



WATER AND CLIMATE COALITION LEADERS ACTION PLAN FOR INTEGRATED WATER AND CLIMATE AGENDA

INTRODUCTION

The Water and Climate Coalition Leaders comprise current and former Heads of State/Government and Ministers, Heads of UN entities and other intergovernmental organizations, as well as representatives of the private sector and youth at the highest level.

Invited by the WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas and UN-Water Chair Gilbert Hounbo, the Water and Climate Leaders set and pursue an integrated global water and climate agenda in support of sustainable development and national mitigation and adaptation actions. As part of the Water and Climate Coalition, the Leaders respond to the call by the United Nations Secretary-General to accelerate the implementation of SDG 6, as a multi-stakeholder initiative under the SDG 6 Global Accelerator Framework and in support of the Water Action Decade.

Their mission is to pursue and advocate for changes leading towards sustainable water management and related climate change action, as well as end siloed approaches in climate and water by means of setting an integrated global water and climate agenda. The Water and Climate Leaders advocate on highest levels, mobilize relevant allies, and propose data-driven solutions to support an integrated water and climate agenda.

The Water and Climate Coalition Leaders believe that the meaningful participation and leadership of youth must be taken into account in order to lead to sustainable outcomes of these solutions.



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LEADERS FOR INTEGRATED WATER AND CLIMATE ACTION

We take action to protect our people and future generations. We lead the way in rethinking how our societies and economies are built to resist climate change. Improving how we use water is a pathway to develop food security, protect health and livelihoods, promote the just transition to clean energy, build water and climate smart cities, protect the environment, deltas and vulnerable low lying areas against the negative impacts of climate change, build resilient economies, help the world achieve the SDGs, and meet global climate commitments.

Data and information are the foundation of climate smart sustainable development. We need data to understand how climate change is affecting our water systems; to understand where, how much, and in what quality water is and will be available. We need information to know where and how our actions can best support our access to the precious resource and protect us from water hazards and disasters. Yet there are major gaps; data is scattered, inconsistent, and incomplete. At COP 26 in Glasgow, more than 125 countries agreed to share weather data as a public good. Now is the time to act on water data and inform action.

The UN High-level Meeting on Water in 2021 welcomed the Water and Climate Coalition with a joint statement co-signed by 168 countries, acknowledging that information on water is essential for effective decision-making. We need informed cooperative actions that will ensure SDG 6 and the climate agenda are integrated and achieved. We must use the advantages of the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028, to catalyze and accelerate our actions.

We therefore call for world leaders’ support, and for resources and political will to accelerate actions and bring together water related data and information to ensure a prosperous future for our people and planet, resilient to the impacts of climate change. We, the Water and Climate Leaders, advocate for an integrated approach, ensuring that water-related indicators are included in the COP process. We also propose an action plan promoting solutions at the UN 2023 Water Conference.

We as the Water and Climate Leaders call for

- An integrated water and climate approach—Recognizing the role of water for informed decision-making in climate change mitigation and adaptation action.
- International support to improve water data and information for a climate ready world—Working together to operationalise global water information services that provides status, assessment, and outlook for smart climate and water-related decisions.
- Partners to join us in the implementation—Support solutions for sound decision making: a water and climate stocktake, a cryosphere information mechanism, a new financing rationale, local engagement, and river basin cooperation.
- Recognizing the need to protect glaciers—Understanding the role of glaciers as one of the most critical sources of freshwater and uniting forces in preserving these resources through an International Year of Glacier Preservation 2025.

