

2026 UN Water Conference – Organizational session

3 March 2025

**Rio Hada, Chief, Equality, Development and Rule of Law Section,
OHCHR New York Office**

On behalf of OHCHR, as well as the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to water and sanitation, I would like to highlight three points as our recommendations:

First, dedicate one of the interactive dialogues to the centrality of human rights to water and sanitation in accelerating the SDG 6. None of the SDG 6 targets are on track. We need to tackle entrenched discrimination and inequalities in access to water and sanitation, if we are to make progress for 2030 and beyond.

Second, human rights and human rights-based approach should be integrated throughout the preparatory process for and during the Conference. This means ensuring safe, meaningful and inclusive participation, transparency, access to information, and accountability.

The voice of rights-holders, particularly persons and groups that face discrimination or are in a situation of vulnerability, should be heard in the various thematic discussions, notably those living in poverty, minorities, Indigenous Peoples, women and girls, persons with disabilities, older persons, migrants and asylum seekers, among others.

The effective and meaningful participation of rights-holders, civil society and social movements representing water and river defenders will allow them to express their views and showcase promising practices on the ground.

Lastly, effective and accelerated SDG 6 implementation requires multi-sectoral, coordinated efforts at all levels. Local governments play a critical role and have shared and complementary duties with central governments for the realization of human rights, including the rights to water and sanitation. **The Conference should ensure active participation of local governments, local institutions and community organizations to share promising practices to achieve SDG 6.**

In concluding, OHCHR is committed to support Member States in realizing human rights to water and sanitation, including through the Water Action Agenda and the implementation of UN integrated strategy under the UN-Water.

In this context, I would like to share that the UN Human Rights Council will convene a panel discussion during its 59th session in June, which will focus on mainstreaming the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, as contribution to the 2026 UN Water Conference.

Thank you.