



## Transboundary Water Cooperation Coalition

### Joint Statement of the Transboundary Water Cooperation Coalition for the one-day organizational session on the 2026 UN Water Conference

New York, 3 March 2025

*This statement is read on behalf of the Transboundary Water Cooperation Coalition which is a diverse, multi-stakeholder coalition of actors bringing together 16 UN Member States, the European Union and 21 organizations, including UN entities, financial institutions, civil society and research institutes, from all regional groupings.*

**Transboundary water cooperation was a key focus at the UN 2023 Water Conference.** High-level political support was evident: over 30 ministers and high-level representatives engaged in the interactive dialogue on water for cooperation and 79 countries highlighted the importance of transboundary water cooperation in plenary statements. Transboundary waters account for 60% of the world's freshwater. Water cooperation is vital for over 3 billion people.

**Yet, SDG target 6.5 on integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary water cooperation as appropriate, is among the most off track,** as evidenced by SDG indicator 6.5.2. At the current pace, only a third of the countries sharing transboundary rivers, lakes and aquifers will have 90 per cent or more of their basin area covered by operational arrangements by 2030. Meanwhile, climate change intensifies water-related risks, making cooperation even more urgent for climate change adaptation and mitigation, for resilient societies and healthy ecosystems.

Beyond reduction of climate and environmental risks, effective transboundary water cooperation can unlock economic opportunities, enhance livelihoods and ensure sustainability. It can promote trade, tourism and energy generation, contributing to regional prosperity and stability. It is also crucial for achieving the human rights to water and sanitation, especially for vulnerable populations.

Water can either fuel tension or catalyze peace. With increasing pressures from population growth and climate change, strengthening cooperation mechanisms is essential for regional stability and peace.

The growing number of Parties to the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (UN Water Convention) reflects a global recognition of the need for improved governance of shared waters.

**The Transboundary Water Cooperation Coalition calls for transboundary water cooperation to be included as one of the themes of the 2026 UN Water Conference.**

**The 2026 Conference must accelerate progress on transboundary water cooperation.** It must emphasize water diplomacy for conflict prevention and peace, ensuring equity and inclusion for marginalized communities and advocating for gender-sensitive policies.

The Conference must showcase successes and benefits of cooperation, address barriers and mobilize high-level commitment to develop and implement transboundary agreements, strengthen basin organizations and secure adequate financing to support transboundary water cooperation.

**Building on the 2023 Conference's success, the 2026 Conference must drive further concrete cooperative action.**

*The Transboundary Water Cooperation Coalition is a diverse, multi-stakeholder coalition of actors. The following members of the Coalition joined this statement: Chile, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Namibia, The Netherlands, Panama, Slovenia, Switzerland, Uganda, European Union, ESCWA, Global Environment Facility (GEF), Organization of American States (OAS), UNCDF, UNDP, UNECE, UNEP, UNESCO, World Bank, Regional Center for Groundwater Management in Latin America and the Caribbean (CeReGAS), EcoPeace Middle East, Geneva Water Hub, Global Water Partnership (GWP), International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre (IGRAC), IHE Delft Institute for Water Education, International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO), IUCN, Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), University of Kinshasa, Water Diplomacy Center at the Jordan University of Science and Technology.*