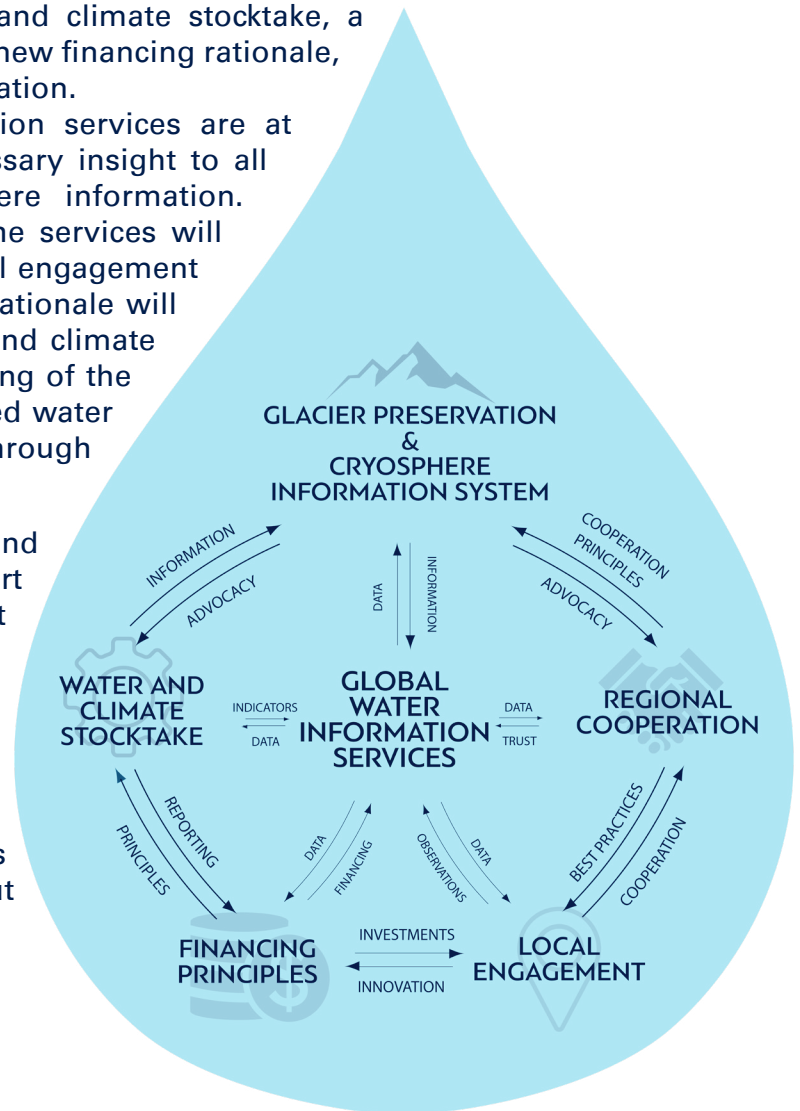
SIX DATA DRIVEN SOLUTION

As one of the major commitments to an integrated water and climate agenda, the Water and Climate Coalition Leaders are calling for six data-driven solutions to ensure the transition from awareness to action. The six solutions described in this Action Plan are: a set of global water information services, a water and climate stocktake, a cryosphere information mechanism, a new financing rationale, local engagement and regional cooperation.

The proposed global water information services are at the center and will provide the necessary insight to all decision makers, including cryosphere information. Multilateral information needed for the services will be ensured through a process for local engagement at the river basin scale. A financing rationale will provide guiding principles for water and climate smart investments. Better understanding of the most relevant features of the integrated water and climate agenda will be provided through a water and climate stocktake.

These components provide a holistic and integrated data driven solution to support achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6 of the United Nations 2030 Agenda.

The Water and Climate Leaders advocate for the integration of these solutions to be part of the climate change agenda implementation process and provide this Action Plan as an input to the UN 2023 Water Conference.





GLOBAL WATER INFORMATION SERVICES

Credit: Yoshiaki Sato

CHALLENGE AND CHANGE NEEDED

In many parts of the world, hydrological data and information is currently missing to understand where, how much, and in what quality water is and will be available. Where data is available, it is often fragmented and inconsistent and remains difficult to access. More comprehensive and connected water data at the global scale will support decision-making on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

OBJECTIVES

To better understand changing water availability and risks.

Global water information services will:

- Allow water availability to be considered in climate change mitigation and adaptation decisions;
- Catalyse informed cooperation through water assessments, warnings and outlooks;
- Improve capacity and infrastructure to monitor hydrological systems;
- Enhance data and information exchange capabilities for better water resources management;
- Reduce drought and flood related climate change impacts.

