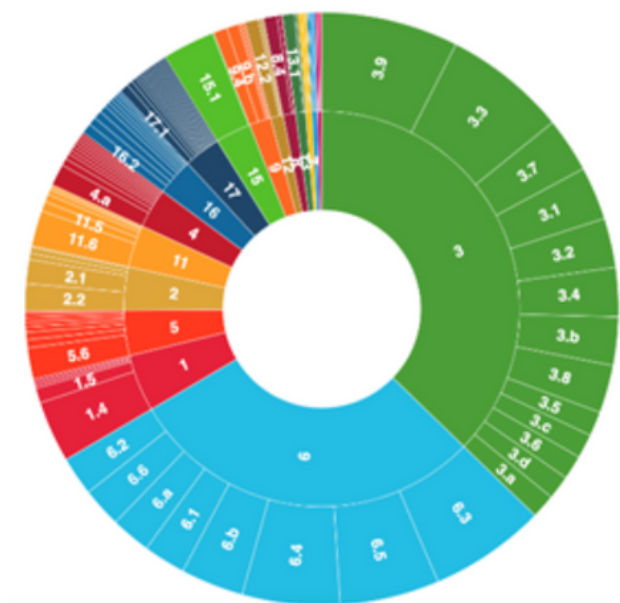


Distribution of submissions per sector. Source: UN DESA

- 6%, *Science and Technological Community - 4%, Indigenous Peoples - 2%, Children and Youth - 1%* and other stakeholders active in areas related to sustainable development - 20%.



Word cloud based on inputs to proposed theme 1 - Water for Health (created by [LinkedSDGs](#))



Reflection of linkages to most relevant SDGs and targets based on inputs on proposed theme 1 - Water for Health (created by [LinkedSDGs](#))

## Important challenges and shortcomings that hinder progress for "Water for Health"

According to multiple stakeholders, the main challenge that impedes progress in terms of "Water for Health" is the **lack of access to safe drinking water**. Stakeholders would like to see the UN 2023 Water Conference raise awareness and address how governments, NGOs and all other stakeholders can jointly and effectively contribute towards access to safe water for everyone.

*"Awareness / sensitization is also very critical and if not addressed, it can hinder the whole process of enhancing services towards Water for Health."*  
**Union of Community Development Volunteers, Uganda, Non-Governmental Organization**

Stakeholders addressed the challenge of **inequity in access to services**. The major **differences between water sources and sanitation coverage in mega cities, urban areas and rural areas**, including peripheries and slums, is a major shortcoming. **Lack of access to safe water by marginalized and vulnerable groups of society**, including girls, women, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities, as well as their **limited ability to engage** in water and health processes at all levels, were mentioned as critical topics to be addressed during the Conference.

Stakeholders identified the **lack of water infrastructure** as hindering progress and flagged that ensuring the technical quality and maintenance of infrastructure is critical to enable access to safe drinking water, hygiene and sanitation. In many regions, there is a

significant lack of sewage treatment which leads to pollution of drinking water sources.

*"A key challenge is sustainable funding operation and management for safe water systems. Significant investment has been made in infrastructure in the past few decades, but a high proportion of those investments will not achieve the health outcomes we expect due to functionality or water safety issues for communities, schools and healthcare facilities."*  
**University of Oxford, United Kingdom, Education and Academic Entities**

**Inadequate investment** was another key challenge mentioned in the consultation, including developing an understanding of the responsibilities of all sectors to make investments for "Water for Health", such as water and sanitation systems. Related to this, stakeholders also noted that everyone should have **access to affordable water**.

Stakeholders emphasized that in too many regions in the world the **water policies, regulations and implementation frameworks** are weak and lack targeted policies and budgets for sanitation. In this regard, the Conference should share good practices on enabling the delivery of safe sanitation services at all levels.

Stakeholders called for **hygiene** shortcomings – including low quality of services and poor assessment of sanitation services - to be prioritized and reminded that the backlog in reaching sanitation, hygiene and drinking water supply creates health risks for millions of people. Many stakeholders reminded that **continuous monitoring of water quality** is of utmost importance, as failing to do so negatively impacts health.



### Water Action Example

**Hydrotec Solutions Private Limited, India, Science & Technological Community:** "We recently developed off-grid solar based drinking water kiosk, which reduces the dependence on grid power, hence reduces the cost of water purification by 60%. These community kiosks are running successfully and saving people from waterborne diseases."

**Water-gender interlinkages with health** need to be carefully examined at the Conference as the health burdens, including gynecological and waterborne diseases, associated with poor WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) can disproportionately affect women. Additionally, in water scarce areas, **menstrual health and hygiene (MHH)** is a major challenge for women and girls. The UN 2023 Water Conference provides an opportunity to address this key issue. Some stakeholders considered the **global lack of trained and qualified WASH staff** the largest barrier to sustained action.

Stakeholders emphasized the importance of proper education on water, including the detrimental effects of water pollution and the dangers of dumping waste from factories into water resources.

*“Challenges directly related to sanitation, especially in regions facing climate vulnerability such as water access and contaminated water, increases vectors and cases of waterborne diseases. Therefore, it is important to discuss ways to make WASH concepts accessible through training and educational methods for youth and children, especially girls and young women.”* Waterlution, Brazil, Non-Governmental Organization

## **Transformative actions to accelerate progress in achieving "Water for Health"**

The gaps in sanitation to which the poorest communities are exposed raised stakeholders' concerns. To ensure the health and wellbeing of all people, the water sector needs to embrace a more **inter- and transdisciplinary approach**, working together with communities and marginalized groups to implement meaningful solutions. In addition, **partnerships with communities and marginalized groups**, including youth, should monitor the solutions to ensure they foster transformations to inclusive access to water and sanitation services. Stakeholders pointed out how it is important to **engage communities** to understand their specific water health issues, such as water shortages and contamination.

*“Governments, development agencies, scholars, and other stakeholders need to delve into ways to move from the infrastructure and supply focus approach in the water and sanitation sector towards achieving sustainability of services. For instance, source sustainability in the case of the water supply scheme is very important to achieve water security and ensure positive public health outcomes.”* Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), India, Non-Governmental Organization

As the funding gap is a challenge, there is a need to **mobilize high level support and finance** to provide safe water for everyone and maintain the necessary infrastructure to reach “Water for Health”. Stakeholders noted the need for **innovative financing mechanisms** and specifically mentioned that financing should focus on supporting communities that are most left behind.

*“...a holistic (yet pragmatic) approach must be taken, defining adequate governance arrangements, the responsibilities of the public sector and the role of multiple actors (including youth) and stakeholders (cross-sector partnerships), mandates & accountability mechanisms, laws and regulations, how service providers should be run, and the expectations of users.”* International Water Association, United Kingdom, Science & Technological Community

Multiple stakeholders recommended for the UN 2023 Water Conference to discuss good practices in creating **enabling conditions for public-private partnerships** that can contribute to affordable public services in water and wastewater management.

*“There needs to be improved governance on water and wastewater management and regulation and the private sector needs to be encouraged and motivated to work closely with governments in public-private partnerships so as to improve water and wastewater service and access.”* Arava Institute for Environmental Studies, Israel, Non-Governmental Organization

Stakeholders noted that support for a **long-term agenda of strengthening WASH systems** is needed. Increased **training and capacity** building, including in technical and administrative operational management, could lead to transformative actions.

