

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE WATER FOR PLANET

Climate, biodiversity, desertification, environment, source to sea, resilience and disaster risk reduction

An extract of the Global Online Stakeholder Consultation:
Inputs to Interactive Dialogues Concept Papers

About this Paper

This paper is an extract from the report of the Second Global Online Stakeholder Consultation: Inputs to Interactive Dialogues Concept Papers, which summarizes inputs received from stakeholders to a [global online stakeholder consultation](#) organized by UN DESA in connection with the [2026 United Nations Water Conference](#), which will be held from 2 December to 4 December 2026, in the United Arab Emirates.

The main Report can be found [here](#), including links to all responses and all inputs to the six Interactive Dialogues, as well as detailed background information and a summary.

This paper presents summaries of key messages for Interactive Dialogue: Water for Planet, climate, biodiversity, desertification, environment, source to sea, resilience and disaster risk reduction.

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

WATER FOR PLANET

climate, biodiversity, desertification, environment, source to sea, resilience and disaster risk reduction

203 responses were received for the Interactive Dialogue theme pertaining to Water for Planet.

Challenges

Water, an integral part of our planet Earth, is under threat from human-induced climate change and environmental degradation. Combating these effects and protecting vulnerable communities from them has proven challenging.

"Many developing countries emit minimal greenhouse gases but face severe climate disasters, limited climate finance, and expanding land degradation, threatening water and agriculture." Environmental Protection and Development Association, Cameroon

Stakeholders report that the hydrological cycle is disrupted by **groundwater depletion, glacial loss, droughts, floods and heatwaves**. Simultaneously, arid zones are expanding, soil is eroding, and agricultural productivity is declining. Fragmented source-to-sea governance has delayed the restrictions needed to mitigate nutrient runoff and plastic and industrial waste contamination as noted by respondents. They also expressed concern over the **lack of adequate early warning systems, underfunded disaster risk reduction**, and the weak integration of water into climate adaptation strategies.

"Rising climate extremes, desertification, and biodiversity loss, combined with groundwater depletion and pollution, hinder resilience. Since 2023, escalating droughts, floods, and weak integration of water-climate policies have intensified these global challenges." Center for Scientific and Technical Research on Arid Regions CRSTRA, Algeria

Collectively, these challenges reportedly represent a cascade of interconnected risks that significantly impair the resilience of water-ecosystems and the communities that depend on them.

"Lack of recognition of socio-ecological interdependence undermines adaptive capacity, while climate extremes accelerate risks faster than institutions transform." Irrawaddy Earth, Belgium

