

UN 2023 Water Conference - Closing remarks

UN-Water Chair, Mr Gilbert F. Houngbo

24 March 2023

421 words

Mr President,
Distinguished Heads of State and Government,
Mr President of the General Assembly,
Mr Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Water friends,

As this historic event draws to a close, we can see and want to believe that a brighter future for water is opening up.

Thanks to this Conference, we have created a bold Water Action Agenda with clear voluntary commitments that will adapt and grow to meet the challenges we face in the run up to 2030 and beyond.

In the spirit of this Conference, I allow me to highlight, on behalf all the colleagues of UN-Water systems, three key take-home messages for us:

First, the importance of cooperation across sectors, across stakeholders and across borders. I am especially encouraged to see so many more countries joining the UN Water Convention. Cooperations and partnerships can guide our way towards a culture of deliberations for sustainable solutions in solidarity.

Second, the fundamental role of the human rights to drinking-water and to sanitation, as a guiding light to leave no one behind. The need for social justice demands that we act, unconditionally.

And third, we all have a role to play and **we can be the change we want to see.**

Inclusivity is going to be key to success. We need all, the youth, indigenous peoples, women, governments, the private sector, all working together in our collective Water Action Agenda, on equal terms, with equal rights.

Excellencies,

This mid-term review of the Water Action Decade has brought us together.

This week, we have demonstrated that the United Nations **can** bring water from ‘everywhere and from nowhere’ and bring it to one place where we can all debate, we can all reach consensus, and we can all decide on action, report on progress and learn from each other.

As a result, water can flow into all other relevant intergovernmental processes.

Because water is and shall remain *everyone’s* business.

Now is our moment of concluding this Conference successfully. Tomorrow, we have to work harder to deliver on the voluntary commitments.

The UN-Water family will be there all the way. On behalf of all my colleagues in the UN-Water, I am excited for us to engage in this process in the coming months and pledge the UN-Water to assist in the implementation of the Water Action Agenda.

Our first stop is going to be during the HLPF with the SDG 6 Synthesis Report.

In this journey together, we are looking forward to seeing many of you at the Water Action Agenda Special Event at HLPF.

Thank you.