

SIWI Insight Brief

Part of SIWI's 2026 Engagement Series

Event Name	44th UN-Water Meeting
Location	Rome, Italy, and online
Date	1–2 October 2026



The event

The 44th UN-Water Meeting reviewed coordination across the UN system on water and sanitation and preparations for the 2026 UN Water Conference. It brought together UN entities, partner organizations and government representatives to discuss joint priorities and support for implementation. SIWI participated online.

At a glance

The last UN-Water Meeting before the 2026 UN Water Conference showed an expanding agenda of proposed initiatives. Discussions highlighted the need to connect these efforts, clarify financing and plan for implementation beyond December.

What stood out

Proposed flagship initiatives included a permanent science panel and an Aqua Bonds Exchange. Participants called for consistent objectives across the Conference's six Interactive Dialogues. The co-hosts also emphasized linking Conference outcomes to climate and biodiversity processes, the 2028 UN Water Conference and the post-2030 development agenda.

Key signals

- **Private-sector engagement:** UN-Water established a task force on private-sector engagement. The Investment for Water dialogue proposed support for country investment platforms through matchmaking, risk reduction and capacity-building.
- **Country-level coordination:** Regional clinics engaged more than 50 UN Resident Coordinators, with opportunities identified to integrate water into UN country assessments and cooperation frameworks.
- **Water across global agreements:** A proposed flagship initiative would promote water's integration into implementation of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.
- **Resources and follow-up:** Financing instruments announced included an Aqua Bonds Exchange, but arrangements for tracking flagship implementation remain unclear. Work on water quality and wastewater lacks dedicated funding.

Implications

The growing number of initiatives makes coordination and accountability more important. Before December, clearer responsibilities, financing and milestones would help show how proposals will deliver results. Preparations for the 2027 SDG Summit and the post-2030 agenda offer an opportunity to embed water more firmly in global priorities.

SIWI perspective

SIWI sees a need to connect emerging initiatives through governance that addresses the full hydrological cycle, including water in soils, rivers and aquifers. Limited attention to soil moisture and under-resourced work on water quality and wastewater risk leaving gaps between institutional mandates. SIWI is contributing to preparations for several Conference flagship initiatives and developing a governance brief on how global water processes can work together.

Looking ahead

The immediate priority is to clarify how flagship initiatives will be financed, coordinated and followed up after the 2026 UN Water Conference. The 2027 SDG Summit and the 2028 UN Water Conference provide subsequent milestones for sustaining progress. World Water Week 2027 offers an opportunity to assess implementation and connect these efforts with science, policy and practice.