

Statement by Shannon K. McCarthy

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UN 2026 Water Conference Preparatory Meeting

Excellencies, colleagues, and friends,

It is a privilege to join you as we prepare for the 2026 UN Water Conference. The urgency is clear: we must accelerate progress on SDG 6—ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all—while strengthening resilience to climate change and increasing demand.

At the International Desalination and Reuse Association (IDRA), we believe water resilience is not only achievable—it is essential. Since 1973, IDRA has supported governments, communities, and the private sector in advancing sustainable desalination, water reuse, and integrated resource solutions. We are proud to hold consultative status with ECOSOC, serve as an observer to the UNFCCC, and contribute to the FAO's WASAG framework.

In support of Resolution A/78/L.110, IDRA works to expand access to climate-resilient, inclusive, and non-conventional water resources infrastructure, especially in water-stressed and vulnerable regions. We advocate for an integrated paradigm built on eight interdependent pillars:

1. **Water Reuse** – Fit-for-purpose reuse closes the water loop, reduces pressure on freshwater sources, enhances resilience, and creates a circular water footprint.
2. **Desalination** – A drought-proof drinking water supply and water for agriculture for coastal and arid regions, especially when powered by renewable energy.
3. **Industry Water Stewardship** – Industrial actors must adopt water-smart reuse practices, reduce use, and protect local watersheds where they operate.
4. **Renewable Energy Integration** – Aligning water and energy systems strengthens sustainability and decarbonization.
5. **Innovative Policy Frameworks** – Forward-looking regulations and incentives can accelerate the uptake of reuse and desalination.
6. **Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)** – Incorporating non-conventional sources into IWRM strengthens sustainability and water quality.
7. **Climate-Responsive Infrastructure and Finance**: Blended finance and nature-based solutions are critical to closing the water financing gap and delivering on SDG 6.
8. **Public-Private-Partnership Process (4Ps)** – Structured collaboration enables scalable, inclusive, and adaptive project delivery.

IDRA's global network across 60+ countries stands ready to support Member States in translating these principles into action.

The 2026 Conference should mark a decisive step forward in securing a climate-resilient water future for all.

Thank you.