*“... call upon governments and international organizations to provide strong policies that shall influence communities to take ownership of their water and sanitation facilities by increasing capacity-building and technology transfer to the communities as this shall scale up efforts to provide safe, clean, accessible and affordable drinking water to the communities.”* Hygiene Village Project, Malawi, Non-Governmental Organization

## Stakeholder actions and collaborations needed to achieve "Water for Health"

Investing in **innovative technologies**, as well as in innovation and knowledge management, was suggested as a key action to be taken by stakeholders. Through **multi-stakeholder dialogues and co-creation processes** by industries covering the full value chain of water, new multi-stakeholder partnerships and initiatives can be built. The critical assistance of development institutions and UN organizations, such as UN-Water, was mentioned by multiple stakeholders.

Stakeholders shared that **capacity building and training of local actors** is essential to enhance monitoring and evaluation exercises, including water quality surveillance, to be done by communities themselves.

*“Establish water purification systems with parallel replenishment and reuse streams. The government, communities and research and academia play a role in developing an enabling landscape for improving water access and enhancing WASH infrastructure. This is underpinned by behavioral transformation that can be achieved through community engagement.”* WWF Pakistan, Pakistan, Non-Governmental Organization

Stakeholders recommended establishing **comprehensive educative courses** to raise awareness on how to combat poor WASH conditions in households. The use of traditional media, and in particular social media, were noted as ways of informing citizens on the importance of safe drinking water, hygiene and sanitation.

*“Education in the form of training and sensitization programs to create awareness among the population on the use and integrated management of water resources. Investing in hygiene and sanitation knowledge sharing and creating networks and partnership for information and best practices exchange.”* NEHELP, Cameroon, Non-Governmental Organization

Investment in inter- and transdisciplinary **research & development (R&D)** was broadly referred throughout the online consultation. Stakeholders noted that it is critical to share research on water and health through global knowledge exchange, including on topics like the state of water distribution systems and mineralization processes. **A change in data collection practices** as well as data sharing systems was mentioned as a valuable action to achieve “Water for Health”.



## Water Action Example

**Toilet Board Coalition, Switzerland, Non-Governmental Organization:** “The Toilet Board Coalition is the most successful convener of sanitation economy private sector voices and proven in strengthening and growing local service providers to meet the needs of low-income populations without sanitation products and services.”

It was also recommended that stakeholders should cooperate to find new **funding partners**, especially along the entire sanitation service chain. Stakeholders identified that sanitation should be addressed as part of locally delivered services, broader development programs and health policies.

*“The health sector should fulfill core functions to ensure safe sanitation to protect public health.”*  
**Women's Health and Education Center (WHEC), United States, Non-Governmental Organization**

Stakeholders recognized that women and girls are the majority of health service users and health workers, and therefore their needs, including sustainable menstrual products, should be prioritized through **special programs for women and girls**.

*“Educating women to have uniform voices to achieve women's right to water and access to health facilities. Amplify the women's voices on water access, and health delivery, and make recommendations to the government on issues. Organizing training for women in communities to be key actors in decision-making.”* African Women Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Network (AWWASHNet), Nigeria, Non-Governmental Organization



## Water Action Example

**Republican Public Organization "Young generation of Tajikistan", Tajikistan, Non-Governmental Organization:** “Our organization started implementation of 3 years project “Child Friendly Schools & Communities in Ferghana Valley” in two regions within 10 rural schools. The main component of this project is WASH. Within this component [the] organization strikes to improve the situation on diseases related to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene not only in ten schools, but in ten medical centers of its target regions.”





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PROPOSED INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE THEME 2

# **Water for Development: Valuing water, water-energy-food nexus and sustainable economic and urban development**

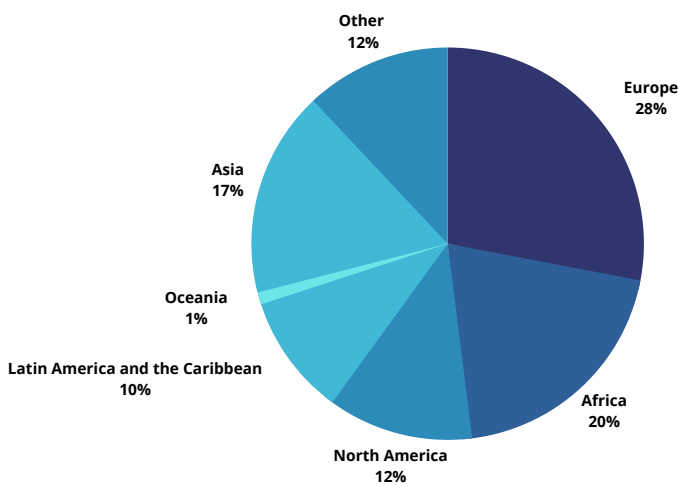




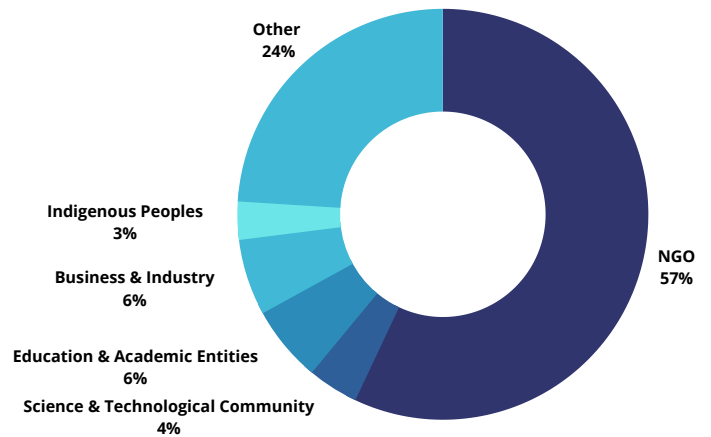
# Proposed Theme 2: Water for Development: Valuing water, water-energy-food nexus and sustainable economic and urban development

A total of **145 inputs** were received from stakeholders on the open, online form for Proposed Theme 2: "Water for Development". All inputs are available [here](#).

Stakeholders representing a wide range of **sectors** submitted inputs with the following distribution: *Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)* - 57%, *Business and Industry* - 6%, *Education and Academic Entities*



Distribution of submissions per region. Source: UN DESA



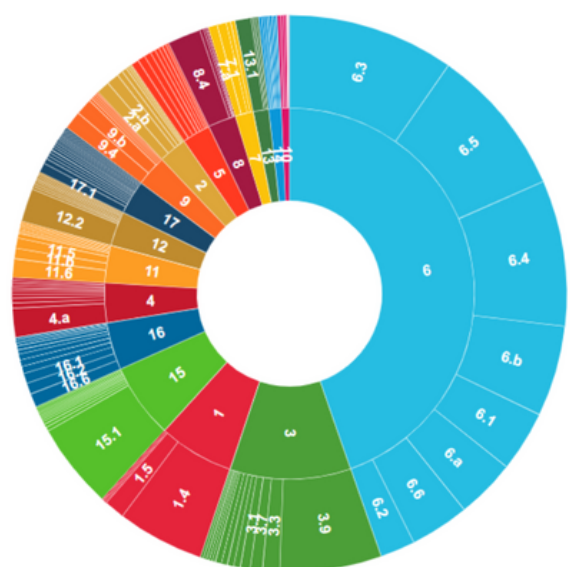
Distribution of submissions per sector. Source: UN DESA

Inputs to this form were received from all **regions** of the world with the following distribution: Europe - 28%, Africa - 20%, Asia - 17%, North America - 12%, Latin America and the Caribbean - 10%, Oceania - 1% and other - 12%.

