

UN 2023 Water Conference Preparatory Meeting

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**Statement of Anthony Rock
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I speak today on behalf of the International Science Council, an organization comprised of national science bodies in 142 countries and diverse international entities across the natural and social sciences.

Far too many people in the world today still struggle with limited access to safe water and sanitation, threatening critical aspects of daily life, including essential health care and food production. For example, it is unconscionable that, today, one-half of health care facilities worldwide still lack this most essential component of basic health care: water - for consumption, for sanitation, and for hygiene. Almost 4 billion people are at risk of infection and death from inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene in these facilities.

If we hope to implement measures to ensure adequate, sustainable water resources for all, then we must first establish the trust and the engagement of communities everywhere in this effort, with all interests carefully considered. We will build that trust when we partner with qualified and respected scientists to understand the problems, spark innovation, and formulate sound, evidence-based policies and practices.

At the 2018 launch of this new water decade, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres issued a global Call to Action specifically aimed at ensuring adequate water, sanitation and hygiene in health care facilities worldwide by 2030. As with water itself, science is also a vital resource in the public interest. In the UN Secretary General's own words: "We must strengthen the interface between science and policy...in our high-level policy decisions."

The International Science Council, representing leading scientific organizations worldwide, has a rich history of community engagement, as well as policy guidance to UN leadership in support of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Science underscores every theme of Water 2023. Let us therefore strive to make real science the platform upon which real policies and practices are crafted. The ISC looks forward to further promoting transparent information exchange and advice to the United Nations (and its member states) to implement these sound policies and practices that will ensure sustainable water availability for all.