

DRAFT PRESS RELEASE

Water is both a victim and a solution to climate change

Baku, Azerbaijan – 13 November 2024 – At the COP29 Climate Conference in Baku, Retno Marsudi, the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Water, joined H.E. Mukhtar Babayev, President of COP29 and Azerbaijan's Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources, to call for water actions in climate resilience. Speaking at the High Level Special Events of the COP29 Presidency on "The Adverse Impacts of Climate Change on the Decline of Water Basins," they highlighted the urgent need to make water conservation a priority in climate policies and efforts, underscoring water's central role in sustainable development and ecosystem protection.

"Water is a victim of climate change" Retno Marsudi stated, reflecting on the stark impacts of climate change on global water resources. Citing data from 2023, she noted that global rivers experienced their driest year in three decades, affecting millions of lives with droughts, floods, and food insecurity. Marsudi emphasized that water scarcity, ecosystem degradation, and infrastructure vulnerability have reached critical levels due to climate impacts.

"However, we must not forget that water is also solution to climate change" she added. This remark was supported by Mukhtar Babayev, who continues by urging for integrated approaches that place water conservation at the forefront of climate resilience strategies.

Throughout the high-level event, speakers also joint the call for more robust and inclusive water actions. Among others are Celinda Sosa Lunda, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Plurinational State of Bolivia; , Hassan Bakhit Djamous, Minister of Environment, Fisheries, and Sustainable Development of the Republic of Chad; and Amna bint Abdullah Al Dahak, Minister of Climate Change and Environment of UAE. They concurred that water must be at the heart of climate discussions and solutions.

Scaled up initiative must be the driver of progress toward the Paris Agreement and Sustainable Development Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation).

"To fight climate change, we must advocate, align, and accelerate actions in water. By acting now and placing water at the centre of climate efforts, we can protect ecosystems, improve livelihoods, and secure a brighter future for our planet" Marsudi concluded.

In the second day of her participation and engagement at the COP29, Marsudi held discussions with various water stakeholders such as Ain Bahadur Shahi Thakuri, the Minister of Forestry and Environment of Nepal and Tatiana Molcean, the Executive Secretary of the UNECE. She consistently delivered a clear message that water must be high in global political agenda.