The services will build on existing tools and be operated by the World Meteorological Organization and supported by members of the Water and Climate Coalition.

LEADERS CALL

1. By 2030, all UN Member States use globally standardized water resources information in their climate mitigation and adaptation decisions
2. Key indicators on current and future water availability, as well as hydrological extremes are available to all.
3. All UN Member States issue timely hydrological warnings and outlooks of floods, droughts and water availability.
4. Multilateral cooperation is optimised for improved water management, as well as climate change adaptation and mitigation action to increase resilience against floods and droughts at all scales, including in cross-border basins and catchments.

TIME FRAMES

- By March 2023 an agreed process to support UN Member States implement global water information services through regional and local level engagement;
- By end-2023 sufficient funds are pledged to help the UN and its Member States set-up the services and as of 2024 sufficient funds are pledged per year to help countries sustain it;
- By 2030 all countries can benefit from the services.

CLIMATE AND WATER STOCKTAKE

CHALLENGE AND CHANGE NEEDED

Despite water and climate challenges being closely interlinked, databases are often managed in separation, so are the mitigation and adaptation projects, as is water and climate financing. This leads to costly and less efficient water and climate related development projects and leaves our society, economy, and nature more vulnerable.

Integrating water and climate related databases will inform decision shaping processes and contribute to the more efficient use of resources, increased added societal, economic and environmental benefits and resilience at the levels of communities, countries and regions. This requires open access, integrated, standardized, relevant and structured data on water and climate.

OBJECTIVES

Better understand the most relevant features of the integrated water and climate agenda.

The stocktake will offer:

- Insight for establishing global water information services;
- A methodology for developing integrated actions at all scales, including in cross-border basins and catchments;
- An inventory of good practices of water and climate data management, relevant to all uses including agriculture, energy production and use, construction, spatial and urban planning and tourism;
- Financing rationales that consider societal benefits and ecological sustainability in data management of water and climate development;

The stocktake will inform political, economic, social and environmental decision shaping in regions with various hydrological and climatic conditions. It will promote simultaneously tackling both challenges across sectoral, political and spatial boundaries.

LEADERS CALL

1. Take stock at the highest UN, regional and national levels of the weather/hydro/climate data requirements of an integrated water and climate agenda;
2. UN Member States and entities, private sector, scientific organizations, financial institutions and civil society to share appropriate weather/hydro/climate data, transfer knowledge, technology and capacity building for integrated solutions.
3. Interlink relevant weather/hydro/climate databases at national and international levels;

TIME FRAMES

- By November 2022 (COP27) foster global partnership for sharing of appropriate data, transferring knowledge, technology and capacity building for integrated solutions;
- By March 2023, ensure decision makers are fully aware of the benefits of the integrated climate- and water related planning.
- By 2030, global water information services provide understanding of the interlinked impacts of changing water and climate conditions.



AN INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF GLACIERS' PRESERVATION IN 2025

Credit: Jelena Ujankina

CHALLENGE AND CHANGE NEEDED

The world's snow, glaciers, and ice sheets are essential long-term renewable sources of freshwater, whether in polar regions, in the mountains or in downstream regions. Globally, the scientific community is clear that under all climate change scenarios, the world's cryosphere is changing, and so are our lives. There is a need to increase the focus of the world community, especially of political leaders and policy makers, to work together, towards defining and sustaining strategies to reduce and better manage the impact of climate change on glaciers, in conjunction to improving the capacity and ability to better research and monitor, understand and predict changes.

OBJECTIVES

Declaring the year 2025 as the International Year for the Glaciers' Preservation will:

- Raise the awareness of the global community about the accelerated and irreversible reduction of world ice resources and its impacts,
- Facilitate the development of adaptive measures to the potential impacts of glacier melting, in particular to reduce water resources demand and the impact of natural disasters,
- Give an additional impetus to the global efforts to limit and where possible to prevent the global warming through different measures and actions to protect glaciers from intense melting and disappearance,
- Improve international cooperation and establish a sustained international mechanism to facilitate and sustain the access to accurate and timely information on cryosphere, at scales commensurable with changes,

LEADERS CALL

1. Declaring 2025 an International Year of Glaciers Preservation, and to proclaim World Glaciers Day;
2. Establish an integrated global cryosphere information system and an international mechanism to facilitate the access to accurate and timely information on cryosphere;
3. Establish the International Fund for Glaciers' Preservation.

