



WATER ACTION DECADE
2018 - 2028

CLIMATE ACTION SUMMIT 2019   **A RACE WE CAN WIN**

Transformative Water Actions to Accelerate Achievement of Global Climate Change-related Goals

Co-organized by the Permanent Missions of Fiji, Canada, Morocco, Russia, Portugal, Singapore, Switzerland, Tajikistan and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs with the support of UN-Water

Conference Room 11, United Nations Headquarters, New York

9:00-10:45, 25 September 2019

Concept Note

Introduction

The impacts of climate change are being felt everywhere and are having real consequences on people's lives. Water is the primary medium through which we will feel these impacts since 90% of global disasters are caused by floods, storms, droughts and other weather-related events. The global water situation will likely worsen as population growth, rapid urbanization and industrialization increase demand for water and intensify the negative effects of climate change on water quality and quantity. Worldwide, an estimated 4.8–5.7 billion people will be living in areas that are at-risk of being water-scarce at least one month per year by 2050. The Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) assessed the hydrological impacts due to climate change, underscoring these freshwater-related risks.

Therefore, there is the need to find ways to adapt to the expected changes and to cope with new conditions and extreme weather patterns in order to make water infrastructure and services more resilient. Climate change is a complex problem that has increased the need for an integrated, multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary response. Apart from the normal water domain, decision-makers in other spheres (finance, trade, energy, housing, regional planning, agriculture, etc.) must account for water. Therefore, sustainable management and development of water resources will play a pivotal role in preparing societies' ability to adapt to climate change in order to increase resilience and achieve all development goals.

Recognizing the need to reinvigorate action, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted resolution on “International Decade (2018–2028) for Action – Water for Sustainable Development” (Water Action Decade). The Water Action Decade serves as a platform for countries and relevant stakeholders to discuss their major water-related challenges, possible solutions, to further cooperation, as well as to encourage partnership at all levels.

This year, the year of climate action, sets out opportunities for discussion to accelerate action, including the High-Level Event on Interlinkages between Water and Climate Action held at the United Nations in March, the Climate Change Event hosted by the President of the General Assembly in March and the United Nations Secretary-General’s Climate Change Summit in September. Additionally, the recently-released UN-Water Policy Brief on Climate Change and Water details the interlinkages between water and climate change and provides recommendations for addressing current and future challenges.

The Climate Action Summit, called on by UNSG, will display a leap in collective national political ambition and demonstrate massive movements to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Together, these developments will send strong political signals and inject the necessary momentum into the “race to the top” among countries, companies, cities and civil society to achieve the objectives of the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Objectives

Following the High-Level Event on Interlinkages between Water and Climate Action held in March and building on the UN Secretary-General’s Climate Summit, this event will present transformative water actions to accelerate the achievement of global climate change-related goals and targets. Participants will share experiences and provide recommendations on implementing these actions, which include successful partnerships and ways to mobilize finance to match the ambition and urgency needed to meet climate change-related goals.

Event Structure

- Opening segment to set the stage
- Presentations of transformative water actions to accelerate the achievement of global climate change-related goals
- Open dialogue to discuss experiences and recommendations on implementing water-related climate actions
- Closing remarks

Participants will include Heads of State and Government, Ministers and other High-Level Government representatives, the private sector, civil society, local authorities and international organizations.