



**Draft Statement on behalf of the Caribbean Community
by H.E. Carlos Fuller, Permanent Representative of Belize to the United Nations
at the Organizational Session for the 2026 United Nations Water Conference to
Accelerate the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6: Ensure
availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
3 March 2025**

Mr. President,

I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of the fourteen Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

CARICOM welcomes the convening of the UN Water Conference next year, three years after the last conference in 2023. That water conference was the first in almost 50 years and we must ensure that another such drought does not recur. One tangible outcome of next year's conference, therefore, should be a decision on the timely convening of UN Water Conferences.

We thank the United Arab Emirates for offering to host the Conference in December next year and to Senegal for agreeing to co-host. We also welcome Senegal's generous offer to convene a high-level international meeting in Dakar later this year to support the effective preparation of the Conference.

Mr. President,

Climate change has disrupted the water cycle; rainfall patterns are no longer predictable; extreme events such as intense rainfall, prolonged dry seasons and drought are now the norm. Water, drainage and sewage infrastructure are routinely compromised by hurricanes, floods and landslides. For CARICOM, these challenges are compounded by our unique circumstances. Many of our Member States depend on ground water as the sole or major source of potable water, but rising sea levels are leading to the salinization of our aquifers. This vital resource is being compromised, and the full extent of it has not been accurately assessed and quantified. The 2026 UN Water Conference needs to address these challenges in a comprehensive manner. CARICOM therefore welcomes the opportunity to provide recommendations on key areas the interactive dialogues should focus on.

Firstly, rising global temperatures are causing seas to expand and glaciers to melt, accelerating the rate of sea level rise. The rapid melting of glaciers has now become the leading cause of sea level rise. One interactive dialogue should therefore be dedicated to the impact of glacial melt on water resources of mountainous regions and downstream riverine systems, its contribution to sea level rise and any remedial measures that can be taken.

Secondly, groundwater is one sector of the hydrological cycle that is not being adequately monitored. Systematic monitoring systems to assess the quantity and quality of groundwater must be established in each country. Such systems will enable governments to develop and implement policies and procedures for water extraction, discharge and the allocation of water resources to the relevant authorized users. Given its importance, this issue can be addressed within one or several of the dialogues.

Thirdly, as noted by the World Meteorological Organization, only 5% of the water on earth is available for use. Development and climate change are making its accessibility more challenging for many, especially the more marginalized in society. The likelihood of conflicts is increasing, including between neighboring States sharing the same aquifers and water catchments. CARICOM therefore proposes that an interactive dialogue be dedicated to the nexus between water and security, while another dialogue addresses the equitable sharing and management of transboundary water resources.

Finally, Mr President, the role of technology in water resource monitoring, both remotely and in-situ, in its management, and the dissemination of information could also form the topic of another interactive dialogue.

CARICOM is also of the view that experts identified by Member States and by the accredited organizations with the relevant expertise should be invited to deliver stage-setting remarks in the dialogues. Member States and organizations should be invited to participate in the dialogues and the co-chairs should then select the panelists from these volunteers ensuring there is an equitable regional representation, gender parity and meaningful participation by civil society.

We further wish to underscore the vital role of intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector with expertise on the subject to the process. We encourage their participation in the Conference through the delivery of statements, engagement in the interactive dialogues and the organization of side events. Their expertise and contributions can assist governments in making informed decisions which should be one of the objectives of the Conference.

Mr President,

In closing, CARICOM extends its appreciation to you for the opportunity to present the region's priorities and looks forward to the next session on July 9th to finalize the themes for the UN Conference and the high-level international meeting in Dakar later in the year.

I thank you.