TIME FRAMES

- Aug 2021 – June 2022: promote initiative through organisation of Side events in the framework of World Water Week, UNGA High Level Week, COP, Dushanbe Water Process etc.
- September 2022: introduction of the zero-draft resolution on International Year of Glaciers' Preservation during the UNGA HL Week – to be adopted in Dec 2022;
- March 2023: announcement of global cryosphere indicator at UN Conference on Mid Term Review of Water Action Decade

FINANCING PRINCIPLES

CHALLENGE AND CHANGE NEEDED

Global development finance and investment capital currently do not reflect the systemic interlinkage in water and climate, with the bulk of financing flowing into the climate projects. Rising demand for fresh water, coupled with increasing vulnerability of societies and an accelerated water cycle through climate change, means that information to guide decisions and investment, use and management is critical. Climate finance needs to be applied to water data projects, enabled by demand and an investment logic. Global water information services will provide data on water storages and fluxes, water availability and hazards, quality, and quantity which are at the core of water risk for capital and finance. The improved water information can play a key role in helping stakeholders solve many of today's most important global challenges and comply with regulatory pressures, thereby creating demand for more water information. Investing in water information infrastructure can establish greater certainty, unlock innovation, and create significant social, economic, and environmental value as an absorptive capacity for climate finance and environmental, social and governance (ESG) capital flows.

OBJECTIVES

Increase financing of water information

The financing principles will:

- Provide proof of concept that water risk as a principle in climate finance deployment and in capital flow regulation can increase financing for water and increase demand by public and private sector investors for water information;
- Define standardized indicators that create

demand for more and better data, including incentives to finance of hydrological and metrological data systems;

- Provide a global framework and typology for water investment risks based on these indicators;

LEADERS CALL

1. Water information for hydro economic models and decision making in terms of public good provision, driving claimed finance, innovation, and capital flows in water;
2. Banks, insurers, asset owners and governments to consider evidence-based water risk in regulation and investment;
3. Shared open access hydrological data is a driver of sustainable financing systems

TIME FRAMES

- In 2022, establish and coordinate multistakeholder working group to define standard indicators, investment logic and water risk principles and typology;
- In 2022, pilot mapping data requirements to assess water risk, including hydrological data infrastructure & water information;
- In 2023, adopt principles with supporter countries, banks, insurers, and investors and announce commitment and announce proof of financing principles concept.

LOCAL ENGAGEMENT

CHALLENGE AND CHANGE NEEDED

Implementing climate resilient investments on-the-ground at different government levels (national, provincial, local etc) requires a coherent system of local data, stress tests (knowing the problems in the system), integrated plans, arranging public or private financing, action planning and implementation at these levels, as well as sufficient institutional basis, capacity, data, political willingness and public support.

Global water information services providing water and climate data at local scale. To improve the measuring of water and better inform decision making, the information needs of (local) decision makers and politicians that decide on water should be taken into account. There is a need to connect global data collection with local/national data and information needs for decision making on water action formulation and implementation, and thus form the scientific basis for an integrated national plan on climate adaptation with water as enabler.

OBJECTIVES

Support local/national decision making

The local engagement will:

- Improve understanding and define the pillars of local data, stress testing, problem identification, governance, finance, capacity and innovation, to create an enabling environment for resilient implementation.
- Create ownership with key,local leaders and institutions and value propositions for informed decision-making and action.
- Feed into the water and climate stocktake of programmes and projects that already are executed on the ground by various actors

of multilateral organisations, NGO's and countries.

- Identify the lacking process steps in the actions already executed on the ground and work with the local people and the organisations to fill in the steps in the process towards resilient water management and climate adaptation.

LEADERS CALL

1. Connect global data collection with local/national data and information needs for decision making on water action formulation and implementation

TIME FRAMES

By 2023, connect to key institutions to ensure ownership and leadership and to enhance coordination between institutions and development partners.

