

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

**CLOSING REMARKS TO THE
UNITED NATIONS WATER CONFERENCE**

New York, 24 March 2023

Excellencies, colleagues, friends,

My thanks to the Netherlands and Tajikistan for co-hosting this conference — a milestone at the midway point of the Water Action Decade.

I also thank the President of the General Assembly, and the representatives of all levels of government who attended — as well as the scientists, academics, civil society groups, indigenous peoples, members of the private sector and young people who have joined us.

Together, your ambitious vision and dedication to action and transformation is propelling us towards a sustainable, equitable and inclusive water-secure future for people and planet alike.

Dear friends,

This conference demonstrated a central truth.

As humanity's most precious global common good, water unites us all.

And it flows across a number of global challenges.

Water is about health, sanitation, hygiene and disease-prevention.

Water is about peace.

Water is about sustainable development, fighting poverty, supporting food systems and creating jobs and prosperity.

Water is about human rights and gender equality.

That's why water needs to be at the centre of the global political agenda.

All of humanity's hopes for the future depend, in some way, on charting a new science-based course to bring the Water Action Agenda to life.

They depend on realizing the game-changing, inclusive and action-oriented commitments made by Member States and others at this Conference.

This means reinforcing water's place as a fundamental human right.

It means reducing the pressures on our hydrological system, and ensuring good decision-making and smart policies.

It means developing new, alternative food systems to reduce the unsustainable use of water in food production and agriculture.

It means designing and implementing a new global water information system to guide plans and priorities by 2030.

It means integrating our approach on water, ecosystems and climate to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and strengthen communities.

This includes resilient infrastructure, water pipelines and wastewater treatment plans, and ensuring every person in the world is protected with early warning systems against natural disasters by 2027.

It means continuing to press for climate justice and global action to limit global warming to a 1.5 degree rise.

And it means dramatically accelerating resources and investment into the ability of all countries to reach Sustainable Development Goal 6.

A number of other follow-up steps are under consideration – including the appointment of a Special Envoy on Water to advance the prominence of water in the lead-up to this September's SDG Summit, as well as the Summit of the Future next year.

I look forward to reviewing our progress during July's high level political meetings.

And I can assure the full support of the United Nations system every step of the way.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Without water, there can be no sustainable development.

As we leave this historic conference, let's re-commit to our common future.

Let's take the next steps in our journey to a water-secure future for all.

Once again, I thank the Netherlands, Tajikistan and the President of the General Assembly for their leadership.

Together, you've brought the world together around solving the water challenge and reinforcing international collaboration for this vital resource.

And I thank all those who contributed their ideas to this conference, and to the creation of the Water Action Agenda.
