



UN
2023 WATER
CONFERENCE

NEW YORK
22-24
MARCH
2023

UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

CONDENSATIONS Designing In Water Part 1 (of 3); Designing Water in Policy

Thursday, March 23 2023

8:00am-9:15am

UNHQ Side Event Room C

Side Event #HQ70

Organized by: Host - Pratt Institute. Co Hosts - Rebuild by Design, Water as Leverage. Academic Partners - University of Pennsylvania, Singapore University of Technology and Design, Universidad del Desarrollo, Anant National University, Harvard University. Industry Partners - Arcadis, Inhabit, Egis.

Background on the event

Pratt Institute hosted a three-part series of events on the occasion of the United Nations 2023 Water Conference (UNWC). Layered upon one another, *Condensations Parts 1-3* examined how design and the built environment intersects with issues of permanent climate change and adaptation. The interactive discussions and workshop will focus on the role integrative design can have in holistically addressing and communicating water challenges with a specific focus on some of the most dense and vulnerable areas on the planet in the coming decade.

The goal of Part 1 was to bring together government leaders of multiple countries/cities who are host to urban and rural archipelagos and whose dense urban areas are on islands or coasts subjecting their populations to immediate climate-based threats. Including representatives from international financial institutions, local and international design organizations, this panel allowed each participant to share existing commitments and to share how they might prioritize design in adaptive, nature-based projects/solutions for water safety, access, quality and delivery. Projects and methods developed by *Rebuild by Design* and *Water as Leverage* served as benchmark examples. The panel was moderated by René van Hell; Ambassador of Sustainable Development and Director of Inclusive Growth, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Netherlands.

Key Issues discussed

- *Government Sector* (Aboutaleb, Sanhueza, Toh)
 - **Cross Cutting:** How policy, finance and design intersect as much as they do not intersect enough.
 - **Timing:** Approvals/phasing often misaligned with need and/or responsive more than anticipatory
 - **Island/Resource Independence:** Understanding carrying capacity within the means/capacities of the geographic/geological circumstances: every drop counts.
- *Financial Sector* (Woodruff, Zhang)
 - **Needs:** How to fund the last mile
 - **Prospects:** Emerging models of funding to support scalable, rapid initiatives with high impact.
- *Design Sector* (Chester, Van Peppen)
 - **Livability:** How design plays a central role forming community and how we might live with permanent water challenges
 - **Fundability:** Misalignments and gaps between nature-based infrastructural design needs/projects and streams of funding.

Key recommendations for action

- **Bridge:** Bring these three sectors together more regularly and earlier on any water-based climate adaptation oriented projects.
- **Engage:** Brainstorm alternative mixed, cross cutting funding strategies
- **Scale:** Seed fund small scale, cost effective nature-based solutions that have scaleable potentials
- **Look:** Transform existing systems incrementally versus entirely demolishing and rebuilding
- **Listen:** Discover and explore existing local water-based practices, rituals and methods to underpin nature-based design/development, to fund any such development and to embellish its future culture.