



**UN**  
**2023 WATER**  
**CONFERENCE**

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## **UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event**

### ***Water Safe Cities: A blueprint for climate action***

22 March 2023, 10:00-12:00 EDT, Consulate General of Denmark in  
New York (11th Floor), 666 3rd Avenue, New York, NY 10017  
United States

C40 Cities, Grundfos, The Grundfos Foundation, International Water  
Association (IWA), W12+ Programs and the Global Water Operators'  
Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA)

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

Cities are at the frontline of almost all impacts of the climate crisis, including water changes resulting in both too much or too little water threatening the safety and living conditions of millions of people in urban areas. This event reunited representatives from different cities and experts to discuss how floods, droughts, and storms caused by climate breakdown can harm communities and the economic growth of cities. It explored ways cities can improve their water safety and security by taking an integrated and holistic approach to water management. The event set the foundation for peer-to-peer city collaboration on urban water-related climate risks.

#### **Water Action Agenda**

C40 alongside key partners (including Grundfos, The Grundfos Foundation, IWA, W12+ Programs and GWOPA) are working with cities worldwide to promote innovative and sustainable solutions, increase awareness and education, and build a culture of water resilience. As a result, mayors are taking action to address water-related hazards, showing that real political leadership can save lives and make communities more resilient. Together, they are all united in action to ensure safe, reliable, and sustainable water supplies for all, protect cities from flooding, and support cities in preparing for the impacts of the climate crisis.

#### **Commitment in the Water Action Agenda**

[Accelerating water action implementation in C40 Cities](#)

## **Key Issues discussed**

- Extreme natural events, such as intense rainfall, may lead to riverine, coastal, and inland flooding. Due to the climate crisis, these events tend to occur more frequently and follow different patterns, which makes it difficult to forecast when exactly the next one will occur.
- Cities need to adapt by implementing new approaches and improving how we work with nature to reduce risk, while managing the scarcity/surplus of water more effectively.
- The problem of having too little water for too many people increases in parallel with uncontrolled urban growth in cities, especially in the Global South. It leads to an overdemand for water in periods of scarcity that are tending to last longer, causing shortages that deeply impact thousands of people.
- The water crisis is often a governance crisis that underlines the importance of cities having authority over their resources.
- Local authorities play an increasingly important role in guaranteeing equitable water distribution as a fundamental human right.
- The effectiveness of water governance in cities largely depends on the public/private utility scheme implemented.

## **Key recommendations for action**

- Cities are critical actors in ensuring resolution of the water crisis.
- Cities often have authority to manage and recycle stormwater through both on-site solutions at the building level and large-scale green infrastructure and depaving.
- Cities also can directly oversee or influence reducing leakages, tapping into alternate sources, and requiring equitable pricing.
- Governance is one of the most critical components regardless the variation cities may have in their approaches to working with the private sector or with other government stakeholders.
- Clear and transparent stakeholder responsibilities and long-term perspective will be critical to ensure success in rebalancing the human relationship with water during climate change.
- Collaborative sharing between peer cities will further allow the ideas to spread at a pace capable of keeping up with the speed of climate breakdown.