

Organizational session in preparation of the 2026 UN Water Conference

National statement by

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on behalf of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

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Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

I would like to thank the United Arab Emirates and Senegal for convening this preparatory meeting.

When The Netherlands and Tajikistan started organizing the UN 2023 Water Conference we had to start from scratch, as the first and previous UN Water Conference was nearly 50 years ago. At the time, water was not high on the global political agenda and we did not have a clear roadmap on the preparatory process. This is different now.

Not only did the Conference create political momentum for water, with over 800 voluntary commitments captured in the Water Action Agenda. We now have a UN System-Wide Strategy on Water & Sanitation and a UN Special Envoy for Water, H.E. Mrs. Retno Marsudi.

All of us can be proud of this outcome. For The Kingdom of the Netherlands water is, has always been, and will always remain a priority issue. Over the past centuries, we have gained a lot of experience in dealing and living with water. As we face global water challenges, we will continue to share the Netherlands' decades of knowledge and experience within our government, private sector, civil society, and knowledge institutes.

And we stand ready to help to make the next UN Water Conference an even greater success. With that, we would like to make three suggestions:

First: To continue the UN 2023 Conference practice of the guiding principles for an inclusive, cross-sectoral and action-oriented process. Ensuring broad multistakeholder engagement, including the private sector, civil society, and knowledge institutions. Creating synergies with other processes, such as the G20, the different COPs, Sendai Framework and sectors such as food and health.

Second: We would like to see that the Interactive Dialogues focus and build upon the five established themes of the Interactive Dialogues in 2023 to ensure continuation, monitoring and build on the recommendations. Faced with the addition of a sixth Interactive Dialogue, The Netherlands suggests focusing on Technology and Innovation as an enabler for progress.

Third: The most ambitious and actionable outcome of 2023 is the Water Action Agenda. We hope that the co-hosts and the UN system will build on this agenda so that it becomes a tool that empowers countries, companies, and civil society organizations to take meaningful action. And to improve cooperation on joint commitments and increase synergies.

To conclude, The Netherlands will continue to support the co-hosts of the 2026 UN Water Conference – the United Arab Emirates and Senegal – to achieve an ambitious outcome, building on the 2023 results and beyond. You can count on us.

I thank you.