Side Event UN 2026 Water Conference

Water at the Heart of the Rio Conventions: From Global Commitments to Local Impact

Thursday, December 10th 13:45-15:00 (Room 6, ADNEC)

Climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation are increasingly interconnected challenges, with water at their core. Yet implementation remains fragmented across the three Rio Conventions: the UNFCCC on Climate, the CBD on Biodiversity, and the UNCCD on combating desertification. Water is not a sectorial concern; it is an integral part of interconnected ecosystems through which climate resilience, healthy ecosystems, and sustainable land management are delivered. An integrated approach across the Conventions through water can ensure a coordinated and integrated approach to optimize resources, generate efficiency and cost savings, and reduce the planning and reporting burdens, while also helping national responses to socioenvironmental challenges that communities experience as interconnected crises.

As 2026 marks a triple COP year, this side event will take stock of progress on water across the Conventions and explore how stronger coordination can accelerate implementation and maximize impact from global to local levels. Building on the momentum of the 2026 UN Water Conference, the event includes high level speakers and ministers to launch a Flagship Initiative advancing water as a shared agenda across the Rio Conventions with a practical roadmap for coordinated action, implementation and financing.

Objective and Expected outcomes

The objective of this side event is to i) share key outcomes from the three COPs, ii) present key national and regional success cases of evidence-based policy and programs to ensure synergies for the Rio Conventions and iii) announce the Flagship Initiative, presenting a roadmap for more coordinated implementation, strengthened financing and measurable impact. The initiative will advance integrated action on climate change and the global hydrological cycle, biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration, while accelerating progress towards SDGs 6, 13, 14, 15 and 17. This side event links to Interactive Dialogues C (Water for Planet) and E (Water in Multilateral Processes) to ensure effective actions on Water for the 2027 SDG Summit, as well as the UN 2028 Water Conference. The expected outcomes are to advance the flagship initiative and partnerships to strengthen water as a pathway towards greater synergies across the Rio Conventions implementation and progress.

Agenda

Time	Agenda Item
13:45-13:55	**Moderator and welcome remarks** • Ms. Susanne Halling Duffy, Director, Stockholm International Water Institute • H.E. Ms. Meike van Ginneken, Water Envoy, Kingdom of The Netherlands
13:55-14:10	**Opening statements** • H.E. Hani Sewilam, Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation, Egypt

	• Mr. Taizo Ida, Assistant Vice Minister, MLIT, Japan • Ms. Cristiane Collet, Director, National Water and Sanitation Agency (ANA) Brazil
14:10-14:30	**Launch of Global Land Outlook (GLO3)** • Dr. Yasmine Fouad, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) • Dr. Barron Joseph Orr, Lead Scientist, UNCCD
14:30-14:40	**Case of Impact and Rio Conventions Synergies** Transboundary Amazon Ecosystem (Science Panel for the Amazon), the World's Largest Connected Freshwater System Statement on Scientific Foundations for Maintaining Hydrological Connectivity for Supporting Biodiversity, Climate Resilience, Healthy Landscapes, and Human Well-being through Knowledge-Sharing and Cooperation
14:40-14:55	**Presentation of the Flagship Initiative and Next Steps** • Ms. Sonja Koeppel, Secretary of the UN Water Convention
14:55-15:00	**Closing Remarks**

Organizing partners: SIWI, The Netherlands, Japan (ID C / MLIT), Brazil (National Water Authority), Egypt United Nations Water Convention, UNCCD, SPA-SDSN, UNCRD (UNDESA), UNU INWEH

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