

UNITED NATIONS  NATIONS UNIES

THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY GENERAL'S  
SPECIAL ENVOY ON WATER

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Remark  
**“The Moment of Water”**

in the  
**Organizational Session of the UN Water Conference 2026**

3 March 2025

Thank you Chair,

1. First of all...allow me to congratulate...  
➔ **Minister Dieye of Senegal** – and **Assistant Minister Balalaa** of the UAE for their the leadership in preparing for the UN Water Conference 2026...
2. I would like to also greet **USG Li Junhua** of DESA for the convening of this Session...

**Distinguished delegates,  
Colleagues,**

3. **This is the moment for water...**
4. Since the first UN Water Conference in 1977 – **water has lost it space** in the discussions and deliberations within the UN...
5. 2023 was a **groundbreaking year**... where the second UN Water Conference took place – after almost 50 years had passed...
6. Today, once again, we are situated in another important point... where the preparation for the **third UN Water Conference** is started...
7. Hence, **this is a moment not to be wasted**...  
➔ A moment for us to “**shape**” our water...

**Colleagues,**

8. Water is life... and there is no life without water...  
➔ We all are agreeing to this **fundamental truth**...
9. **Unfortunately**, our water continues to face **challenges**... that are getting **more complex** than ever...
10. Exacerbated by climate change... 2024 has been claimed to be **the warmest year in record**...  
➔ With that, 2024 has become **a year of extreme droughts** in many parts of the world... disrupting our **foods... livelihoods... environments**... and worsening **poverty**...
11. In the same year **water-related disasters**, such as floods, have affected at least 40 millions people... causing economic loss as much as 550 billion US Dollars...
12. If this trend continues... by 2050 more than three-quarters of the world's population will be severely affected by droughts and other water-disasters...

13. In this situation, our **only option** is to work **five-times and six-times harder...** to **put concrete actions for our water...**
14. The **UN Water Conference 2026** is one of the means to do that...

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,**

15. While we are focusing on **discussions about the priority themes** of the UN Water Conference... allow me to encourage you to **keep several key-principles** in mind...
16. **First**, our vision of the Conference must be **grounded and be built upon the pressing needs in real life...**
  - ➔ The Conference must, at all cost, avoid practice as usual – of sessions without actions...
  - ➔ It must aim to ensure that the benefits of the Conference – concretely help the people who are most in-need...
  - ➔ The Conference must aim to resolve the challenges faced by women, children, persons with disabilities, people living in rural areas, and others – who have limited access to clean and safe water... and are affected by water-related challenges...
  - ➔ It must also aim to build a water resilience future – where water- disasters are no longer a risk to development and livelihood.
  - ➔ **And it must ensure that water, especially through SDG 6, contributes to all development goals – environment, social, and economic development.**
17. **Second**, the UN Water Conference must include **innovations as game changer in water efforts.**
  - ➔ **Technology development...** and **new-models of partnerships** between stakeholders... are among the **elements of innovations** we must not overlook...
18. With innovative solutions we can resolve the existing challenges... such as **financing and limited-capacities in most developing countries.**
19. **Third**, our vision and aspiration must be built **upon concrete commitments to put actions...**
  - ➔ This is the key recipe to have a UN Water Conference that is **action oriented...**
20. **Last**, we must use the Conference to strategize our water actions **many steps ahead...**

- ➔ The UN Water Conference must not fail to **foresee actions that are needed** to ensure **water stays as a priority in our future...** post-2026, post-2028, and post-2030...

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,**

21. I look forward to hearing your inputs and work with all of you in making the UN Water Conference a success...
22. With my “**Triple A**” principles – **Advocacy, Alignment, and Acceleration...** I am ready to support the preparation of a **Conference... and push for progress** in global water agenda...
23. **Again...This is the moment of water...**
  - ➔ The moment to advocate... to align... and to accelerate actions on water.

I thank you,