By 2024, connect to key stakeholders and leaders that can act as champions giving overall strategic direction and who are able to connect and coordinate the work on the ground.

STRENGTHENING REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS TO ENHANCE MANAGEMENT OF FLOODS, DROUGHTS AND WATER-RELATED HAZARDS

Credit: Leonor Hernandez

CHALLENGE AND CHANGE NEEDED

Over the past twenty years, water-related hazards have consistently increased in frequency and intensity with at least 1.6 billion people having been affected by floods and 1.4 billion by droughts. (World Bank, 2021)¹ A weather, climate or water-related disaster has occurred on average every single day within the past 50 years (1970-2019), – taking the lives of 115 people daily and causing US\$ 202 million in daily losses. (WMO, 2021)² As currently 1/3 of the world's population is not covered by early warning systems, we are risking to at least doubling the population exposed to floods and droughts due to climate change. (IPCCC, 2022)³. These challenges will intensify with future climate change, population growth and increasing economic activities, underscoring the importance of building resilience to the socio-economic impacts of extreme weather, climate and water events. To overcome these challenges and build resilient societies and economies close cooperation is needed to strengthen end-to-end warning systems for riverine floods, droughts and water-related hazards. Cooperation can enable joint development of more cost-effective solutions, which offer benefits for all. Fragmentation and gaps in water and climate data at the local, national and regional levels constitute one of the biggest challenges in climate change adaptation as well as floods and droughts risk management.

OBJECTIVE

Enhance flood and drought risk management at the regional scale

The mechanism will:

- Contribute to the UN Secretary-General's call for everyone on Earth to be protected by early warning systems against increasingly extreme weather and climate change within the next five years;
- Gather and share relevant comparable data and information for effective management of disaster risk, enhance preparedness and mitigate the impacts of extreme events;
- Gather early information about future water deficits and how they can be mitigated through green and grey infrastructure.
- Contribute to studies to assess the benefits of water-climate adaptation and mitigation activities

at the river basin scale;

- Strengthen cooperation by sharing the potential co-benefits of improved sectorial and regional cooperation and integration;
- Support establishing coherence between sectoral policies and foster collaboration between sectors.
- Benefit from and build on existing good practices to scale up cooperation at the regional level on climate and water early-warning mechanisms

LEADERS CALL

1. Developing a global early warning system mechanism to enhance capacity to anticipate and manage floods and droughts management at all levels and scales;
2. Establishing a common portal to host water-related satellite-based information from all sources;
3. Free and transparent exchange of all relevant data.
4. Setting-up a financing facility for climate and water early-warning mechanisms that would be integrated in the UN Secretary General Early Warning System initiative.
5. Annual reporting on the development of water-climate early warning systems.

TIME FRAMES

- By COP 27, launch the financing facility for for climate and water early-warning mechanisms that would be integrated in the UN Secretary General Early Warning System initiative
- By March 2023 an agreed process to support UN Member States implement a global early warning system mechanism;
- By end-2023 sufficient funds are available to set-up the mechanism and as of 2024 sufficient ongoing funds are available to sustain the mechanism;
- By 2030 fully operational global early warning system mechanism.

¹ Browder, Greg; Nunez Sanchez, Ana; Jongman, Brenden; Engle, Nathan; van Beek, Eelco; Castera Errea, Melissa; Hodgson, Stephen. 2021. An EPIC Response : Innovative Governance for Flood and Drought Risk Management. World Bank, Washington, DC. © World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/35754> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO.

² World Meteorological Organization. 2021. WMO Atlas of Mortality and Economic Losses from Weather, Climate and Water Extremes (1970–2019). Collection: WMO-No. 1267. ISBN: 978-92-63-11267-5.

³ Caretta, M.A., A. Mukherji, M. Arfanuzzaman, R.A. Betts, A. Gelfan, Y. Hirabayashi, T.K. Lissner, J. Liu, E. Lopez Gunn, R. Morgan, S. Mwangi, and S. Supratid, 2022: Water. In: Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, M. Tignor, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegría, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Löschke, V. Möller, A. Okem, B. Rama (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press. In Press.



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