

UN 2023 Water Conference - Speech by Prime

Minister of Aruba Evelyn Wever-Croes

[2,5 minuut = max 300 woorden]

Your Excellencies, esteemed delegates,

- For the Kingdom of the Netherlands, water is, and will always be, a priority issue.
- Our Kingdom, with its low-lying delta of rivers flowing into the North Sea, and the island countries of Aruba, Curaçao and St Maarten, was literally shaped by water.
- As we meet here today, it's clear that the world is facing an unprecedented water challenge. The science tells us that, for the first time in human history, we have pushed the global water cycle out of its natural balance. People all over the world are facing the reality of too much water, too little water, or water that is too polluted.

- The root causes of water scarcity are our consumption and production patterns. So how do we tackle these challenges?
- I urge you to take guidance from the Global Commission on the Economics of Water: we need to **prioritise** water in our decision-making. Both in economics and in politics. We must put water at the heart of our policymaking.
- This Conference, the first UN Water Conference in almost 50 years, is a vital step in bringing about the systemic change the world needs.
- We, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, will do all we can to foster that change. Our commitments to the Water Action Agenda cover finance, capacity-building, governance, data, innovation and new forms of

collaboration.

- Your Excellencies, esteemed delegates – make no mistake: this Water Conference is only the beginning.
- Water needs ongoing political attention at the highest level. We must make sure the Water Action Agenda gets the follow-up it needs: at the SDG Summit this year, the Summit of the Future in 2024, and the World Social Summit in 2025. And during the next COP sessions on Climate and Biodiversity, and the Dushanbe Water Process.
- A water-secure world is not just our concern. The voices of future generations need to be heard as well. So let me now give the floor to our Youth Representative on Sustainable Development, Sarah Oey.

Statement by Sarah Oey, UN Youth Representative on Sustainable Development for the Netherlands

Spreekpunten Sarah Oey Jongerenvertegenwoordiger

Duurzame Ontwikkeling

300 woorden = 2,5 minuut

Thank you, Prime Minister.

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests,

- As the Prime Minister of Aruba just said, water is a priority for the Kingdom of the Netherlands. It is a global issue and we need to act now.
- The international community has shown that real action is possible. After years of negotiations, we recently managed to agree a legal framework for parts of the ocean outside national boundaries: the High Seas Treaty.

- Taking action on water means getting results on all the SDGs, including human rights, health, climate action, gender equality, youth and socioeconomic inequality. Taking action on water means safeguarding our planet for future generations.
- Too often, the bigger picture gets overlooked. That's a big concern for young people like me.
- In its Water Proposal, the Dutch Youth Climate Movement set out its ideas and called for system change. For instance, we want nature and all waters to be designated as legal entities, to guarantee nature-based solutions for water issues.
- Millions of children are currently in danger because of water threats. So when it comes to solving the water challenges we face, it's crucial that we protect them and listen to their ideas and needs.
- I hope this conference can be the starting point for you to engage with young people back home. Let their innovative ideas inspire you. And let their boldness help

you put the commitments of the Water Action Agenda into practice.

- Don't wait to act. Don't wait another 50 years to meet again to talk about water. As philosopher Roman Krznaric said, 'By making wise – and long – choices as we emerge from this crisis, we could well become the good ancestors that future generations deserve'.
- Thank you.