

Reference: ECOD-COR01-03069

9 April 2025

Dear Mr. Junhua,

Thank you for your letter dated 21 March 2025, inviting the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to collaborate in the preparations for the 2026 United Nations Water Conference, on the identification of possible themes of the Dialogues, in consultation with Member States and with the support of UN-Water and the UN system.

UNEP agrees with the majority of Member States and groups during the [organizational session](#) held on 3 March 2025, which emphasised that the dialogues for the UN 2026 Water Conference should build upon the momentum of the 2023 UN Water Conference, including by maintaining the five established interactive dialogue themes. Within those five initially established interactive dialogue themes, we propose thematic suggestions to be integrated, based on recommendations and actions endorsed by Member States during the sixth United Nations Environment Assembly (Resolution 6/13 on water); and during the 29th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP29) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) launch of the Baku Dialogue on Water for Climate Action.

Using this opportunity, here are the proposed suggestions on thematic areas:

1. *Water for Health:* Mainstreaming sustainable water management and the protection, conservation, restoration and sustainable management of freshwater ecosystems into relevant intergovernmental processes, as well as into key economic sectors where effluents from agriculture, industry, hospitals, and municipal wastewater, are impacting the quality of water, with consideration of the [One Health approach](#). Effluents into water bodies are increasing exposure of humans and the environment to harmful chemicals, at a time when the Global Biodiversity Framework and the [Global Framework on Chemicals](#) have been adopted, and in turn also increasing the risk of antimicrobial resistance, eutrophication of water bodies and ocean hypoxic zones. This theme could also discuss the role that wastewater can play as a sentinel for future pandemics, through global, regional and/or sub-regional wastewater surveillance systems
2. *Water for Sustainable Development:* Enhancing action to improve data provision, including through capacity-building and digital platforms, essential tools to track progress linked to the [Sustainable Development Goal 6 indicators](#) for which the United Nations Environment Programme serves as one of the global custodians, and continue to report on the progress achieved and challenges faced. The suggestion is to focus on adoption of solutions, including linking national [integrated water resources management \(IWRM\)](#) processes to development plans and processes at all levels, including through ecosystem-based and source to sea approaches. Promote dialogue and collaboration on [water-related traditional, local and Indigenous knowledge](#), including, inter alia, integrated sustainable and climate-resilient systems and management. We also suggest inclusion of the [Pact for the Future](#) in this dialogue.

Mr. LI Junhua  
Under-Secretary-General  
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3. *Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment:* Enabling stronger analysis on freshwater ecosystems as the source of water and actions that scale up application of integrated water resources management (IWRM) to help integrate action to address biodiversity, climate and pollution inter-linked challenges through actions on the water cycle. To further advance UNFCCC COP-to-COP discussions on water, we suggest emphasising the Baku Dialogue on Water for Climate Action for continuous and coherent water-related climate action towards the 2026 and 2028 Water Conferences, the 2030 Agenda and beyond. We also suggest approaches to water circularity, including sustainable wastewater management offer in relation to climate mitigation (reduction of GHGs), energy (biogas, energy bricks, heat), water and nutrients (nitrogen, phosphorus) be highlighted.
4. *Water for Cooperation:* Promoting stronger focus of the discussions on the dramatic shift needed from sectoral thinking to an economy-wide approach across the entire water cycle. In the dialogues, we would propose that governments and other stakeholders be invited to share cases of cooperation across boundaries and borders, with an explanation about how transboundary and regional cooperation has delivered socio-economic and other co-benefits.
5. *Water Action Decade:* Accelerating the Implementation of the Objectives of the Decade, including through UNEA resolution 6/13, which calls for scaled up action on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and resolutions 3/10 and 5/2, which call for addressing water pollution from wastewater and nutrients.

I take note of the ongoing discussions around the sixth theme of the Interactive Dialogue and look forward to further engaging on this theme once it has been articulated by Member States.

UNEP remains steadfast in its commitment to providing technical and substantive support to the 2026 United Nations Water Conference. My colleague, Ms. Dianna Kopansky ([dianna.kopansky@un.org](mailto:dianna.kopansky@un.org)), Head of UNEP's Freshwater Ecosystems and Wetlands Unit, will be UNEP's thematic focal point and remains available to respond to the queries of your team.

Yours sincerely,



Inger Andersen  
Executive Director