



UN  
2023 WATER  
CONFERENCE

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## UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

### *Science-Based Global Water Assessment*

Friday 24 March, 11 :00 - 12 :15 p.m. ECOSOC, UNHQ

Organized by: The Republic of Korea and United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

#### **Background on the event**

The president of the UN GA called for “Solutions through solidarity, Sustainability and science” during the 77th session, as a path towards satisfying the development needs of the present generation and preserving opportunities for future generations. Echoing this call, several Member States called for an increasing role of science, technology and innovation for accelerated transformation in the water realm as part of the contribution mechanism from Member States for the UN 2023 Water conference. Responding to the call of the member states, UNESCO presented the game-changing idea of a **Science-based Global Water Assessment** during the UN 2023 Water Conference. The idea proposes the establishment of an **“Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform for Water Sustainability (ISPWAS)”** to undertake a science-based global water assessment to forge a new relationship between science and policy-making. Thus, it would bring evidence-based knowledge and rigorous analysis to policy-making, sustainably addressing increasingly complex interconnected water challenges across sectors and bridge the growing science-policy gap that exists in many countries. ISPWAS would share world-class, science-based, solution-oriented knowledge to support Member States in their decision and innovative policy-making that underpins and addresses the complexities of sustainably managing water resources. It would help to identify and address the severe deficiencies in human capacity and water governance that hinder effective water management. ISPWAS would undertake the global assessment implemented through national entities with an intergovernmental validation mechanism. The initiative is to be interlinked and coordinated with other potential game-changing solutions, for instance, those related to data and information and capacity development – two of the accelerators defined in the SDG Acceleration Framework. Synergies with other intergovernmental mechanisms (such as the IPCC, IPBES, and others) are also foreseen.

## Water Action Agenda

Following commitments made during the event are direct contributions to the Water Action Agenda and support implementation of a Science-based Global Water Assessment towards achieving the SDGs:

- UNESCO to promote the establishment of a Science-Based Global Water Assessment
- A number of countries have agreed on their active support to the initiative, namely Republic of Korea, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Egypt, Hungary, Indonesia, Mexico, Poland, Senegal, Uganda, and EU to partner with UNESCO's commitment
- A number of UN and International Agencies have pledged their support to the initiative, namely IAEA, UNCCD, UNEP, UNDP, WMO, ISC, ITAIPU, IAHS, Sustainable Water Future and Global Water Futures Programme to partner to UNESCO's commitment and provide technical support

## Key Issues discussed

- The **science-based global water assessment**, if approved, will be implemented by national entities and validated by an intergovernmental body has the potential to offer targeted water solutions that meet the unique needs of Member States. Published digitally every 5-6 years, it would provide a reference point on the status of global water resources, sectorial water uses, and state-of-the-art management tools.
- A **High-Level Water Science-Policy Dialogue Forum** is needed for interactions, demonstrations and feedback on the outcomes of the assessment, such as scientific synthesis (e.g., reports), knowledge accumulation and accessible tools
- **Water Policy Recommendations and thematic report**, published every 1 or 2 years, translating key scientific findings into policy metrics and recommendations based on thematic aspects to assist policy and decision-makers on the best course of action using evidence-based science for a range of well-defined contexts.
- An interactive **web-based repository** of assessment tools, models, data, maps, process mapping, and capacity development tools, established and tested at national level and validated by national authorities.
- **Member States' buy-in** is seen as critical for the success of the implementation of the ISPWAS platform, whilst creating momentum for the several UN agencies and research institutions, custodians of existing assessments and reports, to develop a collective and solution-oriented mechanism.

## Key recommendations for action

- UNESCO in collaboration with the Republic of Korea and international agencies will be outlining the next steps in the coming months which includes the preparation to have a side event at the **High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)** 2023, 10-19 July 2023 in UN headquarters,
- Further consultations need to be held on **the ISPWAS implementation pathway**