

Department of Environmental Policy Analysis (EPA) Institute for Environmental Studies (IVM)

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Written Statement to the UN 2023 Water Conference

A delegation of representatives from the Department of Environmental Policy Analysis at the Institute for Environmental Studies (IVM), Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, participated in the UN Water Conference from 22-24 March at the UN Headquarters in New York.

We welcome the UN 2023 Water Conference as an important initiative and appreciate that it has produced some momentum for advancing the governance priority for the water agenda.

Supporting and encouraging the United Nations to accelerate on the implementation of the **UN Water Action Agenda** we hereby submit six reflections:

- 1. We recommend that the potential of hybrid governance arrangements with public, private and civil society representation is further explored to deal with increasing environmental, social, political, and financial risks to advance more resilient, equitable and sustainable outcomes.
- 2. Furthering the integration of science and policy is essential, for example as governments commit to scaling up pilots developed through research and innovative practices by local organizations. This is especially important in the rural water services sector, which is often neglected, as these areas are considered commercially unviable.
- 3. Critical perspectives and voices representing environmental activists, indigenous people, youth representatives and dissenting scholars should be fully heard.
- 4. An understanding of risk governance in the communication, perception, and translation of water related hazards into decision-making processes should be advanced.
- 5. We welcome the recommended appointment of a Special Envoy for Water and suggest that this position especially focuses on policy decision-making processes and their coordination including critical perspectives and local approaches.
- 6. More attention to contested issues such as water grabbing, water defenders, water contestation should be ensured and insights from the academic community used to develop strong legal frameworks and water right safeguards.

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