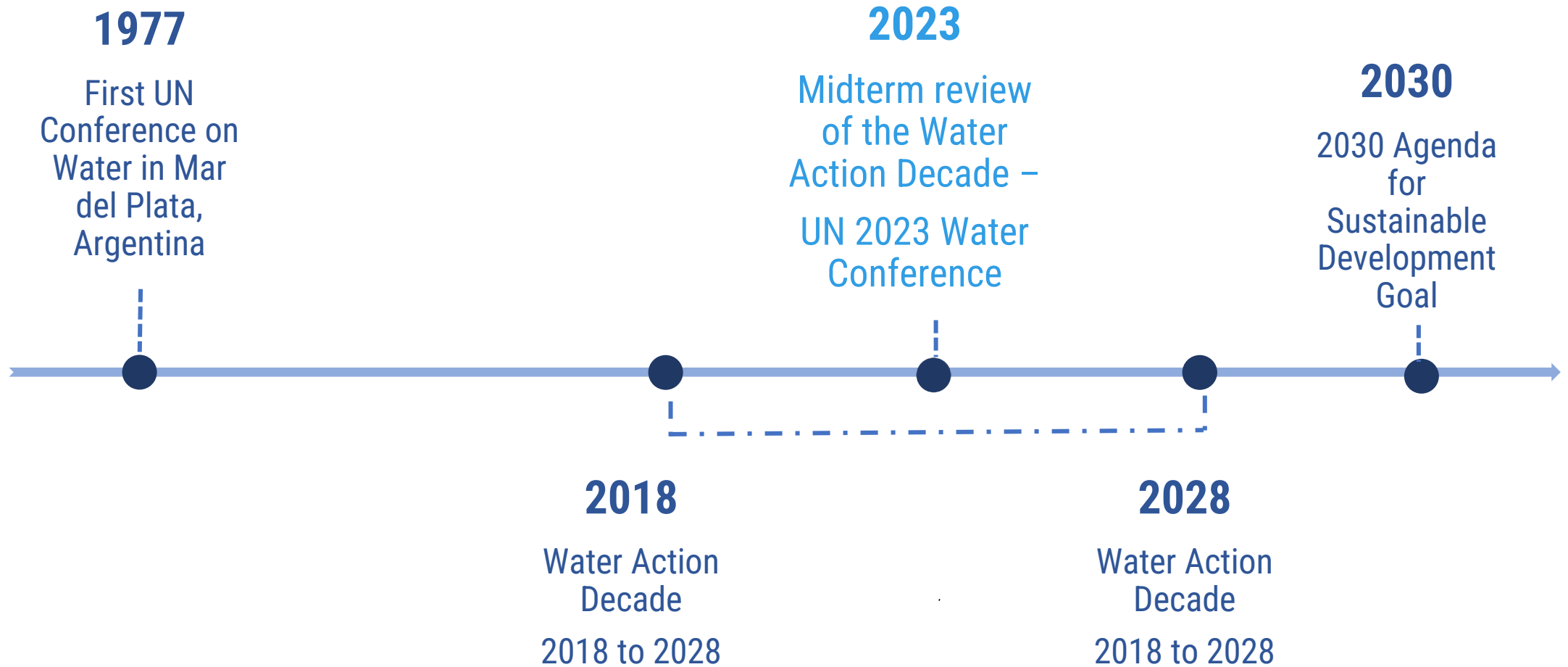


OUTCOMES OF THE UN 2023 Water Conference

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UN 2023 Water Conference: “Once in a generation” Conference



Water Action Decade (2018-2028): Averting a Global Water Crisis

- In December 2016, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution [“International Decade \(2018–2028\) for Action – Water for Sustainable Development”](#) to help put a greater focus on water during ten years.
- Emphasizing that water is critical for sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and hunger, UN Member States expressed deep concern over the **lack of access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene and over water related disasters, scarcity and pollution** being exacerbated by urbanization, population growth, desertification, drought and climate change.
- The new Decade will focus on the **sustainable development and integrated management of water resources** for the achievement of social, economic and environmental objectives and on the **implementation and promotion of related programmes and projects**, as well as on the **furtherance of cooperation and partnership at all levels** in order to help to achieve **internationally agreed water-related goals and targets**, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- The Decade commenced on World Water Day 22 March 2018, and will terminate on World Water Day, 22 March 2028.
- The World Economic Forum ranks the water crisis in the **top 3 of global risks for the third consecutive year**.
- Failing to respond effectively to these challenges will have devastating global effects.

