

Online at: enb.iisd.org/events/39th-un-water-meeting

Monday, 18 March 2024

Summary of the 39th UN-Water Meeting: 12-13 March 2024

The 39th UN-Water Meeting provided a platform for brainstorming how to implement the first-ever UN system-wide water and sanitation strategy. This strategy was called for in a September resolution by the UN General Assembly and follows up on the UN 2023 Water Conference, which took place in March 2023. UN-Water was assigned the responsibility for developing the collaborative implementation plan for the strategy. Deliberations during UN-Water's biennial meetings, which gather UN-Water Members and Partners to discuss how the UN can "deliver as one" in response to water- and sanitation-related challenges, will support this effort.

Participants highlighted several challenges the implementation plan should address. Among these issues is the confusion of many inside and outside the UN who think UN-Water is an agency, rather than a coordination mechanism among its Members and Partners. Speakers also highlighted the importance of better communication among UN-Water's Task Forces, which are comprised of representatives from UN-Water Members and Partners. Communication challenges with actors at the regional and national levels were also discussed with a focus on ensuring the UN system can deliver more strategic, effective support to countries. Participants supported the development of tools such as a repository of agreed text on water and sanitation within intergovernmental agreements and resolutions.

Coordination and collaboration with other international processes was also a key focus during the meeting. Among the upcoming events during which the profile of water and sanitation issues can be raised are the Summit of the Future and the One Water Summit. The latter was proposed during the UAE Climate Change Conference by the governments of France and Kazakhstan. Both events are scheduled to take place in September in New York, US. In addition, Conferences of the Parties to all three Rio Conventions (the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification) will convene in the final quarter of 2024. Participants also looked forward to the conferences on water and sanitation in 2026 and 2028. These events were called for in the same UN General Assembly resolution that called for the new strategy.

Among other items on the packed agenda were discussions on the launches of upcoming reports. The World Water Development Report, which is focused on "Water for Prosperity and Peace," will be launched on World Water Day on 22 March. The secretariat of the Global Commission on the Economics of Water will launch its report – the third such economic review of costs

related to a global environmental challenge – at the One Water Summit in September. This report follows the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change and the Dasgupta Review on the Economics of Biodiversity. A UN-Water Analytical Brief on the Water Dependencies of Climate Mitigation will be released prior to the Baku Climate Change Conference in November 2024.

The 39th UN-Water Meeting convened in Rome, Italy, from 12-13 March 2024, at the headquarters of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The meeting included an open session for UN-Water Members and Partners, as well as closed sessions on the morning of 12 March and afternoon of 13 March for UN-Water Members only. Approximately 120 UN-Water Members, Partners and observers registered to join the event, with 44 joining virtually.

A Brief History of UN-Water

While over 30 UN organizations carry out water and sanitation programmes, no single UN entity is dedicated exclusively to these issues. In 1977, the UN's Inter-Secretariat Group for Water Resources began coordinating UN activities on water. Subsequently, in 2003, the UN Administrative Coordination Committee's Subcommittee on Water Resources was transformed into UN-Water and endorsed by the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB). UN-Water plays a coordinating role within the UN to ensure the UN family "delivers as one" in response to water-related challenges.

UN-Water Meetings bring together Members and Partners (see the full list of Members and Partners at the end of this report) twice a year to carry out the mandate of informing policies, monitoring and reporting, and inspiring action on water and sanitation issues. Participants include representatives of the UN Secretariat and UN agencies, funds, programmes and other entities, multilateral environmental agreements, civil society organizations, and other organizations. Representatives from UN Member States also participate in UN-Water meetings as observers.

Initiatives: The overarching focus of UN-Water's Members and Partners is to support UN Member States to sustainably manage water and sanitation.

Efforts to inform policies focus on placing water and sanitation issues on the agenda of key UN agreements, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs. SDG 6 calls for the international community to strive to ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all by 2030.