- 6%, *Science and Technological Community* - 4%, *Indigenous Peoples* - 3% and other stakeholders active in areas related to sustainable development - 24%.



Word cloud based on inputs to proposed theme 2 - Water for Development (created by [LinkedSDGs](#))



Reflection of linkages to most relevant SDGs and targets based on inputs on proposed theme 2 - Water for Development (created by [LinkedSDGs](#))

## Important challenges and shortcomings that hinder progress for "Water for Development"

One of the most important challenges that hinder progress for "Water for Development" is the **financing gap** in the investment of water related sectors. Stakeholders called for a mobilization of **private investment** to complement public funding in this area. In addition, the "**underpricing**" or "**under-valued price of water**" was emphasized by multiple stakeholders as a shortcoming.

*"The financing gap is the most important challenge. Public funding alone will not be enough to fill this gap, the mobilization of private investment is required. The UN 2023 Water Conference should focus on solutions to mobilize more private investment."* Convergence Blended Finance, Canada, Non-Governmental Organization

Another challenge mentioned by stakeholders was **inefficient water governance**, including but not limited to the lack of clarity over water management authorities and the lack of holistic and coherent system approaches in water management. Stakeholders also pointed to corruption, inadequate legal frameworks and governance gaps as challenges.

*"The main challenge is to develop an understanding in all sectors of the true value of water and the implications of poor water*

*management. Indigenous Peoples should be invited to teach about how they have achieved good results over the centuries."* Pawanka Fund, Nicaragua, Indigenous Organization

Stakeholders expressed concerns over the increasing negative impacts caused by **population growth, especially in urban areas**, which leads to land degradation and increased waste disposal in water bodies. Furthermore, stakeholders pointed out that, due to **inefficient wastewater management** and the **lack of adequate wastewater treatment facilities**, the situation becomes worrisome in many urban areas in developing countries. In rural areas, **water scarcity caused by agriculture**, which increases global freshwater withdrawals, was spotlighted by many stakeholders as a challenge. In addition, **environmental pollution, water contamination** and **deforestation** were also identified by stakeholders as challenges for water resources, which could hinder sustainable food production, food security and consequently sustainable economic development.



### Water Action Example

**Solidaridad Network, India, Non-Governmental Organization:** Solidaridad Network in Asia has extensively worked in Agri-water space, which has resulted in saving of about 500 billion liters of water savings in last 8 years. The learnings indicate that unless water is valued and paid, there cannot be an amplified movement. To do so, Solidaridad has adopted water valuation method to determine water credits. Its constituted expert group aims to deliver Agri-water standard & certification system, which is credible, and market accepted by June 2023."

Stakeholders reminded that in many countries, **inaccuracy or lack of relevant data** posed a challenge for policy makers. For instance, multiple stakeholders shared that there are limited, or no statistics related to existing water reserves in some African countries. In addition, stakeholders also noted the **unequal access to new technologies** in water management among different countries.

Several stakeholders mentioned **inadequate awareness** and **insufficient training or education** on the value of water, as well as **limited expertise and resources for capacity building** on water management in some regions.

*"It is still a pending task that everyone understands the value of water (not the price) as it happens with energy. Everyone understands that without energy nothing happens but is exactly the same with water. Without water there is no economic development, no food to feed an increased population, no green areas in many cities/regions, no well-preserved ecosystems, etc..."* Bioazul SI, Spain, Business & Industry

## Transformative actions to accelerate progress for "Water for Development"

Stakeholders emphasized that **transformative actions** to accelerate progress in achieving "Water for Development" should be **led by governments** who should be held accountable to **review and reform legal framework protecting water ecosystems**.

Governments of developed countries should be encouraged to strengthen **their commitments to developing countries** with increased financial aid and capacity development support.

*"Governments must improve legal measures to protect water sources through ending pollution at the source, in particular from industrial and extractive activities, from transport, shipping, the military and waste management, in line with the BRS, UNFCCC and Biodiversity Conventions and the 2030 Agenda."* Womenvai, Portugal, Non-Governmental Organization

To address the financial gap, many stakeholders stressed that **structural, innovative and sustainable financing** on water is crucial. Stakeholders called for transition to more **water resilient and nature positive agricultural economic models**, with a holistic approach focusing on the water-energy-food nexus.

*"At country level and in national budgets, set bigger priorities for developing access to performing Water and Sanitation services, in a broader discussion with allocation of resources (financial and natural). Governments to focus on nexus approach water-energy-food-health-development in a holistic matter."* AquaFed - The International Federation of Private Water Operators, Belgium, Business & Industry



## Water Action Example

**University for Development Studies, Ghana, Education & Academic Entities:** In Corona era, the faculty of sustainable development collaborated with NGOs and UNILEVER to campaign for the use of water in schools for hand washing; with plastic waste technology; WACWISA collaborated with World Bank, sustainable water management networks, and others to provide education and research in water resources and management; irrigation; water conservation; and an international training program on DSSAT for assessing environmental sustainability in agriculture."

Stakeholders emphasized the increasing demand for **multi-sectoral, multidisciplinary, and innovative partnerships** to overcome water challenges. Such partnerships should be as **inclusive** as possible and encourage exchanges among different groups to ensure the **participation of the most vulnerable communities**. It was highlighted that civil society organizations should be treated as **implementation partners** to governments, rather than social contractors.

*“Water has to be revalued and wastewater treatment has to be promoted for the valuation and use of the by-products that can be generated. In addition, it is necessary to work with specialized institutions to collect data and train personnel in charge of water issues in governments. These actions should be carried out under the quadruple helix: private, public, academia and civil society.”* The Millennials Movement, Peru, Non-Governmental Organization

Stakeholders also called for attention to the interlinkages between SDG 6 and other SDGs, and pointed out that ensuring **food security** and the **sustainable use of water** need to go hand in hand, both in policy and practice, to achieve “Water for Development”.

*“Governments/policy makers/leaders need to see SDG 6 as fundamental to achieving all other SDGs and view water and sanitation as a vehicle for a thriving community.”* World Youth Parliament for Water, United States, Children & Youth

## Stakeholder actions and collaborations needed for "Water for Development"

Stakeholders highlighted the importance of **raising awareness** on the true value of water and recognized their critical role in supporting outreach. Stakeholders also emphasized actions to **disseminate data and information**, to **create knowledge products** on the value of water, and help the broader population to understand how **sustainable water management is linked to economic development**.

*“... raise awareness and supports understanding groundwater by disseminating data and information and creating knowledge products. It works with national governments and regional institutions to create an enabling environment for groundwater management through improving, developing and harmonizing policy and legal and regulatory frameworks.”* SADC-GMI, South Africa, Regional Economic Community Institution

Many stakeholders emphasized the increasing demand for **technology transfer**, and the need to make clean technologies available to marginalized groups. Related to this, stakeholders pointed out that **promoting and enhancing the traditional techniques of indigenous peoples and local communities** could also contribute to the achievement of “Water for Development”.



### Water Action Example

**Global Alliance for the Future of Food, Bolivia, Private Philanthropic Organizations:** “The Global Alliance itself has a team working on aquatic-terrestrial food health. SEKEM is a great example of a holistic agricultural initiative that has succeeded in greening the desert in Egypt.”

