

UN 2023 Water Conference Youth Rapporteurs

Rapporteur: Maria Angel

Date: 23-03-2023

Event Title: *Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment (Interactive dialogue)*

The interactive dialogue 'Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment' Moderated by David Cooper, Acting Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), highlighted the centrality of water to some of the most pressing challenges facing humanity today. Climate change, loss of biodiversity, ecosystem degradation, and sustainable development goals are directly connected to water, making it critical to manage and conserve this resource sustainably. As the impact of increasing emissions becomes more pronounced with severe droughts, flooding, and storms, the discussion called for holistic management of the water cycle, which involves recognizing the interconnections between land, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems. The following report summarizes the key ideas presented during the discussions, including the need to prioritize planning and activities that promote resilience and allocate financing to vulnerable communities.

The participants in the interactive dialogue called for governments and regulators to prioritize planning and activities that promote resilience and allocate finance to vulnerable communities. János Áder, former President of Hungary, discussed financing wastewater management in Ghana and shared that a \$50 investment per person can provide water and sanitation in Africa. One of the challenges highlighted in the discussion was the insufficient funding available to Indigenous Peoples despite their critical role in preserving biodiversity. Indigenous Peoples possess valuable knowledge about water conservation and management, making it essential to include them in water governance actively. They must be given a seat at the table, and their voices heard.

Another critical solution proposed in the discussion was the need for greater investments in groundwater and cryosphere data to support ecosystems and provide clean drinking water. Integrated water resources management and governance at scale will also be essential, incorporating holistic, cross-sectoral perspectives into planning strategies at all levels. Mariam Almheiri, the Minister of Climate Change and Environment in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), highlighted their goal of investing in water security and sharing innovative technologies like desalination at the 28th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 28). However, it is equally important to recognize the impact of technological innovation on water, particularly in the ICT sector and data centres.

The interactive dialogue emphasized the need for holistic water governance and management approaches that consider the linkages between ecosystems from Source to Sea and foster cross-sectoral collaborations. Leticia Tituana, a youth representative from the Future Rising Fellows program, called for governments to ensure compliance with regulations and legislation from large industries and for radical changes to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Additionally, Bruno Oberle, Director-General of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), advocated for well-designed nature-based solutions as a primary strategy.

The recommendations proposed to achieve these goals were the use of an Inter-COP process to implement water-related decisions, a global water information system for improved management, and environmental economic accounting to unlock investments for water-related climate and environmental resilience building.

The first recommendation emphasizes that moving from agreement to implementation is crucial to delivering on the ambitious water-related commitments made in recent years at various intergovernmental processes. The second recommendation stresses that decision-makers need reliable data and information on water status and outlook to ensure equitable access to water resources and protect people and economies from related disasters and pollution. The third recommendation highlights that the application of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting linked to national accounting can help make the case for investments in sustainable and resilient water infrastructure, nature-based solutions, and hybrid options to address water-related climate and disaster risks.

UN 2023 Water Conference Youth Rapporteurs

Rapporteur: Maria Angel

Date: 23-03-2023

Event Title: *Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment (Interactive dialogue)*

In conclusion, the dialogue demonstrated that addressing water-related challenges requires a paradigm shift towards more integrated, multi-stakeholder, and cross-sectoral approaches that incorporate innovative solutions, respect traditional knowledge systems, and promote equity and social cohesion. Water governance and management need to move beyond sectoral approaches and take into account broader environmental and social contexts. The dialogue underscored the critical role of partnerships and cooperation in achieving the water-related SDGs and the need for private sector engagement in investing in water sustainability.