Monitoring and reporting efforts seek to provide coherent and reliable data and information on key water trends and management issues. The [Integrated Monitoring Initiative for SDG](#)

6 (IMI-SDG 6) builds on and expands the experiences and lessons learned during implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. It aims to:

- develop methodologies and tools to monitor SDG 6 global indicators;
- raise awareness at the national and global levels regarding SDG 6 monitoring;
- enhance technical and institutional country capacity for monitoring; and
- compile country data and report on global progress on SDG 6.

Efforts to inspire action include coordination of the annual observance of World Water Day on 22 March, and World Toilet Day on 19 November. UN-Water releases the annual World Water Development Report (WWDR) on World Water Day.

Governance Structure: UN agencies, programmes, and funds with a water-related mandate are Members of UN-Water. Partners are international organizations, professional unions, associations, and other civil society groups that are actively involved in water-related issues and that have the capacity and willingness to contribute to the work of UN-Water and meet UN-Water's partnership criteria.

UN-Water Senior Programme Managers (SPMs) represent UN-Water Members. They provide the overall governance and strategic direction and constitute the highest operational decision-making body of UN-Water. UN-Water is supported in its work by its Technical Advisory Unit (TAU).

The UN-Water Chair is chosen among the UN Executive Heads after consultations within the CEB. The current Chair is Alvaro Lario, President, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The UN-Water Vice-Chair is elected among the UN-Water SPMs. The UN-Water Secretary is a senior staff member of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA).

UN-Water Report

Alvaro Lario, UN-Water Chair and President, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), opened the 39th Meeting of UN-Water and highlighted the importance of the first-ever UN system-wide strategy for water and sanitation that participants would discuss. He said the strategy aims to build a coherent and focused approach for working on water and sanitation issues within the UN system. He looked forward to participant's conversations on how to collaboratively implement the strategy working within the UN-Water family and the wider UN system.

Follow-up to UN 2023 Water Conference

This agenda item focused on UN General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution A/RES/77/334, which was titled "Follow-up to 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." This event, which took place in March 2023, was also called the UN 2023 Water Conference.

Significance for UN-Water and updates on the UN System-wide Strategy on Water and Sanitation: Madhushree Chatterjee, UN-Water Secretary and UN DESA Programme Manager, highlighted that the UNGA resolution, which was adopted in September 2023, calls for global conferences on water and sanitation to take place in 2026 and 2028. Furthermore, the resolution requests the UN Secretary-General to present a UN system-wide water and sanitation strategy before the current

session of UNGA concludes in September 2024. This strategy should seek to "enhance the coordination and delivery of water priorities across the United Nations system." Chatterjee noted the UN 2023 Water Conference did not conclude with a negotiated agreement, essentially rendering the UNGA resolution the outcome and follow-up to that conference.

During the discussion, speakers highlighted linkages between the water conferences and strategy and other UN-related processes. For example, participants were informed the sixth session of the UN Environment Assembly, which convened several weeks earlier, adopted a resolution on strengthening water policies and acknowledged that UN Environment Programme's (UNEP) strategic priorities should be aligned with the new strategy. A government representative expressed his hope that other UN governing bodies would adopt comparable decisions. Speakers also emphasized the need to overcome the current fragmentation of water policy within the UN system.

Reporting back on the results of the Water Action Agenda commitment holder survey: A key outcome of the UN 2023 Water Conference was the Water Action Agenda, which gathered voluntary commitments for action to address water and sanitation challenges. Chatterjee reported over 840 commitments had been submitted as of January 2024.

A survey of commitments was conducted at the end of 2023, with an approximately one-third response rate. Chatterjee reported most commitments were made by civil society organizations and national governments. Philanthropies and regional and local governments submitted fewer commitments. Most of the commitments were reported to be at the global scale. Only 4% of commitments reported they had been completed by the end of 2023. Chatterjee said the initiatives were generally high quality but lack financing and need assistance in upscaling. She also indicated the SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation) targets are still not well understood.