*“The International Rainwater Harvesting Alliance (IRHA) partners with its alliance members around the world to demonstrate proof of concept and show the utility of rainwater harvesting for life and livelihood, rural and urban. Advocacy and promotion at national level, and policy advice and collaboration with FAO, universities and the private water sector are triggered by IRHA and its partners.”* International Rainwater Harvesting Alliance, The Netherlands, Non-Governmental Organization

Stakeholders also advocated for **open access to data and information** on water resources, in order to improve groundwater monitoring at national and local levels. Stakeholders were committed to **bridge the gap** between local communities, political leaders and technical experts and called for **inclusive global information sharing infrastructures** to empower both researchers and local communities in the search for **evidence-based solutions** for sustainable development.

*“AWC contributes to helping developing countries discover and receive financial support for water development projects on their own through water projects in cooperation with MDBs. Through this, we will strengthen international partnerships and promote national innovative growth by activating the water industry ecosystem.”* Asia Water Council, Republic of Korea, Non-Governmental Organization

Stakeholders pointed out that **multi-stakeholder mechanisms** should be further strengthened at all levels to enhance international cooperation, bridge the financial gap, inspire innovative collaborations, and share best practices from across the globe. Some stakeholders further stressed that multi-stakeholder partnerships and platforms were essential to **empower and mobilize youth and children**, and to engage youth in the dialogues that would affect their future.

*“We can contribute robust scientific evidence on water and non-water related systems transformations that can support SDG targets, as well as contribute the means to achieve these*

*transformations. We can root this evidence in partnerships with research institutions across the Global South and, in developing this evidence base, combine many social & physical science disciplines to support local capacity development, especially the inclusion and training of young scientists...”* International Water Management Institute, Ethiopia, Science & Technological Community





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PROPOSED INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE THEME 3

# **Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment: Source to sea, biodiversity, climate, resilience and disaster risk reduction**

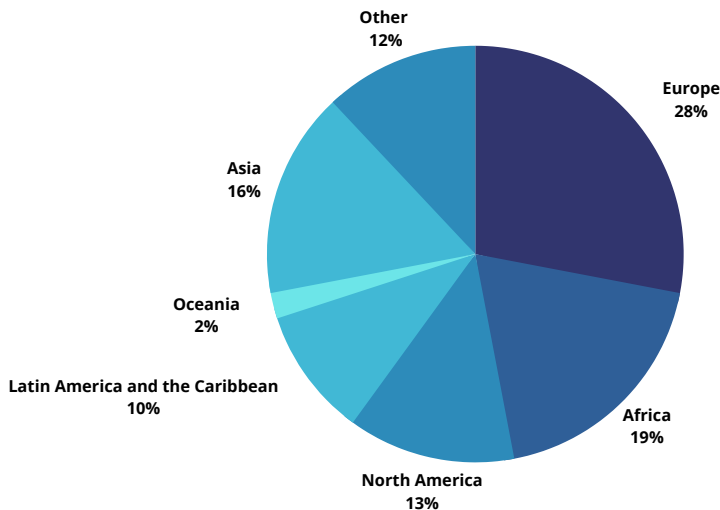




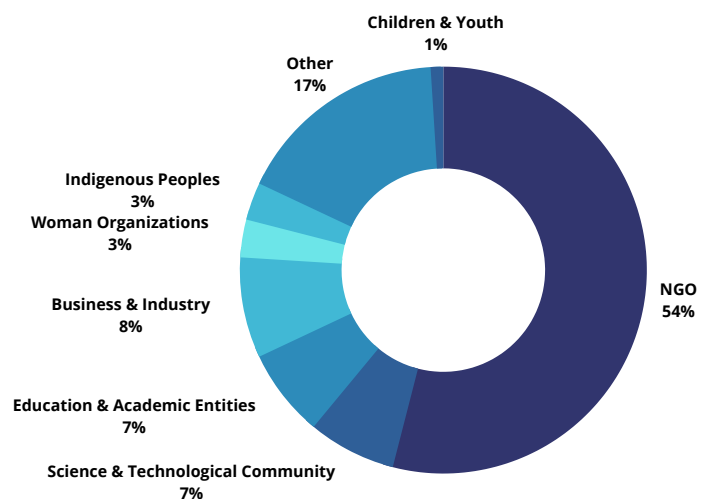
# Proposed Theme 3: Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment: Source to Sea, biodiversity, climate resilience and disaster risk reduction

A total of **181 inputs** were received from stakeholders on the open, online form for Proposed Theme 3: “Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment”. All inputs are available [here](#).

Stakeholders representing a wide range of **sectors** submitted inputs with the following distribution: *Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) - 54%, Business and Industry - 8%, Education and Academic Entities*



Distribution of submissions per region. Source: UN DESA



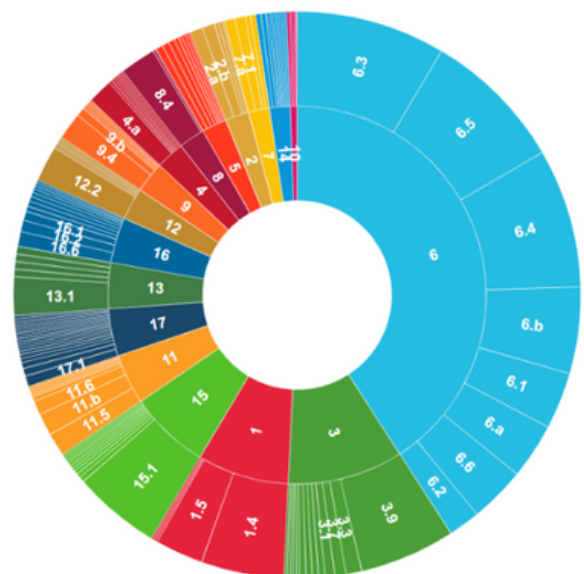
Distribution of submissions per sector. Source: UN DESA

Inputs to this form were received from all **regions** of the world with the following distribution: Europe - 28%, Africa - 19%, Asia - 16%, North America - 13%, Latin America and the Caribbean - 10%, Oceania - 2% and other - 12%.

- 7%, *Science and Technological Community* - 7%, *Indigenous Peoples* - 3%, *Women Organizations* - 3%, *Children and Youth* - 1%, and other stakeholders active in areas related to sustainable development - 17%.



Word cloud based on inputs to proposed theme 3 - Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment (created by [LinkedSDGs](#))



Reflection of linkages to most relevant SDGs and targets based on inputs on proposed theme 3 - Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment (created by [LinkedSDGs](#))

## Important challenges and shortcomings that hinder progress for "Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment"

Stakeholders pointed to **climate change** as a leading challenge impacting both water quality and availability. Climate change is **altering weather patterns and raising sea levels**, leading to increased disasters such as droughts and flooding. Increased droughts are reducing the availability of water, especially in arid regions. At the same time, floods are becoming more frequent and intense, causing contamination of available water as well as increasing the risk of waterborne diseases. The UN 2023 Water Conference should **address the effects of climate change on water availability and quality**. The Conference should prioritize leaving no one behind, as marginalized communities are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of disasters.

*"These [poor] communities have little or no experience in preparing for and responding to events such as irregular rainfall causing floods or droughts and intensified and uncontrolled urbanization. It is the combination of their exposure to the climate-related risks and their lack of organization, experience, and skills that makes them extremely vulnerable."* REACHOUTSALONE, Sierra Leone, Non-Governmental Organization

A lack of **accurate, accessible and updated data** regarding water, new weather patterns and

impacts was highlighted as a concern by stakeholders. Stakeholders noted that there is very little data about the quantity of water being stored in groundwater, surface water and lentic sources. Compounding this, there is little data covering the emerging weather patterns and the impacts they will have on water availability and quality. Additionally, stakeholders provided that the available data is not easily accessible.