Focus of the UN 2023 Conference

- a) Assessing the progress made in the implementation of the objectives of the Water Action Decade;
- b) Identifying possible challenges and obstacles related to the achievement of the objectives of the Decade, as well as opportunities and innovative ways and means to support their implementation and acceleration of progress;
- c) Exchanging views and develop actions and initiatives needed for accelerating progress towards the achievement of the objectives during the second half of the Decade;
- d) Supporting further action, initiatives and success, and enhance means of implementation and partnerships as well as cooperation at all relevant levels, including international cooperation, as appropriate, to accelerate the achievement of the internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including Sustainable Development Goal 6, and promote the implementation of the objectives of the Decade, including with regard to sustainable development and integrated management of water resources including through collaborative approaches,
- e) Sharing ongoing efforts, best practices and experience gained in the implementation of the objectives of the Decade.

UN 2023 Water Conference, 22-24 March, UNHQ

Six Plenaries

Member States announce commitments, plans, actions, and best practices

Five interactive dialogues held in parallel with the plenary meetings

Special Events

The co-hosts decided to organize 3-5 Special Events, scope: 50-200 people

Side Events

Member States and other stakeholders organized many side events that are cross-cutting and aim for action

Themes for the Interactive Dialogues

- 1. Water for Health:** Access to safe drinking water, hygiene and sanitation (SDG 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 17)
- 2. Water for Sustainable Development:** Valuing Water, Water-Energy-Food Nexus and Sustainable Economic and Urban Development (SDG 6.3, 6.4, 6.5 and SDGs 2, 8, 9, 11, 12)
- 3. Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment:** Source to Sea, Biodiversity, Climate, Resilience and DRR (SDGs 6.5, 6.6, 7, 11.5, 13, 14, 15)
- 4. Water for Cooperation:** Transboundary and International Water Cooperation, Cross Sectoral Cooperation and Water Across the 2030 Agenda (SDG 6.5, 6.b and SDGs 16, 17)
- 5. Water Action Decade:** Accelerating the implementation of the objectives of the Decade, including through the UN Secretary-General's Action Plan.

Supported by 5 Accelerators of the **SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework:**

- Finance
- Governance
- Capacity
- Data and information
- Innovation

Side events

- **UN 2023 Water Conference - Opened Call for Side Events – Deadline 20 January 2023**
- Side events could be organized in connection with the UN 2023 Water Conference by Member States, the UN system, Intergovernmental Organizations and accredited non-governmental stakeholders.
- All interested parties were strongly encouraged to partner with others to organize a side event.
- Side events could be held either in-person inside UN Headquarters, in-person in other locations in New York, or virtually.
- The side events would be an opportunity for all participants to **share knowledge and solutions to accelerate implementation of SDG 6 and showcase voluntary commitments for the Water Action Agenda.**

What did the Conference deliver?

The Conference helped set the agenda until 2030, and thereafter:

- 1. Delivered a summary of the Conference proceedings**
- 2. Presented a set of voluntary commitments (Water Action Agenda)**
 - Scale up and replicate** what works
 - Discontinue or change** what does not work
 - Innovate** what needs to be improved
 - Fund** what merits funding
- 3. Roadmap towards 2028 (Decade) and 2030 (SDGs)**

Commitments could come through coalitions and partnerships across all of society

Webinar series - Multi-Stakeholder Thematic Webinars

- A series of Multi-Stakeholder Thematic Webinars held virtually on **17-18 January 2023** from **9:00 – 11:00 AM** (EST) as an additional opportunity for stakeholders to prepare for the UN 2023 Water Conference, and to mobilize their contributions to the Water Action
- Agenda. The events was open to all interested stakeholders and livestreamed on Facebook.

Preparations for participation by Uganda in the UN Water Conference

Formal Communication on need to prepare for participation received by MWE from Uganda Mission in New York in November 2022.

Inputs into the thematic concept papers were submitted to the UN Head quarters in New York by the set deadline of 28 November 2022

Some proposals for possible people to participate in the dialogues as moderators, chairs or panellists submitted by 28 November 2022

A number of background documents wer available for reference as follows:

- UN SG Action Plan Water Action Decade
- Letter from Permanent Mission of Uganda to the UN
- Draft outline for UN 2023 Water Conference
- Water Action Decade: Report on Africa Regional Consultations
- Inputs in the 5 Thematic Concept Notes
- 5 Thematic Concept Notes prepared by UN to guide discussions

Preparations for participation by Uganda in the UN Water Conference

The following was done:

- Preparation of Uganda's input into the conference and the 5 themes (**Report on 5 thematic areas and overall position paper with commitments prepared**)
- Teams to represent Uganda in the conference and the 5 themes (**5 overall preparatory meetings held and as well as theme meetings**)
- Organizing a side event with others partners: (**proposal for a side event in UN Complex submitted on water in migration and displacement settings; Uganda invited to participate in 6 other side events approved by UN**)
- Commitments were made during the conference and these were identified as part of the preparations.
- Accreditation of the Uganda's delegation
- Coordination of Uganda's participation in Uganda and in New York (**Done by MWE, MOFA and Mission in New York**)
- How to implement the outcomes of the UN Water Conference (**road map prepared to guide the preparatory activities and actions after the conference**)

Uganda's participation

- Ministry of Water and Environment spearheaded the organisation of Uganda's participation in the Conference with a total of 32 government officials participating in the conference including Ministers, Members of Parliament, Permanent Secretaries, senior government officials, civil society organisations and other water related organizations.

Issues proposed during the preparatory process for consideration in commitments for the Water for Health

1. Integrating the various information systems into one and have practical synergies between the energy, agriculture and the WASH sectors in Uganda
2. Demonstrate the impact of human resources onto the sector through validation of the required resources (technical and financial) to achieve SDG 6 targets.
3. Invest in knowledge generation, evidence sharing and learning to achieve the current progress, scale up interventions to assist the country reach out to the population.

Issues proposed during the preparatory process for consideration in commitments for Water for Sustainable development

- I. Establishing transformational initiatives, through impact based research, community driven activities, private sector investments to ensure sustainable management of water for production, water supply and sanitation to extend services such that no one is left behind especially the role of youth, women and people with disabilities.
- II. Sourcing for alternative financing from the development partners, partnerships, private sector investments and finance to solve the financing gap, and consolidate sector research and innovations.
- III. Strengthening the regulation on utilities to reduce non-revenue water, improve the operation and maintenance, capacity and governance.

Issues proposed during the preparatory process for consideration in commitments for the Water Climate Resilience

- i. Developing and operationalize a comprehensive strategy and policy for sustainable development and management of ground and surface water.
- ii. Collaborating with riparian states to prioritize the conjunctive management and use of surface and ground water resources in transboundary aquifers
- iii. Engaging private sector and the communities to participate and get involved in climate resilience activities.
- iv. Adopting an approach that integrates Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) into water resources planning and management, as well as water infrastructure development.
- v. Lobbying the UN and its member states to introduce a sub Conference of Parties on water every 2 years

Issues proposed during the preparatory process for consideration in commitments for the Water Cooperation

1. Acceding to the UN Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses and the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention).
2. Cooperation with riparians and international research organizations to guide science-based decision making on water resources development and management.
3. Increasing multi-sectoral inclusion and coordination, including civil society, public private partnerships, marginalized groups, for eco-system-based approaches and transboundary cooperation within a national and cooperative framework

Issues proposed during the preparatory process for consideration in commitments for the Water Action Decade

- a) Scale up **partnerships and collaboration** through ongoing initiatives such as the Program based approach to planning and implementation under the National Development Plan; catchment based planning, development and management of water and related resources; annual Uganda Water and Environment Weeks, and a number of other programs under the Water Resources Institute.
- b) Scale up **operationalization of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF)** to fully address the refugee crisis caused by conflicts and environment and climate change challenges through focusing on humanitarian and development needs of both refugees and host communities.
- c) Scale up **monitoring of SDG 6 indicators** to facilitate progress review and generation of credible data to inform design, planning and implementation of water related programs

COMMITMENTS UGANDA COMMITTED TO

- There were 700 global commitments
- Some of the commitments were global and Uganda adopted and agreed to be party to them. These include among others the **Global initiative towards making all drinking water Lead free by 2040.**

VOLUNTARY COMMITMENTS BY UGANDA

In line with the requirements of the conference, Uganda submitted 6 voluntary commitments as follows:

- Accelerate inclusive access to safely managed water and sanitation services in both rural and urban areas in order to reach out to the underserved population
- Ensure availability of adequate and good quality water for domestic use and for productive purposes through transformational initiatives with a focus on marginalized groups so that no one is left behind;
- Accede to the UN Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses and the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes as a means of promoting transboundary water cooperation;

VOLUNTARY COMMITMENTS BY UGANDA

- Scale up partnerships and collaboration through ongoing initiatives under the National Development Plan 3 such as the Program-based approach to planning and implementation; the catchment-based planning, development and management of water and related resources; the annual Uganda Water and Environment Week, and other water related programs;
- Implement the updated Nationally Determined Contributions with special focus on ensuring resilient water supply systems for domestic and productive uses, promoting sustainable water harvesting and storage, increasing sanitation and waste water treatment infrastructure and services, scaling up integrated water resources management approaches and water use efficiency, and protection of ecosystems.
- Scale up Uganda's response to conflict and climate change induced migration and displacement through improved water services and water security.