During the discussion, a speaker highlighted the value of giving actors a platform to report on their commitments, such as during the SDG 6 special event that takes place at annual meetings of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). Another speaker suggested providing benefits to commitment holders, such as a newsletter, prize to recognize progress by various commitment holders, or match making among commitment holders. Several UN-Water Members highlighted they are serious about the commitments they submitted and encouraged others to submit progress reports on their own commitments. Another speaker said the voluntary commitments are the connectors from one UN Water Conference to the next.

Upcoming events

10th World Water Forum: A representative of Indonesia informed participants that this Forum, which is scheduled for 18-24 May 2024, in Bali, Indonesia, will focus on the theme, "Water for Shared Prosperity." The agenda will include issues such as the impacts of climate change, pollution and growing demand for water. She said the event will focus on developing solutions and will conclude with a Ministerial Declaration. In addition, a center of excellence on water and climate resilience will be established following the Forum.

Several UN-Water Partners noted that those most affected by water and sanitation challenges are the least able to afford to attend such events. They stressed the need to include civil society in the proceedings. Others requested access to background documents so they could provide input to the event.

3rd High-Level International Conference on the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028: A representative of Tajikistan provided an overview of preparations for this conference, which will take place from 10-13 June 2024, in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. He noted Tajikistan is hosting biennial conferences to support the implementation of the goals and targets of the UN Water Decade. He added that the 2024 conference would contribute to the preparatory process for the UN Water Conference in 2026.

Summit of the Future: Chatterjee reported the UN Secretary-General is organizing this event, which will take place at UN Headquarters in New York, US, from 22-23 September. Representatives from Germany and Namibia are co-facilitating negotiations on the outcome document from this event, and the zero draft includes a reference to following up on the UN 2023 Water Conference.

One Water Summit: A representative from France said French President Macron and Kazak President Tokayev announced during the December 2023 meeting of the UAE Climate Change Conference that the One Water Summit would take place on the sidelines of the next high-level session of the UN General Assembly. This three-hour event, which will take place in September 2024, in New York, US, aims to be an “incubator of solutions” in preparation for the 2026 UN Water Conference. It will focus on six themes:

- Promoting transboundary water cooperation projects, especially in regions subject to strong demographic, socio-economic, and climate tensions, such as the Aral Sea basin;
- Sharing and financing the technologies needed for water management;
- Supporting local actors, in particular basin organizations;
- Supporting international law, which could include promoting ratification of the New York and Helsinki Convention but also ensuring the unacceptability of the use of water as a tool of influence in international relations;
- Promoting a “net zero water” agenda to encourage firms to become more responsible and sensitive to water issues through the development of tools, standards, and stakeholder coalitions to assess and reduce the water footprint of global value chains; and
- Scaling up the Freshwater Challenge program, which has already brought together a large number of countries in a commitment to restore 300,000 km of rivers and 350 million hectares of degraded wetlands worldwide.

During the discussion, issues such as drought and its links to land and migration as well as science and evidence-based action were highlighted as additional items to include on the agenda. Speakers also stressed the need to include rights holders and local actors in the preparations and deliberations.

Update from the Global Commission on the Economics of Water: The secretariat of the Global Commission on the Economics of Water updated participants on the Commission’s report, which will be the third such economic review of costs related to a global environmental challenge. The report follows the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change and the Dasgupta Review on the Economics of Biodiversity. The report will be launched at the One Water Summit in September.

The key messages of the report are focused on transitions and transformation. The report notes we are changing the source of freshwater, with the assumption that local and regional supplies of water are relatively stable, predictable, and manageable no longer being true. The report will highlight that:

- Green water is critical for the supply of precipitation;
- Water is a major source of interdependence among countries; and
- Water can serve as a connector across scales, geographies, sectors and global agendas.

During the discussion, a participant emphasized the links between a global right to water and the economics of water.

Global Campaigns

World Water Day 2024 and the UN World Water Development Report 2024: The UN-Water Task Force on World Water Day 2024 reported on plans for the day, which is marked annually on 22 March. In 2024, it is focused on the theme “Leveraging Water for Peace.” The “pivot event” for the Day will be held at the headquarters of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in Paris. UNESCO said the event will launch and showcase the World Water Development Report, which is focused on “Water for Prosperity and Peace,” and the report will show the UN has tools and resources to prevent conflict.