*"There is an urgent call to make the invisible visible when it comes to water resources. This can only be done with more reliable data, shared more widely."* Akvo, Burkina Faso, Non-Governmental Organization

Stakeholders pointed to **consistent groundwater exploitation** as a major challenge. Groundwater is being extracted at high rates, quickly depleting a source of water for many populations. Groundwater extraction and use is increasing as rainfall patterns change and reduce the availability of other sources, such as surface water. In addition, a lack of proper infrastructure and planning is leading to **contamination of groundwater**.

Reduced value of **ecosystem health** is mentioned as an obstacle to progress "Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment". Ecosystem health is a key factor in safeguarding the water supply and a key element for public policies.



### Water Action Example

#### **Grace Communications Foundation, United States, Private Philanthropic Organization:**

We raise awareness about water use among teachers and students with the tools and info at [www.watercalculator.org](http://www.watercalculator.org) using water footprints and the food-energy-water nexus. Over 3.7 million users have completed the [Water Footprint Calculator](#). We also engage with civil society and governments through "partnerships" with groups like Turning Green Project Green Challenge and interactions with entities like the New York City Department of Environmental Protection on their Climate Education Module."

A lack of **access and accountability of funding** was highlighted as hindering progress especially in the Global South and least developed countries. Stakeholders emphasized the need for **long-term funding** of climate projects that will protect both the environment and water resources. Stakeholders expressed concerns that funding and endorsement of certain water-related projects are denied for political reasons and that, when available, there are often no accountability mechanisms in place.

Stakeholders pointed to **minimal awareness** regarding the link between climate and water. Awareness is essential for reducing water use, overuse and contamination. In addition, there is little awareness of the links between water, climate and gender.

Stakeholders noted that a **lack of inclusivity** in plans and processes further hinders progress towards "Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment". Stakeholders repeatedly emphasized the **lack of indigenous peoples inclusion** in efforts to protect the environment and water, despite them being at the forefront of environmental protection.

*"Local ecosystem changes due to climate change will impact the local hydrological cycle, potentially exacerbating primary impacts. For Indigenous Peoples, this is especially concerning as climate change breaks down the long-standing relationship between communities & local animals & plants in their territories, impacting on the cultural identity and well-being of affected Indigenous Peoples. In addition, many indigenous territories include important sources of water or are important water towers."* Stockholm International Water Institute, Sweden, Non-Governmental Organization

Several submissions emphasized that large private sector corporations are not penalized for polluting water sources. This **lack of accountability for polluters** provides no incentive for the private sector to reduce water pollution and some companies may directly influence water policies, hindering stricter regulations.

Finally, stakeholders pointed to the **reduced importance placed on water** as a major challenge

and that water related issues are often not considered in climate policies and decisions. Climate fora tend to focus solely on emissions and renewable energy, while ignoring the impacts of climate on water quality and availability.

*"Water is often left out of the climate discussion. It gets a side stage at UNFCCC COP and various other climate conferences. However, water is how people experience climate change. It is absolutely central to the discussion of climate adaptation but is competing against the discussion and action around climate mitigation."* ImagineH2O, United States, Non-Governmental Organization

## **Transformative actions to accelerate progress for "Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment"**

Stakeholders highlighted the need for an **inclusive and participatory approach** to decision and policy making. Too often policies and programmes are developed and implemented in silos, drastically limiting their impact. To reach transformative action, communities and grass-roots organizations should become more involved in processes, leading to policies that are able to adapt to local contexts.

Specifically, stakeholders underscored the importance of preserving and listening to **indigenous peoples and knowledge**.

*"Transformative actions for water, climate, resilience & environment are already happening everywhere around the world. It's grassroots, locally-rooted organizations that have essential expertise and understand the needs of their communities, including feminist, women-led and Indigenous groups/organizations. Their work needs to be promoted by all stakeholders at the conference."* Association Démocratique des femmes du Maroc, Morocco, Women Organization

Stakeholders further emphasized the necessity of **following up on international commitments** through national and local policies. National and local governments must incorporate the commitments made internationally into their policies to create transformative action.

Increased longer term **availability and accountability of funding** at all levels for climate and water projects can accelerate progress in achieving “Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment”.

**Ecosystem preservation and restoration, including biodiversity preservation**, was repeatedly underscored as essential steps to increase the quality of water and protect the hydrological cycle. Parties responsible for exploitation and pollution should be held financially accountable.

*“National governments must incentivize and implement holistic management of terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine systems to prevent biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation, and exacerbation of climate change impacts. Academia and UN organizations need to invest in science, education, knowledge sharing, data, and monitoring to better understand the linkages across the source-to-sea continuum to safeguard healthy ecosystems and protect livelihoods dependent upon ecosystem services.”* Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), Sweden, Non-Governmental Organization

Stakeholders pointed to water **oriented urban planning** as a transformative action to reduce runoff, flooding and contamination.

**Increased and updated research** is needed to increase data about water availability and changing weather patterns. Water policies should be backed by scientific research, therefore more

funding must be given to research projects. Open-source data must be increased to allow WASH actors to make informed decisions. Stakeholders provided that there is not enough knowledge about how climate change affects the water cycle at all levels and that **increased research and education campaigns** are essential to teach all stakeholders about the connection between climate change and water.

*“Local, regional and national authorities need to strengthen their common understanding of the effects of climate crisis on the water cycle and provide local stakeholders with strategies to mitigate these effects. Such an understanding can be built through direct interaction with the various actors (Mayors, stakeholders, regional institutions, innovation ecosystems, the financial system) mobilized through strategic development projects.”* Circular Research Foundation, Czech Republic, Education and Academic Entity

Stakeholders underscored the importance of shifting towards **more sustainable agriculture** practices to decrease the need for water and contamination of water supplies. Agriculture can be made more efficient using alternative water sources, low water crops, saline tolerable crops and practices to reduce erosion.

**Alternative water resources** should be explored to preserve water availability and reduce further groundwater exploitation. Brackish and wastewater treatments should be further developed, improved and distributed to avoid using



## Water Action Example

**“IHE Delft Institute for Water Education, The s, Education and Academic Entity:** As part of projects under the Water and Development Partnership Programme we can provide evidence of how inter- and transdisciplinary approaches can lead to meaningful and lasting impact on the ground in various parts of the world, including new relevant knowledge and strengthened capacities on water for climate, resilience and environment.”

freshwater. Rainwater collection should be increased to avoid excessive groundwater extraction and preserve water for use during drought conditions.

## **Stakeholder actions and collaborations needed for "Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment"**

The value added by stakeholder actions and collaborations to achieve "Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment" was highlighted. Stakeholders considered **participating in community outreach and strategy** and promoting collaboration with youth, rural communities, local governments, indigenous peoples, women and community leaders as key actions to ensure that all members of communities are working towards the shared goal. Stakeholders mentioned **lobbying and advocacy efforts** as critical ways of getting involved and of holding governments accountable to their commitments.

In addition, stakeholders highlighted the importance of **knowledge sharing and peer learning**, through the provision of technical support, training, research and good practices. Furthermore, stakeholders should participate in story telling campaigns to share experiences addressing the impacts of climate change on water management. Sharing expertise across sectors can help to create multi-stakeholder partnerships towards "Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment".

*"Academia along with R&D are enablers in creating awareness drives along with aiding the government*

*and private organisations to deeply comprehend the profound issues related to rejuvenation of rivers and river water conservation."* Panjab University Chandigarh, India, Education and Academic Entity

**Awareness raising** was recognized as an essential action to be taken by stakeholders. Education campaigns and initiatives on the nexus between water and climate can inspire action among communities. Suggestions for awareness raising campaigns included hosting workshops in building resilience, public river clean ups and recycling activities. **Inspiring others to take action** was highlighted as an essential action stakeholders can take.

