



Council of the  
European Union

Brussels, 12 December 2022  
(OR. en)

15938/22

LIMITE

ENV 1292  
DEVGEN 234

**NOTE**

---

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

---

Subject: UN 2023 Water Conference  
(New York, 22-24 March 2023)  
(co-hosted by the Republic of Tajikistan and the Kingdom of the  
Netherlands)

- Information from the Dutch delegation

---

Delegations will find in the Annex an information note from the Dutch delegation on the above subject, to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council (Environment) meeting on 20 December 2022.

**UN 2023 Water Conference  
(New York, 22-24 March 2023)**

**co-hosted by the Republic of Tajikistan and the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

**- Information from the Dutch delegation -**

From 22 to 24 March 2023, the UN 2023 Water Conference will be held at the UN headquarters, in New York. This conference will be co-hosted by the Republic of Tajikistan and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, with the support of UN DESA and UN-Water. The formal invitation letter from United Nations Secretary-General Guterres to Heads of State and Government was sent on 2 December 2022.

Water security determines the sustainability of our economic future. What should be the driver for sustainable development is, increasingly, becoming an impediment for economic growth, energy and food security, welfare and health, society and the environment. Even Europe sees the impact of water scarcity spreading across the continent: four of the last five summers were unusually dry, with significant impacts on agriculture, energy provision, transport, nature and society. At the other extreme, several parts of Europe were confronted with disastrous floods in 2021.

**UN 2023 Water Conference: Uniting the world for water action**

A cascading set of global challenges requires a whole-of-government and all-of-society approach. There is an urgent need to change the way we value and manage water, both locally and globally. The UN 2023 Water Conference offers the opportunity to set that change in motion. It must bring water to the highest level of attention, galvanise commitments and accelerate actions on water across multiple sectors, including health, energy, food security, development cooperation, infrastructure, urbanisation, biodiversity, climate, the environment, disaster risk reduction, oceans, education, gender equality, peace and decent work.

## **Water Action Agenda: Time to deliver**

For the UN 2023 Water Conference to be impactful, we need clear commitments, pledges and actions, which will be brought together in a **Water Action Agenda**. Commitments may vary in type, scale or reach, but whether they be public, private or in partnership they should deliver significant and lasting impact, stimulate cooperation and accelerate progress globally. In order to ensure follow-up, keep the momentum going and guarantee the implementation of commitments, we are striving for the Water Action Agenda to be embedded in existing relevant UN processes, e.g. the High Level Political Forum (HLPF), Sendai Framework, CoPs on Climate Change and Biodiversity, and the follow-up of the Food Systems Summit. Progress on the Water Action Agenda will be highlighted at the 2023 SDG Summit, and the 2024 UN Summit of the Future.

## **Importance of EU leadership**

The EU is uniquely positioned to mobilise change in all water-related sectors, both through its internal policies (e.g. the ambitious Green Deal, including its climate law, circular economy, biodiversity and zero pollution strategies) and external policies (e.g. by creating stronger interlinkages between water and human rights, and peace and security and the Team Europe Initiatives). Demonstrating EU leadership helps set the bar for the global water policy agenda of the future, and helps create global momentum for increased and impactful action, including the mobilisation of water-positive investments, across sectors and stakeholders.

## **Call for action**

Therefore, the Kingdom of the Netherlands calls on its EU partners for active and continuous support<sup>i</sup> to make this conference the true watershed moment the world needs, including your participation at the **highest political level**, bringing a diverse delegation representing different sectors and stakeholders, and concrete and substantial financial, political, policy and/or partnership commitments to the **Water Action Agenda**. In addition, we encourage you to mobilise and empower other countries, partners and stakeholders, especially those outside the water sector, to get involved and contribute to making the conference a success.

---

<sup>i</sup> Council conclusions 13440/21 on Water in the EU's external action, 19 November 2021