During the discussion, a UN-Water Partner emphasized the need to address the weaponization of water, which is the flip side of water and peace.

World Toilet Day 2024: The UN-Water Expert Group on Drinking-Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) introduced the proposal to have that group take over the coordination of planning for World Toilet Day, which is marked annually on 19 November.

Participants agreed to request the Expert Group on WASH to coordinate the World Toilet Day campaign 2024 and beyond, and invited the Expert Group to prepare a workplan, budget and timeline for World Toilet Day 2024.

International Year of Glaciers’ Preservation and World Water Day 2025: Representatives from the coordinators for events to mark this International Year as well as the Day updated UN-Water meeting participants on preparations. Based on consultations, the representatives from UNESCO and WMO reported four task forces have been established: Global Campaign for International Year of Glaciers’ Preservation 2025; International Conference on Glaciers’ Preservation, Regional Workshops and Capacity Building; Research and Monitoring Initiatives; and Policy Advocacy, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization.

Participants agreed to encourage UN-Water Members and Partners to actively engage in the initiatives related to the UN International Year of Glaciers’ Preservation 2025. They also reaffirmed that the UN-Water Task Force on World Water Day 2025, co-coordinated by UNESCO and WMO, would spearhead and implement the 2025 World Water Day campaign, in collaboration with the efforts undertaken for the implementation of the UN International Year of Glaciers’ Preservation.

SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework

SDG 6 Capacity Development Initiative: UNESCO reported that pilot countries for this Initiative are Panama, Costa Rica, Cuba, and Gambia. A learning platform is being established, and a mapping exercise on available capacity development resources and expertise is underway. Participants were invited to consider how to coordinate their organizations’ efforts to support countries’ needs.

Participants agreed to acknowledge the progress update on the SDG 6 Capacity Development Initiative and to request an update on its implementation at the 40th UN-Water Meeting.

Integrated Monitoring Initiative for SDG 6: The Integrative Monitoring Initiative (IMI-SDG6) reported on the results of the 2023 data drive. For most SDG indicators, the targets for the number of countries with data have been met or exceeded. Joint deliverables for 2024 will include gender contextualization, work on river basins, country acceleration case studies, and indicator reports. Joint outreach activities to launch a progress update for IMI will take place at World Water Week, the HLPF, the Summit of the Future, and the One Water Summit.

Roadmap on human rights to water and sanitation: The UN-Water Expert Group on WASH introduced this agenda item. Participants were reminded the 36th UN-Water Meeting approved the UN-Water Roadmap for the integration of human rights to water and sanitation and committed to upholding and integrating human rights in their work. Following the UN 2023 Water Conference and the celebration of 75 years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Expert Group highlighted additional opportunities have emerged for the implementation of the roadmap, including as a integral part of the implementation of the UN system-wide strategy for water and sanitation.

During the discussion, a participant suggested exploring whether countries with a right to water in their constitution are doing better on the SDGs. The need to explore the link between the right to food and the right to water was also highlighted.

Participants agreed to support the implementation of the Roadmap for the integration of human rights to water and sanitation, in the context of the UN system-wide strategy for water and sanitation. They also asked the Expert Group on WASH to conduct a mapping and produce an analysis to follow up on the Roadmap with a prioritization.

Recommendations for advancing the innovation accelerator of the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework:

Proposed work plan: The Task Force on Innovation presented the proposed two-year scope of work. They proposed four work streams: public policy for water innovation; learning from institutional setups; increasing finance; and coordination among the ecosystem of water innovation stakeholders.

The Task Force requested approval of their report and two-year scope of work, along with allocation of USD 20,000 for a UN-Water analytical brief on the enabling environment to support water innovation. Participants agreed and called for a progress update at the 40th UN-Water Meeting.