*"Creating global awareness about the "Water for Climate, Resilience, and Environment" initiative in public spheres, policy debates, as well as media and cultural sectors, with a view to inspiring long-term public and private investment."* Global Environmental and Climate Conservation Initiative (GECCI), Nigeria, Non-Governmental Organization



## **Water Action Example**

**Citizenship and Sustainable Development Association (ACDD), Tunisia, Non-Governmental Organization:** "ACDD has developed in the peri-urban oases of southern Tunisia experiences in the treatment and valorization of urban wastewater and drainage water. ACDD has received in 2019 an international award on this subject."





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PROPOSED INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE THEME 4

# **Water for Cooperation: Transboundary and international water cooperation, cross-sectoral cooperation and water across the 2030 Agenda**





## Important challenges and shortcomings that hinder progress for “Water for Cooperation”

Stakeholders identified a variety of challenges that can affect the progress around “Water for Cooperation”, including **limited collaboration** to address the use and protection of waters at all levels through long-term regulatory frameworks. **Minimal mechanisms of implementation** affect the intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder collaboration processes. Stakeholders expressed specific concerns regarding regulation of transboundary waters.

*“A main challenge is that the management of transboundary basins has not been handled in the best way, water management must be an element of union between the countries, this issue must be discussed at the 2023 Conference and invite the voices of the Indigenous Peoples to share their best practices.”* Centro para el Desarrollo y la Autonomia de los Pueblos Indigenas (CADPI), Nicaragua, Non-Governmental Organization

Stakeholders also pointed to challenges such as population growth, migration, conflict, climate change and weak governance that hinder the benefits that cooperation on water could provide.

The lack of **participatory decision-making processes, including different stakeholders**, is recognized as a shortcoming. To reach successful collaboration, multiple sectors, including local

communities, youth, women, indigenous peoples and others, should be involved in all steps of public policymaking and implementation of international agreements. Stakeholders noted that the silos created by isolating sectors could intensify existing challenges.

Stakeholders identified **unclear power dynamics, competing political agendas and geopolitical conflicts** as additional challenges hindering progress towards “Water for Cooperation”. These challenges add to the **lack of transparency** while short-term political incentives downplay the importance of water.

*“Geopolitical conflict and tensions. Water issues suffer from lack of visibility, transparency and collaboration in international processes. Lack of global frameworks and cooperation initiatives bringing in multiple stakeholders. Economic differences and geographic inequity when it come to the contribution to and impact of water risks.”* Franklin Templeton, Poland, Business & Industry

**Limited, inefficient funding and lack of commitment** for its proper management were other challenges identified that prevent the advancement on “Water for Cooperation”. Stakeholders identified weak cross-sectoral, integrated workstreams and a **lack of formal coordination mechanisms** as challenges.

Finally, stakeholders considered that progress towards “Water for Cooperation” has slowed down in the last decades, while the **perception of water**



### Water Action Example

**Upstream Tech, United States, Business & Industry:** “Our partnership with the World Wildlife Fund and Microsoft helped deliver data on river basins fall within the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA). Upstream Tech’s theory-guided machine learning model provided historical ungauged streamflow records at key locations in the Kwando and Upper Zambezi basins. Please see [here](#).”

as a **privilege or commodity** has amplified, thus increasing the challenge of water scarcity for marginalized populations and further impeding their ability for resilience and adaptation.

## **Transformative actions to accelerate progress in achieving “Water for Cooperation”**

Multiple stakeholders stated that in order to progress in achieving “Water for Cooperation”, water must be embraced as a **human right** and not perceived as a commodity. Stakeholders agreed that all sectors should provide a **collaborative response** to address water security challenges, such as water and justice, promoting equity and social inclusion in public policies.

*“Most efforts should come from policy makers at the national, not necessary water but economy, environment and other relevant stakeholders. Most important transformations should come in valuing of the water as not a product but rather an important factor for environment, economy and social development.” CAREC Institute, Uzbekistan, Other stakeholders active in areas related to sustainable development*

Stakeholders pointed to the need of **concrete commitments** at the UN 2023 Water Conference and for **multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral dialogues and mobilization** efforts at all levels to be promoted. Stakeholders noted that cooperation, accompanied by technical support, can reduce conflict over transboundary waters and accelerate progress towards “Water for Cooperation”.

Stakeholders shared that different actors, including local authorities, civil society and youth, should lead transformative actions. Stakeholders spotlighted the **power of local action**, and specifically called for a strengthened role of local and regional governments in decision-making processes.

*“We wish to be inclusive and represent the water sector in total. However, we need to prevent inclusion in separate groups. Thus, youth talk to youth, sanitation to sanitation. Mixing different*

*ages, cultural backgrounds and perspectives will make the UN 2023 Water Conference the most inclusive of all.” Wavemakers United, The Netherlands, Non-Governmental Organization*

Stakeholders underscored the importance of **accountability and transparency** in water governance as essential for “Water for Cooperation”. Tackling corruption and political agendas, mapping stakeholder interests and strengthening the rule of law were emphasized as transformative actions to be undertaken. Additionally, stakeholders underscored that **water must be included in trade regulations** to achieve water justice.

Sharing **innovative technologies**, increasing accurate data and promoting the role of researching institutions were mentioned as transformative actions. Furthermore, capacity building and experience and knowledge exchange within local communities should be considered in long-term plans towards “Water for Cooperation”.

*“The collaborative power and reach of governments, businesses, finance and civil society can transform global supply chains by putting water at the heart of trade, purchasing and investment decisions that connect the global north and south so that our water footprints drive a more just and resilient future. The Glasgow Declaration for Fair Water Footprints is leading this work through the bold leadership of 26 Signatories. We aim to double this by UN Water 2023.” Chatham House, United Kingdom, Non-Governmental Organization*

## **Stakeholder actions and collaborations needed to achieve “Water for Cooperation”**

Stakeholders shared several actions needed to achieve “Water for Cooperation” as well as their interest in supporting the organization of multistakeholder dialogues, bringing those previously left behind at key water-decision making tables, such as young people, girls and indigenous communities.

*“The Asia-Pacific Water Forum (APWF) can be the core of the collaboration platform to work with various water organizations and other sectors to tackle various water security challenges, including the five themes of the UN-Water Conferences, particularly in Asia and the Pacific. By collecting the practices, and recommendations of the Asia-Pacific stakeholders, we can also collaborate with the other regions' stakeholders to tackle globally common water-related development challenges.”* APWF Secretariat c/o Japan Water Forum, Japan, Non-Governmental Organization

In addition, stakeholders stressed their support to localizing the outcomes of the Conference by working with local groups and networks. Moreover, they shared their expertise and willingness to connect with national policymakers, decision-makers and other stakeholders such as academia and the private sector to promote the management of knowledge and gender responsive efforts through the development of public policies for “Water for Cooperation” in diverse contexts.

*“AIDA can contribute in synergy with IGOs (OECD, UNESCO, UNECE) to exposing national policymakers, decision-makers and lawmakers to the legal and institutional principles that inform cooperation regarding transboundary rivers, lakes and aquifers, and in parallel to advancing the debate on such principles for uptake by governments in negotiations with neighboring States.”* International Association for Water Law (AIDA), Italy, Non-Governmental Organization

Stakeholders showed interest in collaborating on transboundary aquifers and shared water systems, through **awareness campaigns** on the specific challenges surrounding shared water sources. Additionally, stakeholders supported actions advocating for open access groundwater data policies and transboundary groundwater resilience.

