



UN
2023 WATER
CONFERENCE

NEW YORK
22-24
MARCH
2023

UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

Our water world: on the frontlines of water access and governance

Thursday 23 March, 14:00-15:15, Conference Room A, UN HQ

Organised by the University of Bergen with co-organisers:
International Water Association (IWA), Norwegian Agency for Development
Cooperation (Norad), United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI), Pacific Small
Island Developing States (PSIDS), International Association of Universities
(IAU), University for Development Studies in Ghana, and Norwegian
University of Life Sciences

Background on the event

Building on and expanding our existing broad geographical network within capacity building in research and higher education, and to reach policy makers with scientific knowledge to reach SDG6.

Water Action Agenda

Contribute to building capacity in higher education to train the future water scientists and water leaders of the world. In this regard we registered the Water ESSENCE Africa project as WAA commitment #SDGAction50451:

<https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/water-essence-africa-creating-synergy-meet-global-challenges>

Key Issues discussed

- Universities and academic institutions are part of both global and local life. These institutions can connect the two and facilitate contact between different stakeholders.
- When designing, implementing, and reviewing policy, we must remember that water is a common good and resource.

- There is a huge gap between decisions and the needs of those affected by water related issues.
- Saltwater intrusion leads to non-consistent water supply in Pacific atoll island states. In some countries local staple crop can no longer be cultivated and these states experience a cycle of drought and excess rainfall.
- More north-south knowledge exchange is happening. More thought goes into the productive use of water. What quantity and quality of water is needed for different tasks.
- Large rivers are critically important for SDG6.
- There are almost 300 transboundary river basins in the world. Transboundary waters account for 60 per cent of the world's freshwater flows. Over 40 per cent of the world's population lives in these river basins.

Key recommendations for action

- Universities and higher education institutions must be included in policy making processes to provide scientific knowledge for clean water and sanitation.
- There is a need to build infrastructure that is more climate resilient. Start designing systems for harvest and storage.
- Policy makers must work closer with local communities and use local knowledge. This needs also to be tailored to climate change.
- Clean water should be available for all independently on the geography, resources, wealth of a nation.
- Build more capacity in higher education to train the future water scientists and water experts to reach SDG6.
- We will update with more policy suggestions via the side event webpage:
<https://www.uib.no/en/news/161323/exploring-new-un-avenues-water-conference>