Regional Level Coordination: The Expert Group on Regional Level Coordination updated participants on the Regional Forums on Sustainable Development the five UN Regional Commissions are organizing between February and April 2024. The Expert Group encouraged UN-Water Members and Partners to engage in these regional forums, noting global messages can be conveyed through these forums to the regional and national level.

Additional regional-level activities include a publication on interactions between climate change and water resources produced by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), titled 'Navigating New Waters: Addressing Asia-Pacific's Water Challenges and Trade-offs in a Changing Climate.' During a September workshop of the UN Issue-based Coalition (IBC) on Environment and Climate Change for Europe and Central Asia, the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), as Co-Chair of the IBC, organized a half-day on water including discussions on how UN Country Teams (UNCTs) can enhance their support to the countries on water issues.

Country Level Engagement: The Task Force on Country Level Engagement reviewed its mandate to work to reinforce

Resident Coordinators' (RCs) and UNCTs' inter-agency efforts on water-related issues and coordinate among UN-Water-related country level initiatives. The Task Force aims to do annual outreach to countries to offer demand-driven support to RCs and UNCTs. The Task Force seeks to work with some of the Water Action Agenda commitments submitted for the UN 2023 Water Conference and is working to build a standard engagement process with countries.

During the discussion, UNEP highlighted a relevant resolution adopted at UNEA-6 calling for strengthening regional environmental ministers' forums.

Participants noted the progress of the Task Force and requested a report back at the 40th UN-Water Meeting.

Update on the World Bank Global Challenge Program on Water Security and Climate Adaptation: The World Bank Group highlighted that its Global Challenge Program aims to strengthen water security and climate adaptation through systems change and targeted investments in water and sanitation, irrigation, water resources management and flood and drought risk reduction. It seeks to accomplish these aims through partnerships and country-level platforms.

During the discussion, a participant asked if drought and land restoration are taken into account. The International Labour Organization's Better Work programme, which is focused on increasing access to water and sanitation as a way to increase productivity, was highlighted as a possible entry point for the Global Challenge Program.

Selected Reports and Progress Updates

Update on activities at COP28 and plans towards COP29: The Expert Group on Water and Climate Change reviewed efforts to advocate for climate and water issues during climate change conferences. Activities include the preparation of a study on the water dependency of mitigation measures, titled "Study on the Water Requirements of Climate Mitigation Measures." In a preview of the study's findings, participants were informed solar and wind power are good at reducing carbon while having a relatively low water footprint. By contrast, liquid biofuel and light duty vehicle batteries use water more intensively. In addition, peatlands restoration is better from a water-use perspective than reforestation.

The Expert Group reported on activities that took place during the 2023 UAE Climate Change Conference, including the organization of a water pavilion and "water day." The Group said it has identified the need to engage in the preparations for the COPs during the subsidiary body meetings in June. As a result, UNECE has submitted a side event proposal for the June 2024 meetings.

The Expert Group also called attention to the COP 28 outcome on the Global Goal on Adaptation, which followed a two-year work programme. Thematic indicators must still be agreed for this Goal, and the Expert Group suggested UN-Water could provide input on the indicators given its experience through the Integrative Monitoring Initiative.

During the discussion, a participant highlighted that land is a connector between water and climate and should be incorporated into the discussion. The need to identify implications for consumptive versus polluted water was mentioned. The role of dams in generating energy and addressing flood challenges was also noted.

On mitigation, participants agreed the Expert Group on Water and Climate Change should prepare a UN-Water Analytical Brief

on the Water Dependencies of Climate Mitigation, with an eye to releasing it prior to the Baku Climate Change Conference in November 2024. They also agreed on the strategic direction for the Water for Climate Mitigation strategy and workplan for 2024, including its objective to ensure water-related issues are considered in decision-making on climate mitigation measures at all levels. They requested the Expert Group on Water and Climate Change to compile information about all relevant UN system programmes that can assist Member States to consider and manage the water dependencies of their climate mitigation measures, and to collect information on how UN-Water Members and Partners can best incorporate water dependencies of climate mitigation measures into their current programmes, to be presented at the 41st UN-Water Meeting.