*“In the Community of Women in Water we have experience in managing binational basins such as the Puyango Tumbes basin between Ecuador and Peru or the Río Bravo basin between Mexico and the US.”* Paziflora, Argentina, Women Organization

Stakeholders indicated their interest in bridging the gaps within the science-policy-practice interface to influence sound decision-making based on scientific knowledge and evidence.

Stakeholders expressed that working with **researchers and other stakeholders, such as students**, supports the development of truly inclusive transformative paths and global data sharing infrastructures that empower stakeholders to take **evidence-based action**.

Finally, stakeholders pointed out their capacities to support advocacy and awareness initiatives on key topics and relevant international frameworks towards “Water for Cooperation”. Stakeholders recognized the importance of **amplifying people’s voices** at the global level and supporting their inclusion in key water related international decision-making spaces.



## Water Action Example

**Cap-Net, South Africa, Intergovernmental Organization:** “In Argentina, Kazakhstan and Kenya substantial progress was made in encouraging and promoting the integration of environmental data within relevant decision-making processes in partnership with UNEP and GWP. Across 18 countries (16 countries in Africa, China and Bangladesh), targeted trainings led to the adoption of revolutionary international non-sewered Sanitation Standards. In partnership with American National Standards Association”.



*“Advocate that the international community recognize and guarantee the right of participation of NGOs and local actors in the negotiations and development of international water and sanitation policies and systematically include water as a specific segment in the agenda of international conferences that deal with water-related issues.”*  
CAREC Institute, Mexico, Non-Governmental Organization



## Water Action Example

**Deltares, The Netherlands, Knowledge Institute:** “The Water, Peace and Security Partnership is a cooperation amongst different sectors (e.g. water and security) and organisations. WPS Partnership also partnered with other similar ongoing initiatives, in order to reinforce each other instead of working on parallel processes. The Source-to-Sea Platform is also a good example of international collaboration to connect fresh and salt water.”





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PROPOSED INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE THEME 5

# **Water Action Decade: Accelerating the implementation of the objectives of the Decade, including through the UN Secretary-General's Action Plan**

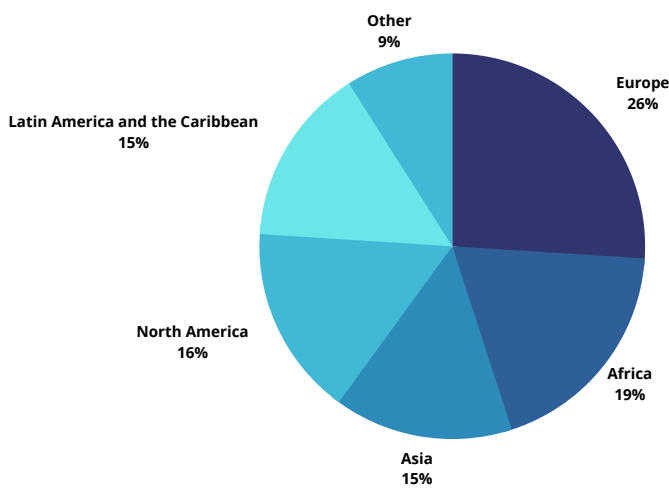




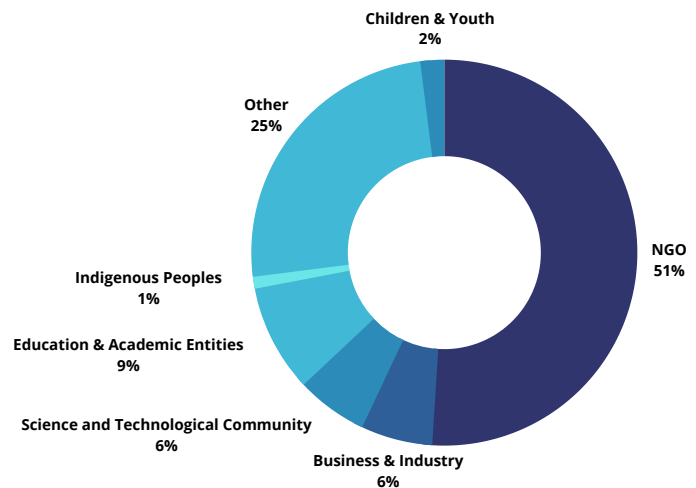
# Proposed Theme 5: Water Action Decade: Accelerating the implementation of the objectives of the Decade including through the UN SG’s Action Plan

A total of **81 inputs** were received from stakeholders on the open, online form for Proposed Theme 5 – “Water Action Decade”. All inputs are available [here](#).

Stakeholders representing a wide range of **sectors** submitted inputs with the following distribution: *Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) - 51%, Education and Academic Entities - 9%,*



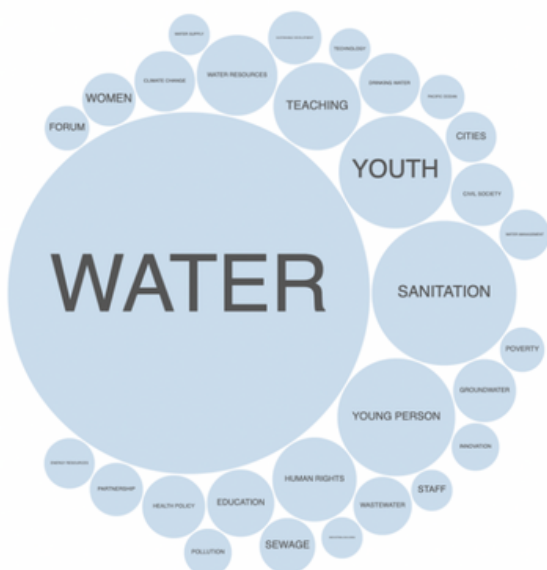
Distribution of submissions per region. Source: UN DESA



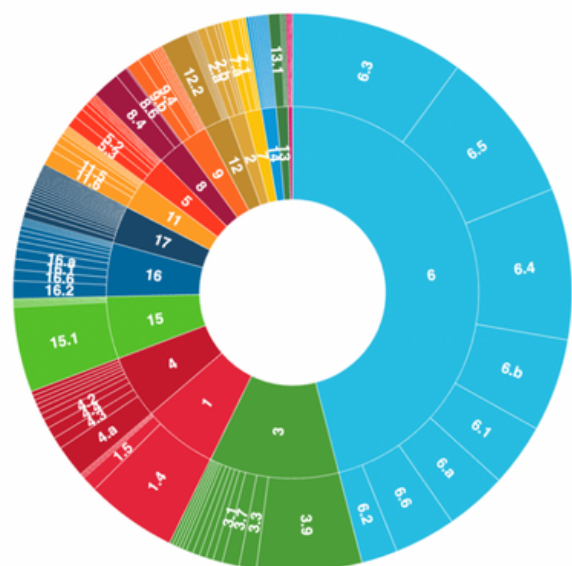
Distribution of submissions per sector. Source: UN DESA

Inputs to this form were received from all **regions** of the world with the following distribution: Europe - 26%, Africa - 19%, North America - 16% , Latin America and the Caribbean - 15%, Asia - 15%, and Other - 9%.

