

Organization - UNICEF

Speaker name - Aidan Cronin

Date – 3 March 2025

Meeting title - 2026 UNITED NATIONS WATER CONFERENCE

----- START -----

Excellencies, Esteemed representatives from Senegal and United Arab Emirates, the UN 2026 Water conference hosts, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

UNICEF greatly welcome a conference focus on the centrality of water and sanitation to the health, ecosystems, biodiversity loss, economic development and the peace and well-being of all people and especially for children and future generations.

The UN 2026 Water Conference should help create greater connectivity across the many on-going global meetings and processes to ensure water and sanitation remain central to this conversation and helps accelerate implementation.

This requires Leadership, not only from the conference co-hosts but also from Member States, partners, and UN entities engaged on water and sanitation. To elevate the water agenda, we must engage the highest levels of Political Leadership, including Heads of State. We suggest the conference should have a dedicated segment for high-level political commitments which UNICEF stands ready to assist through the Heads of State Initiatives.

We suggest a succinct and focused number of side events to foster more meaningful engagement. The conference may serve as a moment for accountability and progress sharing on the Water Action Agenda. The conference must strive for transformative partnerships and commitments, with Member States in the lead.

We support the current format with Interactive Dialogues, we suggest with more cross-cutting topics and interaction. Responding to the current global challenges we believe water for climate, health, food, peace and innovation would be hugely relevance for future

generations. These topics offers opportunities to collaborate within the UN system but also to forge partnerships with academia, private sector, civil society and youth and for increased financing.

Let's remember the billions of people that still lack access to safe water and sanitation and that it is about reducing these inequalities and ensuring the right to water and sanitation for all boys and girls; to echo the call of the Distinguished Special Envoy on Water for Advocacy, Alignment and Acceleration – let's ensure future generations remain to the fore of the 2026 UN Water conference objectives.

Thank you.