



UN
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UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

Pollution, Sanitation, Water Quality and Climate Resilience: A Call to Action

Friday 24 March 2023, 09:30 -10:45 EDT, Trusteeship Council Chamber, United Nations Headquarters

Organized by:

Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation, Zambia (lead)

Co-conveners:

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| 1. Local Government Division(LGD), Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives, Bangladesh | 7. Ministry of Water, Tanzania | 16. Resilient Cities Network |
| 2. Ministry of Water and Energy, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia | 8. Ministère d'Eau et Assainissement (MEA), Sénégal | 17. ADB |
| 3. Ministry of National Development Planning: Directorate Urban, Housing, and Settlement, Indonesia | 9. German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) | 18. BMGF |
| 4. Ministry of Water Supply, Government of Nepal | 10. African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) | 19. AfDB |
| 5. Government of South Sudan | 11. Africa Union Commission (AUC) | 20. GIZ |
| 6. Ministry of Water and Environment, Uganda | 12. UNICEF | 21. SuSanA |
| | 13. GGGI | 22. SNV |
| | 14. WaterAid | 23. UTS |
| | 15. World Bank | 24. WHO |
| | | 25. UN-Habitat |
| | | 26. IWA |

Background on the event (one paragraph)

Worldwide, much of the discussion about climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience in the water sector focuses on securing the required quantities and quality of water for different uses, conserving water catchment eco-systems, building climate-resilient sustainable water and sanitation infrastructure with strong community-based and business-oriented operation and management structures, and supportive policy and institutional systems. As a result, the issues of pollution, waste and consequently water quality receive less attention. However, with 44% of domestic wastewater released without appropriate monitoring, regulation and treatment into the rivers and lakes, we cannot and should no longer ignore the issues of environmental pollution and sanitation. Eutrophication caused by domestic wastewater and untreated effluent is becoming one of the leading causes of aquatic degradation. Public health and well-being of more than 3.5 billion people is affected. Moreover, sanitation systems cause significant GHG emissions: 2-6% of global methane, 1-3% of nitrous oxide. This is particularly acute

where water tables are high, infrastructure not well designed based on climate hazard information, managed and maintained, and onsite containment systems are not timely emptied.

There is no climate resilient future without a concerted broad-scale effort to improve the entire sanitation chain, in urban and rural areas, and across all settings. Therefore, a Call to Action was launched at COP 27 for Climate Resilient Sanitation action at all levels. Systems and services must be made resilient to protect investments, promote public health, withstand climate hazards especially flooding, and safeguard the environment. Furthermore, safely managed sanitation contributes to water saving, nutrient and energy recovery.

This side event aimed to help member states and other water sector stakeholders better understand the rationale for a holistic, integrated approach to environmental pollution, sanitation, sludge and wastewater management, as well as the need for climate-resilient and low-carbon sanitation. The event also aimed to mobilise commitments of more stakeholders around the Call to Action on Climate Resilient Sanitation, and promote the recommended actions in the guidelines.

Water Action Agenda (one paragraph, if possible, please include the link to your commitment in the [Water Action Agenda database](#))

There is a draft commitment which will be uploaded before the 1st of May.

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

- Pollution from inadequate sanitation and ineffectively treated waste affects water quality and increases climate vulnerability. The collective impact greatly disrupts livelihoods, health and economies.
- Different country contexts will need different strategies to address pollution through sanitation and waste, but there are many good examples ranging from Senegal, South Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, Tanzania, Nepal, Bangladesh and Indonesia. This includes a range of nature-based solutions.
- Management choices for wastewater treatment, on-site sanitation systems, sludge treatment plants, dumpsites and landfills all have large implications for methane emissions. Considering the number of on-site sanitation systems globally, this is a significant source of GHG emissions.
- Currently only 2% of the NDCs and NAPs refer to sanitation. There is need to make sanitation more visible in climate discussions and climate funding.
- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) are setting up financing mechanisms to increase funding for climate resilient sanitation and waste management.

Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)

- 1) There is need for a holistic, integrated approach to environmental pollution from sanitation and waste, sludge and wastewater management, as well as the need for climate-resilient and low-carbon sanitation and waste management.
- 2) In the development of NAP and NDCs, the linkages with sanitation and waste should be better unpacked and addressed.

- 3) In the development of national water and climate plans, sanitation and waste should be central.
- 4) Financing instruments for climate and water should have an earmarked percentage for addressing pollution from sanitation and waste systems.
- 5) Knowledge development should be a continued priority including the quantification of GHG emissions along the sanitation and waste chains in order to contribute to climate mitigation and effectiveness of adaptive measures to ensure climate resilience of services.