

**Speech by H.E. Ms. Yoko Kamikawa,
Special Envoy of Prime Minister of Japan**

UN 2023 Water Conference 2023

Interactive Dialogue Three

Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment

The United Nations Headquarters, New York, the U.S.A.

March 23rd, 2023

10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

- Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
it is a great honor for me to serve as a co-chair
with His Excellency Mr. Hani Sewilam (ヘイニ スウイリアム),
Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation
of Egypt,
for the Interactive Dialogue Three
on Water for Climate, Resilience
and Environment.

- I believe
we have already shared the global challenges
behind the theme of this session.
- So, I would like to start my opening remarks
from the substance of the discussion.
- We, as the co-chairs,
Egypt and Japan have large difference
in climate; Dry Egypt and wet Japan.
- In addition, such flood and drought extremes
are being intensified due to climate change.

- Japan has experienced serious damages frequently due to the too-much water.
- Under such a water-rich environment, Japan is vulnerable to too-little water in reality.
- So, once drought happens, our society faces serious damage.
- I believe we have common challenges.
- Let us discuss together a globally applicable

and effective framework.

- In order to make discussions more constructive and to achieve truly action-oriented outcomes, I would like to propose today a water action workflow that has already been circulated.
- The action workflow consists of two parts, a trunk and leaves.

- The trunk is critical steps beginning from the challenges by climate change to on-site solutions, that is water actions.
- The leaves are effective and innovative contributions to support each critical step.
- The trunk composed of six steps, namely
 - Risk awareness
 - Risk identification
 - Designing of counter-measures
 - Funding

- Multi-stakeholder participation, and
 - On-site implementation.
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- The leaves include all the tools and resources that contribute to achieving the critical steps.
 - As a first example, we need scientific data and an open and integrated global platform for data collection and assessment for the critical steps.

- Then,
we will design countermeasures such as
early warning systems.
- And multi-benefit solutions
that serve both climate change adaptation
and mitigation
are also important.

- The next step is to mobilize the funds needed for the countermeasures.
- Decision-makers and investors need reliable information on risk and value, including Ecosystem Accounting.

- Legal support is also necessary.
- I now chair a cross-party Parliamentary League for Water Policy Reform in Japan.
- The League proposed a bill for Water Cycle Basic Law in 2014, which legislates multi-stakeholder participation.

- Finally, we need to foster facilitators who can connect data and assessments with decision makers, stakeholders, and ordinary people.
- And we should foster competent human resources, especially for the future generation.

- As we know,
water is vital for all human lives, including
agriculture, industry,
as well as drinking water.
- Water is a crucial foundation for peace.
- And I believe that the building process of
a sound water cycle itself
can also contribute to peace-building.
- I look forward to hearing
many interventions
which will strengthen

the trunk of the Action Workflow
and enrich its leaves.

- Thank you.

(473 words)

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Comments by H.E. Ms. Yoko Kamikawa at the 3rd Interactive Dialogue (IAD3)
The UN 2023 Water Conference, March 22nd, 2023

1. Changing Climate: Water scarcity, droughts, and the melting cryosphere

First of all, I would like to thank all speakers for your useful comments. They include lots of good practices, experiences, tangible commitments, and useful recommendations that help our future actions.

We all agreed here that climate change is inseparably connected to water. Indeed, 80% of climate change impact is felt through water. The question is how we can translate this common understanding into actions at country and field levels. The sense of political urgency is needed for this.

First thing to do is to create clear policy guidance at all levels that connect policies on climate change, water, and resilience so that they can be planned and implemented in integrated and coordinated manners, particularly in terms of finance, governance and capacity building.

Next, rather than debating on adaptation versus mitigation, we can focus on effective measures that contribute to both mitigation and adaptation through water. Investing in green and grey infrastructure, supported by advanced IT on water, meet this objective. This creates foundation for more sustainable, resilient, and inclusive Quality Society for next generations.

Combatting drought and desertification is our common challenge globally. We have to closely collaborate with people and institutions out of water box, particularly those on food and energy. In doing so, we can turn the current energy and food crisis into opportunities through water. The concept of water, food and energy axis is useful on this front.