On adaptation, participants agreed UN-Water should engage in the work programme under the Global Goal on Adaptation and requested UN-Water Members and Partners to submit a joint UN-Water proposal on the development of indicators. Participants also committed to collective urgent action and asked the Expert Group to report to the 40th UN-Water Meeting.

Groundwater activities: The Expert Group on Groundwater provided an overview of its activities, which include convening twice a year, organizing sessions at international events, sharing groundwater-related material within the UN-Water family, supporting UN-Water campaigns with groundwater-related material, supporting member states with knowledge about groundwater, and identifying a thematic area to develop with contributions from the members of the Expert Group.

Mainstreaming of water in all relevant intergovernmental processes: The Expert Group on the 2030 Agenda highlighted the need for a depository of valid text across global decision-making processes that relates to water and sanitation issues. This information could inform UN-Water Members and member states during negotiations on these topics.

Participants agreed UN-Water Members and Partners should commit to providing support to mainstreaming water in all relevant intergovernmental processes including supporting the possible UN Special Envoy on Water. They requested the Expert Group to further define concrete supporting action to mainstreaming water in intergovernmental processes and to develop a comprehensive repository of agreed and still valid texts on water and sanitation within intergovernmental agreements/resolutions. A report from this Expert Group was requested at the 41st UN-Water Meeting.

Set of activities for the Expert Group on Water Quality and Wastewater: The Expert Group on Water Quality and Wastewater explained it had updated its terms of reference to establish a joint coordination secretariat among UNEP, FAO and WHO. The Expert Group requested additional time to identify key priorities for the Group and invited UN-Water Members and Partners to participate in their deliberations, which will be reported to the 40th UN-Water Meeting.

World Café: Collaborative Implementation Plan of the UN System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation

On the second day of the 39th UN-Water Meeting, Bruce Gordon, UN-Water Vice-Chair, opened the session and celebrated that the UN System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation had been agreed on 12 March 2024 by the UN High-Level Committee on Programmes. Kelly Ann Naylor, Consultant, informed participants that the strategy assesses how the UN system is working together on water and sanitation and seeks to

operationalize interagency cooperation to ensure the UN system can deliver more strategic, effective support to countries. She said the implementation plan will evolve to adapt to the needs and requests from the UN system.

UN-Water Members and Partners were reminded that the development of the collaborative implementation plan for the strategy had been delegated to UN-Water, and they proceeded to engage in world café style discussions to inform the development of this plan. The small group conversations were organized around the five entry points of the strategy:

- Lead and inspire collective action for water and sanitation;
- Engage better for countries by leveraging “whole of the UN system” support and mobilizing stakeholders and partnerships for water and sanitation;
- Align UN system support for integration across sectors and mainstreaming into intergovernmental processes;
- Accelerate progress and transformational change by unifying UN system support to five SDG 6 accelerators; and
- Account through joint review and learning.

On **lead and inspire collective action for water and sanitation**, participants highlighted the importance of communications, leadership at the country level, and leadership in international fora. They noted many are confused and believe UN-Water is a UN agency, rather than a coordination mechanism, and suggested addressing this misunderstanding through messaging inside the UN as well as externally. They suggested Resident Coordinators within UN Member countries should have water focal points within their offices. They also suggested treating the 2026 and 2028 UN Water Conferences as though they are Conferences of the Parties (COPs) and said the secretariats and parties of multilateral environmental agreements should be invited.

On **engage better for countries by leveraging “whole of the UN system” support and mobilizing stakeholders and partnerships for water and sanitation**, participants said Resident Coordinators should understand the new strategy and what it offers for the countries they work in. They discussed the need to create demand for water services work and engaging with different ministries.

On **align UN system support for integration across sectors and mainstreaming into intergovernmental processes**, participants called for greater communication among UN-Water task forces, members and partners. They suggested hosting a UN-Water pavilion at COPs for a variety of MEAs, and not just climate change. They also called for identifying the ways water is discussed in other international decision-making processes.