WAY FORWARD WITH RESPECT TO THE OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CONFERENCE AND VOLUNTARY COMMITMENTS BY UGANDA

- An Action plan and work plan for operationalization of all commitments and recommendations will be developed for the short term and long term to enable regular reports on the progress to be prepared and shared within the Uganda and at UN level.
- A mechanism to follow up the pledges and commitments that were made by various development partners that are relevant and of interest to Uganda will be developed and implemented
- The commitments and recommendations for Uganda will be quantified and costed in order to solicit for funds for their implementation

Hilton Foundation support

Support to Uganda to accelerate achievement of SDG 6 through various commitments made at the 2023 UN Water Conference

Component 1: Share efforts by Uganda to achieve SDG 6, including the commitments made at the 2023 UN Water Conference

- Hold workshop at national level to share with all key stakeholders important efforts Uganda has committed to and is undertaking to achieve SDG 6, including the commitments made at the 2023 UN Water Conference
- Prepare awareness raising materials in form of posters and flyers and booklets for use in raising awareness about efforts made to achieve SDG 6, including the commitments made at the 2023 UN Water Conference
- Supporting the 5 thematic teams on 2023 UN Water Conference to hold discussions and meetings to develop action plans and budgets for implementing each of the main commitments and a number of other commitments that Uganda agreed to be party to at the 2023 UN Water Conference
- Disseminate the outputs of the various thematic teams through a number of means such as workshops, printed materials, media briefs etc.
- Participation and attendance at key national events such as the Uganda Water and Environment Week, National SDG Conference to share important efforts Uganda has committed to and is undertaking to achieve SDG 6, including the commitments made at the 2023 UN Water Conference and mobilize the required support and commitment
- Participation and attendance at key international events such as the Stockholm Water Week, SDG Summit/UN General Assembly and UNC Water & Health Conference to share important efforts Uganda has committed to and is undertaking to achieve SDG 6, including the commitments made at the 2023 UN Water Conference and mobilize the required support and commitment

Component 2: Participation in key global and regional WASH events

- The Component will enable Uganda to participate in key global and regional water events and engage with multiple stakeholders including governments, civil society and private sector. Such events will provide Uganda with opportunities for increased knowledge and skills acquisition, share information about the global lead-free drinking water pledge as well as her efforts in achieving SDG6 and other commitments.
- Both the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) and the National Planning Authority (NPA) are active participants in many global water related events, with the most recent ones being the COP27 in Cairo in October 2022 and the UN Water Conference in New York in March 2023. But still more opportunities are needed.

Component 3: Making the global lead-free drinking water pledge and actions a reality

- Lead is an invisible, odorless, and tasteless heavy metal that is harmful to health when consumed in drinking water. Uganda is aware that environmental exposures to lead threaten the healthy development of children and that the many old water supply systems constructed with different materials whose composition is not known could leach lead into the water, hence causing a lot to danger when consumed. Uganda is keen to control exposures from lead as an essential way to achieving safely managed water services.
- At the UN Water Conference in March 2023, Uganda co-convened with other governments, private sector partners and the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, a high-level side event that and pledged to be part of collective action efforts to restrict the use of lead in drinking water supply systems. Through this Component, Uganda will therefore engage in promoting the global lead-free drinking water pledge, raise awareness about the pledge and implement capacity building activities in lead testing and detection. At least 5 high level government officials will be involved in implementation and coordination of this Component while at least 20 people will participate in activities to raise awareness.

Component 4: Scaling up the development and use of district-level WASH Master Plans.

- A district WASH master plan sets out a costed, long term (10–15 years) strategy for achieving the WASH vision of the district. Currently in Uganda, district WASH visions align with achieving SDG 6.
- So far, three (3) district WASH master plans have been developed in local governments of Kabarole, Kamwenge and Luuka. Bunyangabu district has a WASH roadmap and masterplan is under development. The master plans developed and owned by the local governments with support from partners.
- The WASH masterplans have enabled the three local governments to more strongly drive the development and implementation of long-term strategic plans with a common vision for achieving sustainable WASH service provision for all.
- This component will aim to support the National Planning Authority to buy-in, initiate and spearhead scaling of the district level WASH masterplans to cover all the districts in Uganda. This will start with embedding the master planning process firmly in the national planning systems through the National Development Plan. This is to ensure that sustainable capacity is developed, and that the embedded in.