

1st preparatory meeting of the UN 2026 Water Conference

03 March 2025, 10:00-13:00 and 15:00-18:00

ECOSOC Chamber at the UNHQ in New York

FAO Remarks

By

Angélica Jácome, Director, FAO Liaison Office with the UN

Excellencies, distinguished delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Water is fundamental to life on earth.
- It is vital for agriculture, which accounts for 72% of global freshwater withdrawals.
- Yet, as we are aware, freshwater resources are depleting at an alarming rate.
- Water scarcity, floods and droughts are increasing in frequency and intensity.
- We need to commit to using water in a sustainable way – starting with agriculture.
- Agriculture must play an active role at the forefront of efforts to tackle water-related challenges.
- FAO is dedicated to support accelerated action towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, particularly on Sustainable Development Goal two on ending hunger, achieving food security and improving nutrition; as well as Sustainable Development Goal six on ensuring access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene, through improved agriculture water

management for better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life.

- Through the FAO Water Journey, FAO is promoting the integration of water into national policy development and solutions for the transformation of agrifood systems to ensure global food security.
- Water has also been mainstreamed in FAO's internal governance mechanisms and decision-making bodies, and it is the theme of the current biennium of FAO.
- In 2023, FAO submitted eight commitments to the Water Action Agenda, namely:
 - National Water Roadmaps,
 - Global Dialogue on Water Tenure,
 - National Drought Plans,
 - Irrigation needs and potential mapping,
 - Development of a Global Water Data Portal,
 - Monitoring of Water Productivity and Evapotranspiration,
 - Addressing water scarcity in agriculture, and
 - FAO's legal database on water, AQUALEX.
- FAO has actively promoted and strengthened the implementation of these commitments in collaboration with Members and partners on the ground.

- Agrifood systems hold the key to solving major interlinked challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and poverty.
- FAO therefore calls for a holistic, systemic and integrated approach to value and manage water as a key driver for agrifood systems transformation to ensure sustainable development.
- In defining the themes for the upcoming UN 2026 Water conference, FAO would like to propose that particular focus be placed on the vital role of water for agrifood systems transformation.
- During the UN 2023 Water Conference, FAO played an active role as co-organizer of the Interactive Dialogue 2 ‘Water for Sustainable Development: Valuing Water, Water-Energy-Food Nexus, and Sustainable Economic and Urban Development’.
- FAO is committed to supporting the co-hosts of the 2026 UN Water Conference, the Governments of Senegal and the United Arab Emirates, as well as the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Water and stands ready once again to co-organize relevant theme.
- Thank you.