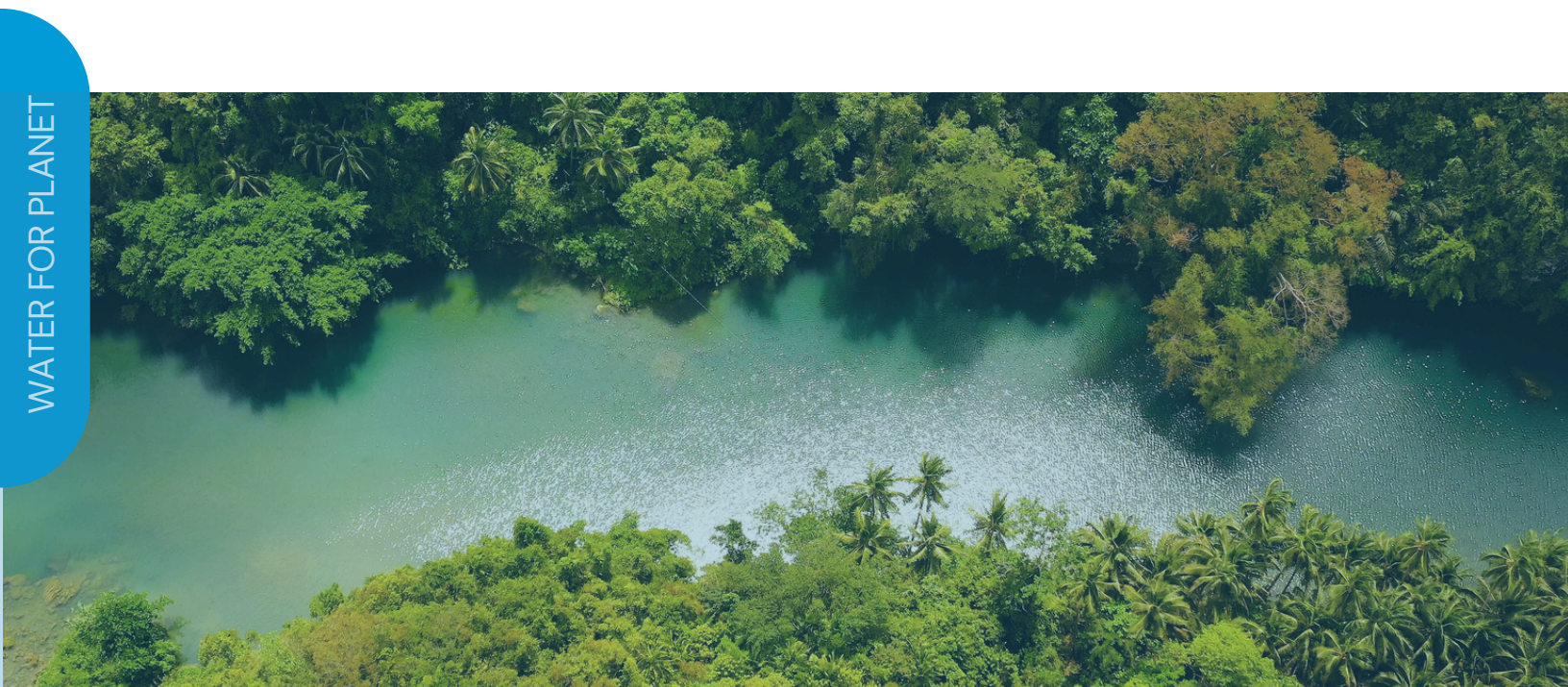
Solutions

Promising solutions to these obstacles, according to stakeholders that contributed to this online consultation, revolve around **nature-based approaches, ecosystem-based adaptation, source-to-sea approaches, and climate resilient infrastructure and technologies**. Floodplain reconnection and soil and riparian restoration were mentioned as specific examples of nature-based ways to regulate water cycles and enhance biodiversity. Stakeholders also discussed how **cross-sector governance** should be used to holistically manage disaster risk reduction (DRR), agriculture, and biodiversity at every stage of the water cycle. Digital twins, satellite and geospatial tools, AI, real-time monitoring and blockchain were promoted as viable solutions to increase transparent water governance.

“Blockchain-secured marine data improves biodiversity monitoring, source-to-sea governance, and disaster risk planning, advancing SDG 6, 13 & 14.” Energon Green Solutions, Greece

Stakeholders also discussed the potential of education and capacity building initiatives like **water literacy programs**, integrating water protection practices and lessons into school curricula, **intergenerational environmental learning** opportunities, and climate-smart agriculture training to inspire and empower local communities to use (and reuse) water in a responsible and environmentally friendly way.

“Advocate and support the increased inclusion and prioritization of Indigenous values and relational values within decision-making processes at all tiers of governance, and the need to rebuild relationships with waters away from commodity-based approaches to ones that respect water bodies as unique.” Coleman Enviroconsult, Austria



PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

In their responses, stakeholders shared examples of partnerships that have proven helpful in promoting Water for Planet. A few of these are highlighted below.¹

The C40 Water Safe Cities Accelerator has aimed to ensure water security for all through integrated urban water management including climate-adaptive water systems since 2023. The C40 Accelerator currently supports 20 cities from around the world in their commitment to establishing early warning systems in the most vulnerable communities and other emergency preparedness measures like safe shelters, net-zero emissions from water systems, flood protection and universal access. Participating cities can choose to focus on one of these pathways with the intention of meeting the success benchmark by 2030-2035. Data-driven practices are shared through city-to-city knowledge exchanges; research and technical assistance are provided, and progress reports are shared every two years.

Highlighted by: Grundfos, Denmark

Highlighted by: Te Kura Taka Pini Ltd., New Zealand

Whiria Te Waitaki is a catchment and wetland restoration project led by Te Rūnanga o Moeraki in New Zealand, focused on revitalizing the Lower Waitaki River and its surrounding ecosystems since 2021. Indigenous rangers, or kaiaka taiao, work to clear invasive scrub and establish native plantings, supporting the recovery of native birds, fish, and invertebrates. Once a thriving landscape, the Waitaki Valley is now dominated by agriculture, and the floodplain has been altered by the Waitaki Hydro Scheme. Riparian wetlands and shingle riverbeds have been damaged, with remaining habitats overrun by invasive species and predators. Delivered in partnership with Toitū Te Whenua – LINZ and funded through the Jobs for Nature program, the project integrates catchment and wetland restoration with community-driven employment and capacity-building opportunities.

¹ These examples reflect inputs shared by stakeholders and are presented for illustrative purposes only; they do not imply endorsement by the United Nations.

As part of the consultative process, stakeholders were asked to identify one transformative action needed to accelerate progress towards the Water for Planet objectives. A few examples can be found below.

"While declaring states of emergencies in areas affected by irresponsible environmental practices might be far-fetched, strong implementation of existing rules, regulations and policies for environmental protection is required." CSIR - Water Research Institute, Ghana

“Global and national policymakers must mainstream ecosystem-based approaches, enforce environmental protection, and invest in climate-resilient water systems to ensure sustainable management, biodiversity conservation, and disaster risk reduction.” The Volunteer Team Foundation for Humanitarian Action, Egypt

"Corporate-led water coalitions and allies collaborating at the UN need to be much more proactive in fostering, vs. tamping down or ignoring, systemic critiques of continuing to support vs. dismantle extractive industries in key basins." Surcos Digital, Costa Rica

"States, local governments, and communities must co-create inclusive, ecosystem-based water management strategies that integrate climate adaptation, biodiversity protection, and disaster risk reduction." Polekol, Serbia



Figure 9: Visual representation of keywords stakeholders used to describe their perspectives on the theme: Water for Planet.