Written Statement
Input to the UN 2023 Water Conference 2023

Submitted by

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Increase Capacity to Adapt through Nature-Based Solutions and Innovative Technology

VIVAT International is a Non-Governmental Organization with a membership of more than 23,000 from 11 Catholic Religious Congregations, working in 139 countries to promote human rights and Sustainable Development Goals. VIVAT International welcomes the UN Water Conference 2023 under the leadership of the Governments of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Republic of Tajikistan.

Water is essential to life, health, sanitation, and well-being. It is valuable for social, economic, and environmental development. The right to clean, safe and drinkable water is a human right.

Today, we face water-related hazards and shortages due to climate change. The data shows that 2.3 billion people live in water-stressed countries, and 3.2 billion people live in agricultural areas with high water scarcity. Some 1.42 billion people – including 450 million children – live in areas of high or extremely high water vulnerability.\(^1\) While millions of people in many parts of the world suffer from water shortages due to droughts and durable dry seasons, others also grieve from overwhelming water catastrophes because of floods, erosion, storms, waves, and sea-level rise. Water-related hazards affect everyone, especially the most vulnerable people and communities, including local communities and indigenous people.

Adaptability must be increased to prevent water-related hazards and be resilient to water shortage. Capacity development for adaptation and resilience must consider the local context. The local communities and indigenous people have had local knowledge, wisdom, and experiences for centuries in coping with water-related hazards and scarcity. This valuable knowledge must be considered in making effective policies and strategies to prevent and reduce water catastrophes.

Increasing the capacity to adapt to the local context in overcoming water scarcity and hazards can be done through nature-based solutions and innovative technology. For example, indigenous people, school institutions, and the church community in the Philippines hand and hand work for planting one billion bamboos.\(^2\) Planting a billion bamboo trees prevents floods and erosion due to water catastrophes and mitigates climate change because bamboo trees capture much carbon dioxide (CO2). In Indonesia, the local farmers use hydro-Barsha technology to pump water from

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\(^1\)https://www.unwater.org/water-facts/water-scarcity

\(^2\)https://www.vivatinternational.org/blog/2021/12/22/philippines-one-billion-bamboo-for-climate-change/
rivers in the lowlands to the highlands. With that small-scale hydro-technology, they can overcome the water scarcity for irrigating organic farms and redouble their yearly harvests.\textsuperscript{3}

These efforts are valuable but limited in terms of scale and impact. Local communities and indigenous people need to enhance their capacity to adapt to coping with water-related hazards and scarcity.

Therefore, we call on states to:

- Consider the local context in developing the capacity to adapt to overcoming water-related hazards and scarcity.
- Include local communities and indigenous people in the decision-making process for water management to prevent and reduce the impacts of water-related catastrophes.
- Provide adequate finance and intelligent technology to scale up and bold local capacities of local communities and indigenous people for adaptation and resiliency.

\textsuperscript{3}https://www.vivatinternational.org/blog/2021/12/01/indonesia-organic-farming-and-renewable-energy/