

2026 UNITED NATIONS WATER CONFERENCE

Organizational Session

3 March 2025 ECOSOC Chamber, UNHQ

Cross-regional Statement

Co-hosts,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of a cross-regional group of countries that include Australia, Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Georgia, Hungary, Iraq, Jordan, Malta, Namibia, Netherlands, Pakistan, Romania, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Vietnam, the European Union, in addition to my country, Egypt.

Allow me to take this opportunity to thank you, co-hosts, for all the efforts exerted in this process coming to this point, including overseeing the lengthy negotiations that led to the adoption of GA resolution 78/327 “Modalities of the 2026 United Nations Water Conference” in September 2024. This resolution is and shall remain the basis for all our work leading up to the conference. We assure you of our full support moving forward.

Co-hosts,

We meet here today as mandated by the Modalities resolution to “make updated recommendations to the General Assembly” on the themes of the interactive dialogues of the 2026 conference.

In this regard, allow me to make the following brief points:

- 1- This group of countries remains open and flexible to discussions regarding the six themes of the 2026 Conference. We believe the Conference and its interactive dialogues should be inclusive, cross-sectoral, action oriented, and relevant to member states and other stakeholders. They should also allow for the interactive dialogues to be held in a collaborative and multi-stakeholder nature, with due regard for gender and geographical balance.
- 2- The 2023 Water Conference was a resounding success. It resulted in an ambitious Water Action Agenda, and included five interactive dialogues. These dialogues focused on water in the themes of: Health, Sustainable Development, Cooperation, Climate, Resilience and the Environment, as well as the Water Action Decade.

We believe these topics remain relevant, and would benefit from further exploration and more in-depth discussions at the 2026 Conference, building on the outcomes of the 2023 Conference and providing a sense of continuity and follow-up to these topics.

Moreover, this group is of the view that an early agreement and a clear and ambitious timeframe to finalize the details of each of the six interactive dialogues is needed, including identifying the co-chairs, participants, moderators, as well as the related documentation for each dialogue and their possible concrete outcomes.

- 3-** This group of countries remain ready to engage with all member states, the UN Secretariat, the UN Special Envoy on Water, as well as relevant stakeholders on the theme of the sixth interactive dialogue. We strongly believe that this additional interactive dialogue is an opportunity to have a focused discussion on emerging challenges related to water and development in the context of SDG6, in a way that can contribute to formulating innovative solutions for a better future for our societies.

- 4- We also believe that the 2026 Conference would benefit from a discussion on the future of the UN water process beyond 2028.

The agreement on the follow-up to the 2023 Conference, including the convening of the 2026 UN Conference on SDG 6, and the 2028 conference to conclude the Water Action Decade, were steps in the right direction.

This group strongly believes that this momentum should be built on beyond 2028, with a view to reaching an agreement on a well-established intergovernmental UN process to address water and development, to bridge the gaps and join the dots moving into the future. We remain ready to engage on this matter at the earliest opportunity, and we believe the Secretary General's Special Envoy on Water can play a crucial role to this end.

Co-hosts,

We look forward for engaging in today's meeting and in the months ahead towards reaching an agreement on the six themes of the

Conference. We also look forward to the preparatory meeting in Dakar later this year, which we believe would be an important step in the preparation for the Conference next year.

I thank you.