



UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME
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FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

Organizational Session - 2026 UN Water Conference

To begin the preparatory process for the 2026 United Nations Water Conference, and as mandated in A/RES/78/327, an organizational session will be held to "make updated recommendations to the General Assembly on the themes of the interactive dialogues".

**Date & location: 3 March 2025 in the ECOSOC Chamber, UNHQ in New York
10:00-13:00 and 15:00-18:00.**

Input by UN-Habitat for a duration of 3 minutes

Statement by UN-Habitat. 3 minutes (405 words with 135words/minute)

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

Water and sanitation are fundamental to human dignity, public health, and adequate housing. As part of UN-Habitat's new Strategic Plan, we are committed to advancing climate-resilient water and sanitation management in cities and human settlements. We thank the co-hosts, Senegal and the United Arab Emirates, for their leadership in the lead-up to the 2026 UN Water Conference.

UN-Habitat offers four recommendations the interactive dialogue themes:

1. Water and sanitation as key elements of adequate housing and slum transformation.

Beyond basic infrastructure, they are essential for healthy, resilient, and inclusive communities. Without them, efforts to ensure adequate housing and reduce inequalities cannot succeed. Investing in these services can transform informal settlements —home to over a billion people – into sustainable, equitable, and climate-resilient neighborhoods.

2. Integrating Water Management into Urban Planning and Finance

Achieving SDG 6 requires integrated, cross-sectoral governance. Cities must embed nature-based solutions into urban planning, such as restoring wetlands, protecting rivers, and enhancing green infrastructure to reduce floods, pollution, and groundwater depletion. UN-Habitat supports linking water security with land use, infrastructure, and finance through initiatives like *Water as Leverage* and *OurCityPlans*, ensuring sustainable urban water management.

3. Reframing wastewater as a solution, not a problem

Wastewater has untapped potential to support climate and development goals. Properly managed, it could provide energy for half a billion people and reduce global fertilizer demand by 10 per cent. The 2026 UN Water Conference is an opportunity to position wastewater as a core element of global water strategies. We propose integrating wastewater across all six dialogues, anchoring it in a collaborative, results-driven process, and co-hosting strategic events to drive action toward 2030.

4. Empowering Water and Sanitation Operators Through Partnerships

Achieving SDG 6 depends on strong, well-managed utilities delivering affordable, sustainable services. Public operators play a critical role in ensuring safe water and sanitation but face financial and capacity challenges. UN-Habitat calls for greater recognition of their role, increased financing, enabling policies, and stronger capacity development. Through the Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance, we promote peer-to-peer collaborations that enhance utilities' management, service quality, and investment sustainability. UN-Habitat reaffirms its Water Action



pledge to scale up these partnerships, strengthening 100 additional utilities to benefit 100 million people by 2030.

The 2026 UN Water Conference is a pivotal opportunity to accelerate action on water and sanitation. UN-Habitat looks forward to working with all partners to ensure these services drive sustainable urban development and climate resilience.

Thank you.