*Business and Industry - 6%, Science and Technological Community - 6%, Children and Youth - 2%, , Indigenous Peoples - 1%, and other stakeholders active in areas related to sustainable development - 25%.*



Word cloud based on inputs to proposed theme 5 - Water Action Decade (created by [LinkedSDGs](#))



Reflection of linkages to most relevant SDGs and targets based on inputs on proposed theme 5 - Water Action Decade (created by [LinkedSDGs](#))

## Important challenges and shortcomings that hinder progress for the "Water Action Decade"

Stakeholders noted that the Conference would mark the **halfway point** for the Water Action Decade and that in considering the interlinkages, discussions should focus not only on the objectives of the Decade but also on achieving all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

When reviewing the current progress of the Water Action Decade, stakeholders described a time of **several shocks**, due to droughts, floods, challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic and the deepening climate emergency. Stakeholders expressed concern that there has been a disconnect between water for domestic needs, including Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and water resource management (WRM).

*"Lack of mandatory policy on watershed health protection for organisations to think beyond operational management especially in water-stressed areas."* Heineken, The Netherlands, Business & Industry

With regards to the SDGs, stakeholders specifically highlighted the challenge of implementing SDG 6 for the **world's rural population**, especially in Africa and Latin America.

*"About 2 billion people lack safely managed drinking water and 3.6 billion lack safely managed sanitation. If nothing changes, the world will not have enough water to meet demand by 2030."*

*Federacion Nacional de Cooperativas de Servicios Sanitarios Rurales (FESAN), Chile, Rural Cooperative Organization*

Stakeholders noted **delays in strengthening cooperation and collaboration** among various sectors and positions in various fields, levels, and regions as main constraints on the implementation of the Water Action Decade. Multiple stakeholders raised the expectation that the UN 2023 Water Conference and several other discussions within the UN would address those challenges.

*"Today, one-fourth of the world's land base outside of Antarctica is overseen by Indigenous Peoples who protect 80% of the world's richest and rarest biodiversity across land and water. Yet, Indigenous Peoples and youth are largely excluded from UN fora and dialogues on water. The greatest challenge to the UN Water Action Decade is the exclusion of Indigenous Peoples..."* Mni Ki Wakan (Water is Sacred), United States, Indigenous Organization

Stakeholders enumerated various challenges and shortcomings towards 2028, including **inadequate funding, limited awareness campaigns** and the challenge of transitioning from unsustainable, centralized and high-capital water and wastewater systems to sustainable, affordable and decentralized systems.

A recurrent concern was the **risk of private sector involvement** in the provision of water and sanitation services, given the influence exercised by multinational companies and investors on a larger amount of the world's water use.



## Water Action Example

**Superintendencia Nacional de Servicios de Saneamiento (SUNASS), Peru, Non-Governmental Organization:** "In 2020, Sunass implemented the "Participate, neighbor!" program, a space for dialogue and public participation regarding their problems with their drinking water and sewerage services. To date, 780 micro-hearings have been held for the benefit of 297,000 families." \*Translated from Spanish.



*"Only when the private sector values, appreciates and manages water appropriately will we achieve the transformation we so desperately need." CDP, Germany, Non-Governmental Organization*

## Transformative actions to accelerate progress in achieving the "Water Action Decade"

Future action during the Water Action Decade will need to consider forms of **intergenerational collaboration**, namely **engagement and participation of young people**, to ensure a broad and plural debate between generations. Youth called to be equitably involved in the decision-making process, for youth policies to be established and to have access to inventories of water policies to measure the added value of local action projects.

Stakeholders also called for the **participation of indigenous peoples** in UN forums and dialogues on Water, especially considering their role in protecting biodiversity across land and water. Decision makers should also strengthen the **engagement of the science and technological community** as well as interdisciplinary approaches to raise awareness and exchange knowledge.

*"Decision-makers have to: 1. Listen to the science. Not only science for the future, but also science from the past 2. Including everyone as part of important tools for change." ICOMOS International Committee on the Underwater Cultural Heritage, United Kingdom, Non-Governmental Organization*

Multiple stakeholders also addressed the importance of appointing a UN Secretary-General

Special Envoy for Water who could ultimately lead on accelerating progress towards achieving the Water Action Decade. Relating to monitoring, stakeholders recommended governments to present **annual progress reports** on the Water Action Decade goals. Stakeholders also called for water to become a top priority in the sustainable development agenda and for investments in the water sector to become a **pre-condition for financing for other sectors**.

*"There is a need for a systemic approach to the water sector in terms of agency alignment between the global north and south, innovative financing mechanisms which stimulate integrated efforts between WASH and water use in food systems and between public and private sector actors and targeted scientific efforts in bridging the knowledge gaps actors have in implementing water actions. Both science and financing should be targeted at localization and customization of integrated action across scales." International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Bangladesh, Science and Technological Community*

## Stakeholder actions and collaborations needed to achieve the "Water Action Decade"

Stakeholders noted that **enhanced education and training programs** on sustainable development are needed to achieve global awareness of the "Water Action Decade". Such programs should promote knowledge management and data, as well as multi-stakeholder engagement, including grassroots organizations and local communities.



### Water Action Example

**The African Youth Parliament for Water, Children & Youth:** "The African Youth Parliament is all about bringing organisations together to harmonise local action and policy. 20 local youth parliaments have already been established so far, and most of them are officially recognised by their local governments."

Additionally, the **mobilization of youth and volunteers** was reported as an action to be taken by stakeholders. Stakeholders specifically highlighted the successful model of local youth parliaments and called to promote more **intergenerational engagement** during the Water Action Decade.

*"In water fora, there is a special need of "creating safe spaces for unsafe conversations." Foro Confluencia Solidaria, Costa Rica, Water Justice Movements*

Stakeholders also stressed the importance of the **interlinked nature of the SDGs**, with a specific focus on SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), SDG 2 (zero hunger) and SDG 13 (climate action). There were calls for stakeholders to work together in **improving climate literacy** in all sectors of the workforce, including for women and indigenous peoples.

Another action needed to achieve the Water Action Decade flagged in the consultation was **training and capacity development in water management**, including technical and operational aspects. Stakeholders also noted that it is critical to ensure sustainable operation over time with a continuous service with fair rates.

Specific attention was given to the importance of water resource management. Stakeholders recommended water resources to be managed by local communities, and therefore called for the **empowerment of local actors in integrated and holistic ways**, while providing them with technical and managerial skills.

*The Water Action Decade needs to have a universal agenda part of the Sustainable Development Agenda and EU Water Framework Directive, aiming to achieve the human right to safe water and sanitation, therefore the UN Human Rights Commission and UNEP need to play a key role, as well as civil society, feminist and human rights organisations." Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF), Germany, Non-Governmental Organization*



## Water Action Example

**Butterfly Effect, Canada, Non-Governmental Organization:** "The Butterfly Effect stands out for its integrated vision of the water sector, covering the entire water spectrum, not just water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) aspects. The network is also recognized for its global presence, particularly among NGOs and CSOs in some of the least developed countries. One of the strengths of the Butterfly Effect Network is its support for groups with limited voice, such as youth, indigenous peoples, and women."





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# Additional input



# Suggestions on additional topics/issues for the UN 2023 Water Conference

An additional form was opened during the consultation, to request inputs from stakeholders on additional topics/issues that could be considered as part of the UN 2023

Water Conference. A total of 75 inputs were received, and are available [here](#). A list of the main suggestions follows below.

Leaving No One Behind

Water for Culture

Water Management Policies and Strategies

The Human Right to Water

Education on Water

Economic Models for Water and Sanitation

Data for Water

Water and Gender

Water in relation to Conflict and Violence

Youth Inclusion in Water Governance

Water Science, Technology and Innovation





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