



UN
2023 WATER
CONFERENCE

NEW YORK
22-24
MARCH
2023

UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

Towards an inclusive, pre-emptive, and positive hydro-diplomacy

March 23rd, 2023, 6.30pm, Nomad Tower

Organized by: The Bridge Tank & Initiatives for the Future of Great Rivers (IFGR)

(in partnership with the French Water Partnership, the Geneva Water Hub, IHE Delft, the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO), the Chair Technology for Change of École Polytechnique, and APCO Worldwide)

Background on the event

With conflicts over water gaining in prominence and intensity, the need to develop tools and practices ensuring peaceful collaboration and integrated co-management on transboundary water resources has become ever more pressing. Rethinking hydro-diplomacy and expanding it beyond the sole practice of diplomats, beyond its traditional definition as a last resort defensive lever to avoid a violent escalation of conflicts over water resources, aims to establish a more inclusive multi-stakeholder practice of hydro-diplomacy instead, in order to encourage and facilitate a more peaceful and routinised transboundary cooperation on water resources.

Water Action Agenda

Our initiative will establish a recurring annual hydro-diplomacy conference: the World Water for Peace Conference. The World Water for Peace Conference aims to promote a more inclusive practice of hydro-diplomacy in order to ensure a more peaceful and sustainable water cooperation and the integrated management and preservation of water resources.

<https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/world-water-peace-conference>

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

- Hydro-diplomacy's role in sustaining and building peace: pre-empting and anticipating the emergence of conflicts to ensure long lasting peace

- Prevention of conflicts also bolstered through redistribution of benefits and socio-economic development across river basins
- Water: the tragedy of the commons or an opportunity for inter-sectoral and multi-stakeholder cooperation and integration
- The French approach to IWRM and hydro-diplomacy : multi-stakeholder basin level approach
- The importance of the UN Watercourses Convention as foundation and shared language on which to build new agreements and cooperation frameworks
- New dynamics in hydro-diplomacy: increasing attention given to inclusion and societal adaptation of existing frameworks to make all voices heard
- Preservation of riverine ecosystems and renaturation initiatives. Examples from the Vjosa River National Park and the Rhone River
- Connecting track 1 and track 2 diplomacy: Finland's fundamental approach to hydro-diplomacy as a model on which to build continued efforts
- Companies as contributors to hydro-diplomacy: role in redistribution, conservation, mediation, and cooperation

Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)

- Greater horizontal (across different sectors) and vertical (across narratives, bridging the gap between all actors in a river basin) integration required
- Development of dialogue platforms and meso-institutions like RBOs must be supported to bolster this inter-sectoral dialogue and cooperation
- Ratification and implementation of the UN Watercourses Convention must be encouraged and accelerated
- Inclusion of diversity of stakeholders and actors in hydro-diplomacy: from local populations to businesses, the agricultural sector, the energy sector, etc.
- Importance of connecting track 1 and track 2 diplomacy for a more appeased and inclusive hydro-diplomacy

For a detailed report: <https://thebridgetank.org/en/2023/04/05/hydro-diplomacy-proceedings-of-our-side-event-at-the-un-2023-water-conference/>