On **accelerate progress and transformational change by unifying UN system support to five SDG 6 accelerators**, participants identified options related to each accelerator. On governance, they called for thinking beyond national governments to incorporate transboundary considerations. For financing, they suggested looking at how existing financing is used in addition to calling for additional funding. On data, they noted the need to understand data needs and to not simply push for open data. On innovation, they noted the need for a platform through which innovations could be shared. And on capacity building, they noted the need to address capacity gaps and create a shared narrative within UN agencies on the strategy itself and how it should be implemented.

On **accounting through joint review and learning**, participants discussed the need to link this process to the UN’s Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR), which

assesses the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, and impact of UN operational activities for development. Speakers also highlighted the role for engaging at the regional level. The need to learn from mistakes as well as from successes was also discussed.

During a full-group discussion following reports from each small group, several speakers highlighted the need for a deeper understanding of which activities UN-Water would lead and which activities specific UN agencies would lead. Speakers also suggested learning from other UN system-wide strategies.

Participants agreed the next UN-Water meeting would consider these questions and other issues related to the development of the collaborative implementation plan.

Update on UN-Water publication plan

Federico Properzi, UN-Water Chief Technical Adviser, invited participants to review the plan for UN-Water publications between April 2024 and April 2025. The table lists sixteen items along with the coordinating body for each publication and the targeted launch date and location. The list includes the UN System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation, which is targeted for launch during the SDG 6 and Water Action Agenda Special Event taking place during the July 2024 meeting of the HLPF. UN-Water Country Acceleration Case Studies on Cambodia, Czechia and Jordan will also be released during that Special Event.

Participants agreed on the publications plan for 2024-2025.

Date and venue of next UN-Water Meeting and Closing of the Open Session

Federico Properzi, UN-Water Chief Technical Adviser, opened the discussion on the date for the next UN-Water meeting and noted it would consider the draft collaborative implementation plan for the UN System-wide Strategy on Water and Sanitation. Given the timeline for the development of the plan, the 40th Meeting will take place in the final quarter of 2024, back-to-back with the second annual session of the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination meeting in New York, US.

Following agreement on this schedule for the next meeting, UN-Water Chair Alvaro Lario closed the open session of the 39th UN-Water Meeting at 3:44 pm CET.

Upcoming Meetings

World Water Day: World Water Day is an annual observance day to highlight the importance of fresh water. In 2024, observances will focus on “Leveraging Water for Peace.” The World Water Development Report 2024, which is focused on “Water for Peace and Prosperity,” will be launched on this day. **date:** 22 March 2024 **www:** <https://www.unwater.org/news/global-events-mark-world-water-day-2024>

UN Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs 2024: This Forum discusses science, technology, and innovation cooperation around thematic areas for the implementation of the SDGs. **dates:** 9-10 May 2024 **location:** New York, US **www:** <https://sdgs.un.org/tfm/STIForum2024>

10th World Water Forum: The World Water Forum is organized every three years. The Forum provides a unique platform where the water community and key decision makers can collaborate and make long-term progress on global water challenges. **dates:** 18-25 May 2024 **location:** Bali, Indonesia **www:** worldwaterforum.org/wwf

60th Sessions of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies: Deliberations during this meeting will feed into the Baku Climate

Change Conference. **dates:** 3-13 June 2024 **location:** Bonn, Germany **www:** <https://unfccc.int/calendar/events-list>

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2024: HLPF 2024 will conduct in-depth reviews of SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), and SDG 17 (partnerships for the Goals). **dates:** 8-17 July 2024 **location:** New York, US **www:** <https://hlpf.un.org/2024>

World Water Week 2024: World Water Week 2024 will focus on “Bridging Borders: Water for a Peaceful and Sustainable Future”. **dates:** 25-29 August 2024 **location:** Stockholm, Sweden **www:** <https://worldwaterweek.org/>

Summit of the Future: This event aims to forge a new global consensus on what our future should look like, and what we can do today to secure it. **dates:** 22-23 September 2024 **location:** New York, US **www:** <https://www.un.org/en/common-agenda/summit-of-the-future>

