



UN 2023 Water Conference: Themes of the Interactive Dialogues

Proposal by Switzerland

Introduction

Switzerland shares the view that the UN 2023 Water Conference must be a "watershed" moment in global efforts to achieve water security for all. It concurs with the co-hosts' vision that there is a need to move away from single, targeted and reactive short-term actions towards more holistic, integrated and future-oriented approaches and projects.

Switzerland therefore believes that the upcoming conference must "step out of the water box" and adopt a multi sectoral approach to water by reaching out to other relevant sectors. The primary reason lies in the intrinsic relationship between water and current global challenges, such as health, global trade regulation, food and energy security, environmental sustainability and conflict resolution.

Indeed, water availability and quality are not principally the result of local water use but increasingly the effect of global economic processes and political choices, which are exemplified, just to name a few, by climate change, the disrepair state of water infrastructure, the undervaluation of water or inefficient agriculture practices. Conversely, a reliable supply of clean drinking water and sanitation is vital to fulfill the SDGs on health, education, food security, nutrition, agriculture, and poverty reduction in general.

Besides, the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the critical role of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services as the first line of defense in preventing and controlling the spread of infectious diseases. It has reminded us of the importance of investing in such services in order to build forward better from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Proposal

In view of the above, Switzerland proposes a nexus approach; setting 5 thematic clusters for the dialogues that link key water issues to associated issues that are dependent on the successful management of water resources.

In particular, Switzerland recommends that the five thematic clusters cover the Climate-Water-Food-Ecosystems-Energy nexus and the Water-Peace-Security nexus as they are central to sustainable development and water has a crucial role to play in a good number of the SDGs.

In view of its experiences and commitments, Switzerland offers to be the co-chair for the fifth dialogue: "Peaceful and inclusive societies".

As for the SDG6 Global Accelerator Framework accelerators, these should be crosscutting issues for all five dialogues. The dialogues should be action-oriented and deliver forward-looking concrete outcomes.

Proposed themes

Interactive Dialogue	Main issues	Primary beneficiary sectors / SDGs
'Delivering on Paris'	Greenhouse gas emission reduction. Climate change resilience and adaptation	Climate / 13 Energy / 7 Hunger / 2 Employment / 8
	Disaster Risk Reduction (Sendai) Infrastructure resilience	Cities / 11 Waste / 12
'Building forward better'	COVID-19 pandemic, water- related disease outbreaks and other water-related public health risks Sustainable economic recovery Water safety and quality	Health / 3 Employment / 1+8+9 Welfare / 1+5+10
'Feeding the world'	Food security Nutrition	Agriculture / 2 Health / 3 Food waste / 12
'Harmony with nature'	Biological Diversity Habitat protection Invasive species management	Oceans / 14 Land-based / 15
'Peaceful and inclusive societies'	Gender safety Transboundary cooperation. Effective institutions Water and Peace	Gender equality / 5 Peace and justice /16 Global partnerships / 17

Rationale

Switzerland believes that the nexus approach is best aligned with the objectives of the Water Action Decade and in particular, its first objective – advancing sustainable development – as it promotes cross-sector coordination and policy alignment.

The nexus approach also best links with the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda against which governments report their progress. It will therefore facilitate the participation of Member States in the discussions and thereby help raise the priority of water, ensuring inter-sectoral action both within the concerned governments and at regional and global levels.

The nexus approach encourages the participation of stakeholders (incl. "champions") from different sectors to the dialogues thereby further contributing to putting water at the center of the global agenda.