We should be aware that we are crossing planetary boundary towards environmental catastrophes. It is clear if we see available data on cryosphere. The cryosphere should be closely monitored and protected through international cooperation as they are assets of the earth.

I hope that today's meaningful discussion and suggestions are followed up in future processes such as HLPF, SDG Summit, and COP28.

Thank you.

2. Resilience to water disasters: decreasing risk and conserving biodiversity

Pandemic and disasters:

I was impressed by all the interventions. They include again a number of good practices, commitments, and actions. I am glad to say that those will certainly constitute lush leaves of “a tree of resilience” which I described at the outset of the dialogue today.

Resilience is the key word when we are to create post-pandemic policies including that for water. Having experienced COVID-19, we should enhance awareness, integrated preparedness, and timely information-sharing by both governments and citizens to detect and prevent future pandemics, disasters and all sorts of disturbances. We should be aware that environmental crises continued or even worsened during the pandemic. We should share lessons and good practices that have been amassed in the last few years as assets for the future we want.

Inclusive resilience policy is needed so that nobody, particularly vulnerable people, are not left behind in scenes of disasters and catastrophes. In my country, Japan, a new policy named “River Basin Disaster Resilience and Sustainability by All” was introduced to involve all stakeholders in planning and implementing DRR measures that fully consider impacts of climate change. Many policies and actions mentioned today will help countries prepared for disasters.

Conserving biodiversity is a must for the future of the planet. Water is the most fundamental common property for all species. Global changes including climate change are impacting water circulation systems. The question here is how we can keep “sound water cycle” for conserving biodiversity and ecosystems. There were proposals today to conserve ecosystems and biodiversity related to water. These are useful recommendations that should be followed up in the future processes in the UN and others.

Thank you.

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- Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen.
- The dialogue today
was centred around
reduction of various risks
and enhancing co-benefits
related to climate change, disasters,
and ecology/environment.
- Speakers focused on
their actions and commitments,
and related recommendations

towards transformative solution
to water challenges
in line with the Water Action Workflow
that comprises critical steps of
risk awareness and identification;
designing countermeasures;
financing;
multi-stakeholder participation;
and on-site implementations.

- Accordingly,
a number of tangible commitments,
such as
AWARe and Kumamoto Initiatives
and Kumamoto Coalition
as exemplified by Co-Chairs,
were made.
- In association with the commitments,
useful recommendations were proposed
to galvanize transformative actions.

- They include:
 - Promoting Environmental Economic Accounting;
 - establishing Global Water Data Services;
 - creating thematic platforms
such as those on “from source to sea”
as well as water, culture and heritage;
 - and establishing symbolic days
on specific subjects
such as cryosphere and lakes.

- Co-Chairs will review today's interventions to identify more commitments and recommendations.
- Connecting climate change, resilience, and environment in discussion and actions at all levels is of urgent priority.
- Globally, the outcome of ID3 should be fed

into future key processes
of Mid-term Review of Sendai,
High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development,
SDG Summit,
and COP28-by,
inter alia, establishing focused dialogue
on the issue.

- Establishing Inter-COP
and regularizing existing processes

such as

UN Special Thematic Sessions

on Water and Disasters ※水と災害特別会合

were proposed.

- PGA Office is also encouraged to work with Members to propose a UN Water platform to discuss policy and prepare joint programming

to be discussed
in preparation of the SDG summit.

- Regarding early warning,
I recognize
we had confirmed common message today
that you cannot improve
what you cannot measure.

- With regard to “From source to sea”,
the action platform from source to sea
is very useful
as it urges countries
and shared basins to work
towards holistic and integrated
water resources management.
- Regarding financing,
it is critical
to invest in green and grey infrastructure

that create a foundation
for tomorrow's growth
and the next generation.

- Throughout the dialogue,
many stressed the importance
of science and technology
for water transformation.

- Co-Chair recognizes that the key for breakthrough for water transformation is, among other things, the Open Science Policy, facilitation between science and decision making, end-to-end approach, and water cycle integration.

- Finally, I am glad to see that many member states and stakeholders expressed their clear commitments for alliance, game changers, and tangible actions.

- This is very much encouraging as it clearly shows that this session was not discussion for discussion but discussion for actions.
- I conclude that this dialogue was a big success and it paved the way towards our common future on water.
- Thank you.

(450 words)