SIWI Insight Brief

Part of SIWI's 2026 Engagement Series

Event Name	Cairo Water Week 2026
Location	Cairo, Egypt
Date	25–29 October 2026

The event

Organized by Egypt's Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, Cairo Water Week 2026 explored water's role in peace, prosperity, and sustainability. SIWI contributed to sessions on shared waters, green water, and capacity development, and moderated the plenary on national water governance.

At a glance

Discussions at Cairo Water Week 2026 emphasized how to govern water across borders, sectors, and the full water cycle. The Mediterranean, where Africa, Asia, and Europe meet, already faces water challenges that could become more widespread in other regions.

What stood out

Discussions broadened from blue water in rivers, lakes, and aquifers to include green water held in soils and used by plants. Speakers emphasized equitable participation in shared waters governance. Economists argued that many water problems originate in how economies are organized.

Key signals

- Governing the whole water cycle, including blue and green water, is gaining prominence.
- Water risk is increasingly framed as financial risk, bringing finance ministries into the conversation.
- Evidence is advancing, but how it informs climate plans, land-use policy, and budgets remains unclear.
- Capacity development discussions emphasized better coordination through existing platforms.
- Private capital has a clear role, but questions remain about how financially viable projects deliver public benefits.

Implications

Progress at the UN 2026 Water Conference in Abu Dhabi will depend less on new declarations than on clear responsibilities, financing, and measurable outcomes. Strong national water governance is essential, but it must account for water connections and decisions beyond national borders.

SIWI perspective

SIWI can help translate green water evidence into policy and support water diplomacy and capacity development as an impartial knowledge partner. When evidence overlooks parts of the water cycle, budgets risk overlooking them too.

Looking ahead

- Use the UN 2026 Water Conference in Abu Dhabi (8–10 December) to identify countries ready to test accounting for both blue and green water, institutions willing to share methods, and partners prepared to fund the first steps.
- Assess capacity development programmes by what participants accomplish afterwards, as well as how many people they train.

SIWI

Stockholm International Water Institute
Kabyssgatan 4D, 120 30 Stockholm, Sweden
Visiting Address: Hammarbybacken 31
Tel. +46 8 121 360 00 • www.siwi.org