



UN  
2023 WATER  
CONFERENCE

NEW YORK  
22-24  
MARCH  
2023

## UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

### Transboundary Cooperation and Science for the Sustainable Management of Amazon waters

Wednesday 22 March 2023, 14:00-15:15 UNHQ, Conference Room 8

**Organized by:** Permanent Mission of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to the  
United Nations,  
Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, UNESCO

**Partners:** National Water and Basic Sanitation Agency of Brazil, Regional Center  
for Groundwater Management in LAC - CeReGAS, Science Panel for the  
Amazon, Inter-American Development Bank.

#### **Background on the event (one paragraph)**

The Amazon River Basin is the largest drainage basin on the planet, discharging about 20% of the liquid freshwater into the Atlantic Ocean, while covering close to 45% of the land area of South America. Multi-level governance in the Amazon basin, informed by science and including transboundary cooperation among various actors and across sectors is essential to ensure adequate integrated water management in order to guarantee water and sanitation as a human right. To address the challenges at the scale of the Amazon basin, the 8 basin countries cooperate at the national and bilateral level and through transboundary regional cooperation in the framework of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization-ACTO, and with the support of specialized multilateral mechanisms such as the UNESCO Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP), among others. The event discussed the progress, challenges, and opportunities for transboundary IWRM, data, monitoring, and knowledge sharing in the Amazon Basin from the perspective of national water policies, regional cooperation framework, and multilateral cooperation. The side event was attended by the President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, H.E. Mr. Luis Arce Catacora, the Secretary General of ACTO, Ms. Alexandra Moreira, and the President of ANA-Brazil, Ms. Veronica Rios, among the other distinguished speakers, and moderated by Amb. Carlos Lazary.

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

There is a regional commitment to advance the implementation of the Strategic Action Program for the Integrated Management of Water Resources in the Amazon Basin, agreed by the 8 ACTO Member Countries in 2017, to ensure strengthening IWRM at the national and regional level; institutional adaptation to climate variability and change; and water resources monitoring and knowledge management in support of the implementation of relevant SDGs and for the benefit of the peoples and ecosystems of the Amazon Basin. In the framework of this regional strategy, support knowledge generation and capacity development on water-related monitoring and information systems, models,

and tools required for cooperative and sustainable transboundary management in the Amazon basin, through the Amazon Regional Observatory, created and implemented in 2021, and strengthen and promote the protection and sustainable management of the transboundary Amazon aquifer systems.

### **Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)**

- Transboundary cooperation among the 8 Amazonian countries in the framework of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization is contributing to the achievement of not only SDG 6.5.2 but also the other indicators of SDG 6 through the implementation of the Strategic Action Program at the national and regional level, highlighting important advances such as the Amazon Regional Observatory, the regional hydrological and water monitoring networks, the regional initiative on the Amazon Aquifer Systems and the Regional Transboundary Action Plan on drinking water, basic sanitation and solid waste management, among others.
- The role of collaboration among scientists from the region in the context of the Science Panel for the Amazon to advance transboundary cooperation and provide scientific evidence and data for large-scale sustainable planning and management at the basin level of important issues such as fisheries, dams, and protected areas.
- The importance of South-South cooperation in the Amazon basin from the perspective of the National Water Agency of Brazil, which launched the first *Amazon Water Quality Report* stressing the role of solid regional data for informed joint decision-making and improved public policies oriented to bringing integrated solutions for the whole basin.
- The vital role of water for the Living Well of peoples and Mother Earth, taking into account the importance of cross-border cooperation at the science-policy interface to address challenges jointly at all levels, including policy decisions and the inter-scientific dialogue with indigenous knowledge production systems.
- The importance of improving the knowledge on the Amazon basin for decision-making, including the aquifer systems, highlighting the work of UNESCO PHI and the space provided for scientists and decision-makers to come together through initiatives such as regional working groups on hydrogeomorphology on the Andean Amazon Basin and on education and water cultures (including ancestral hydro-technologies) and also using satellite data to measure water quality parameters.
- The particular challenges in transboundary basins, which account for 71% of superficial waters and cover 60% of the LAC territory, highlighting the work of the IDB in institutional and governance strengthening, capacity building, science, and information digital platforms, and financing towards green and resilient infrastructure with the goal of achieving universal water services for the region and its role in the Amazon.
- The importance of groundwater for the achievement of the SDGs due to the numerous services it provides to people and ecosystems and the challenge to cooperate across borders on an invisible resource, highlighting the work of CeReGAS and the cooperation under ISARM/UNESCO-OAS to generate knowledge on the transboundary aquifers in the Americas, their status, preservation, use and supply of groundwater.

### **Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)**

- Advance in the implementation of the Strategic Action Program for the IWRM in the Amazon Basin through regional and international cooperation and partnerships in the framework of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization.

- Strengthen regional cooperation on transboundary aquifers through advancing the financing and implementation of the regional initiative *Towards a better understanding of the Amazon Aquifer Systems for its protection and sustainable management*, in partnership between ACTO, UNEP, and IDB.
- Strengthen the Water Resources Module of the Amazon Regional Observatory through the consolidation of the Amazon Hydrological Network and the Regional Water Quality Monitoring Network and strengthen the functions of the Water Situation Room.
- Advance in the development of the Transboundary Regional Action Plan on Drinking Water, Basic Sanitation and Solid Waste Management and the corresponding portfolio of sustainable and resilient infrastructure projects in the ACTO-IDB partnership.
- Promote regional scientific collaboration to support cooperation and decision-making at the regional level in order to inform and catalyze basin-wide knowledge generation, information exchange, planning, and management for water, food, energy, and environmental security in the Amazon.
- Channel financial resources from multilateral sources, including funds and development banks, for water management at the basin and ecosystem levels, since ecosystem connectivity in transboundary basins requires coordinated and shared management, beyond national borders.