One Water Summit: During the UAE Climate Change Conference, the governments of France and Kazakhstan announced they would convene this event during the opening session of the UN General Assembly. **dates:** TBD September 2024 **location:** New York, US **www:** <https://www.diplomatiegouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/climate-and-environment/news/article/cop28-france-and-kazakhstan-launch-the-one-water-summit-s-international>

Tenth Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention: The Water Convention directly supports implementation of SDG target 6.5, which requests all countries to implement integrated water resources management, including through transboundary cooperation. **dates:** 23-25 October 2024 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** <https://unece.org/info/Environmental-Policy/Water-Convention/events/387291>

UN Biodiversity Conference 2024: The 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) will convene two years after the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) was adopted at COP 15. **dates:** 21 October-1 November 2024 **location:** Cali, Colombia **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/process>

Baku Climate Change Conference: The 2024 UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 29) will convene in November 2024 in Baku, Azerbaijan. **dates:** 11-22 November 2024 **location:** Baku, Azerbaijan **www:** <https://unfccc.int/cop29>

World Toilet Day 2024: World Toilet Day is celebrated annually on 19 November to inspire action to tackle the global sanitation crisis and help achieve SDG 6, which promises sanitation for all by 2030. **date:** 19 November 2024 **location:** worldwide **www:** <https://www.un.org/en/observances/toilet-day>

40th UN-Water Meeting: The 40th UN-Water Meeting is expected to take place back-to-back with the meeting of the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination. **dates:** TBD November 2024 **location:** New York, US **www:** <https://www.unwater.org/>

UNCCD COP 16: The 16th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP 16) will discuss topics under three issue-areas: land, resilience, and people. **dates:** 2-13 December 2024 **location:** Riyadh, Saudi Arabia **www:** <https://www.unccd.int/cop16>

For additional upcoming events, see sdg.iisd.org

UN-Water Members (36 as of 13 March 2024)

UN Secretariat

Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)
UN Department of Peace and Political Affairs (DPPA)
UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)
United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)

Programmes and Funds

UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)
UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)
UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
UN Development Programme (UNDP)
UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)
UN Environment Programme (UNEP)
UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)
World Food Programme (WFP)

Regional Commissions

UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)
UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC)
UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)
UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA)

Specialized Agencies

Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO)
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
International Labour Organization (ILO)
International Organization for Migration (IOM)
International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)
UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)
The World Bank Group (WB)
World Health Organization (WHO)
World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

Other Entities

UN University (UNU)
UN Related Organizations
International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
Conventions
Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

UN-Water Partners (48 as of 13 March 2024)

Aquafed
CDP
Center for Affordable Water and Sanitation Technology (CAWST)
Conservation International
Gender and Water Alliance (GWA)
Geneva Water Hub
Global Water Partnership (GWP)
Green Climate Fund*
Human Right 2 Water
IHE Delft
International Association for Hydro-Environment Engineering and Research (IAHR)
International Association for Water Law (AIDA)
International Association of Hydrogeologists (IAH)
International Association of Hydrological Sciences (IAHS)
International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID)
International Groundwater Centre (IGRAC)
International Hydropower Association (IHA)
International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA)
International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)
International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO)
International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC)
International Water Association (IWA)
International Water Management Institute (IWMI)
International Water Resources Association (IWRA)
Public Services International (PSI)
Ramsar Convention
Rural Water Supply Network (RWSN)
Sanitation and Water for All*
Sanitation and Hygiene Fund*
Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future
Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)
Toilet Board Coalition (TBC)
UN Global Compact's CEO Water Mandate (UN Global Compact)*
United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)
UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation*
Water Environment Federation (WEF)
Water Integrity Network
Water.org
WaterAid
Women for Water Partnership (WfWP)
World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)
World Council of Civil Engineers (WCCE)
World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO)
World Resources Institute (WRI)
World Water Council (WWC)
World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
World Youth Parliament for Water (WYPW)

* Partner with Special Status