



**UN**  
**2023 WATER**  
**CONFERENCE**

NEW YORK  
22-24  
MARCH  
2023

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the UN 2023 Water Conference?

In March 2023 the world will come together in New York during the [UN 2023 Water Conference](#). The Conference is convened by the UN General Assembly. The Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Republic of Tajikistan, co-hosts of the Conference, are committed to make the Conference a watershed moment that will bring stakeholders from all sectors together and that will create a global momentum for accelerated implementation and improved impact to advance the broad challenges surrounding water. UN DESA serves as the Secretariat, supported by UN-Water.

Building on the [UNGA modalities resolution](#), the [vision statement](#) defines three principles to guide the Conference and its preparatory process that it is: inclusive, action-oriented and cross-sectoral.

### Why is water an urgent issue and why should I care about it?

Water is fundamental to everyone. It is essential for human health and well-being, energy and food production, healthy ecosystems, climate adaptation, poverty reduction, and more. Water is at the core of sustainable development. But decades of poor management, misuse, overextraction of groundwater and contamination of freshwater supplies have intensified water stress and degraded water-related ecosystems. This leads to negative impacts on human health, economic activities, and food and energy supplies.

Safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene are vital to human health, and access to these resources are a basic human right. The availability of safely managed drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene can help reduce the spread of diseases and improve health, education, and economic productivity of populations. Yet, billions of people around the world still lack access to these basic services. More than 800,000 people die each year from diseases directly attributed to unsafe water, inadequate sanitation, and poor hygiene practices. Water is a critical issue that affects everyone. Urgent action is needed to ensure a sustainable and equitable distribution of water for all needs.

### What are the themes of the 2023 UN Water Conference?

The five themes of the conference are:

1. **Water for Health:** Access to safe drinking water, hygiene and sanitation.
2. **Water for Development:** Valuing Water, Water-Energy-Food Nexus and Sustainable Economic and Urban Development.

3. **Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment:** Source to Sea, Biodiversity, Climate, Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction.
4. **Water for Cooperation:** Transboundary and International Water Cooperation, Cross Sectoral Cooperation and Water Across the 2030 Agenda.
5. **Water Action Decade:** Accelerating the implementation of the objectives of the Decade, including through the UN Secretary-General's Action Plan.

The themes were proposed by the co-hosts of the conference, The Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Republic of Tajikistan, in July 2022 and were agreed on by Member States at the [Preparatory Meeting in October 2022](#). The themes support the five principles of the [SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework](#).

### **What are the expected outcomes of the Conference?**

The Conference will comprise of an opening and a closing ceremony, six plenary meetings and five interactive dialogues, and the mandated output document of the Conference will be a summary of its proceedings prepared by the President of the General Assembly. In order to mobilize all sectors, actors and countries and create the political momentum needed to combat the global water challenges, the Water Action Agenda is another main outcome of the Conference which has been launched by the co-hosts to turn the political momentum created by the Conference into tangible and ambitious action to get progress on track.

### **What is SDG 6?**

The Sustainable Development Goal on Water and Sanitation (SDG 6) aims to ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. The targets for SDG 6 include:

- **6.1** By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all
- **6.2** By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations
- **6.3** By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally
- **6.4** By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity
- **6.5** By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate
- **6.6** By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes
- **6.A** By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water

harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies

- **6.B** Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management

### **What is the Water Action Agenda?**

The Water Action Agenda will be a main outcome of the UN 2023 Water Conference. The Water Action Agenda is the collection of all water-related voluntary commitments to accelerate progress in the second half of the Water Action Decade 2018-2028 and second half of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Launched by the Conference's co-hosts during the Dushanbe Conference in June 2022, the Water Action Agenda encourages Member States and other stakeholders across all sectors, industries and interests to unify and to make their voluntary commitments to address the global water challenges. While the voluntary commitments are gathered in the lead-up to the UN 2023 Water Conference and during the Conference itself, new commitments will continue to be added to the Water Action Agenda also after the Conference and up until the end of the Water Action Decade 2018-2028 and the 2030 Agenda.

Details about the Water Action Agenda can be found [here](#).