



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations



***Water for people and the planet:
Stop the waste, change the game,
invest in the future***

Trusteeship Council Chamber

13 and 14 February 2023, New York

Programme

Moderator: Ms. Betsy Otto, Fellow, Alliance for Global Water Adaptation

Monday, 13 February	
10:00–10:20	Welcome remarks
	Mr. Csaba Kőrösi , President of the 77th session of the General Assembly Mr. Duarte Pacheco , President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
10:20–11:00	Interactive survey
	Participants will be invited to respond to a few questions designed to identify basic positions and trends. The survey will be conducted on Mentimeter.com and will require participants to use their phones or tablets. The moderator will introduce the questions and then comment on the results, engaging participants in the process.
11:00 –12:00	SDG 6 as a linchpin of sustainable development
	<p>SDG 6 – Ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all is key to the implementation of the entire SDG framework. Water and sanitation are essential to human life and development as well as to economic activity from manufacturing to agriculture. Water cuts across and supports the achievement of relevant SDGs through close interlinkages with land, ocean, climate, gender equality, health, amongst others. The current rate of progress needs to be boosted to achieve universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene.</p> <p>This session will provide an overview of progress on water and sanitation commitments in the context of the SDG framework, highlighting the stumbling blocks that stand in the way of full implementation by 2030. It will put the parliamentary hearing into the context of the current discussions at the United Nations and provide an outlook to the UN 2023 Water Conference in March.</p> <p>Leading questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the major challenges to achieving SDG 6 and how can commitments be translated into action?• How is the water problem different around the world?• What are the expectations for the UN 2023 Water Conference?
12:00 –13:00	Access to safe water and sanitation as a human right

	<p>A 2010 ground-breaking resolution of the General Assembly recognizes the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and the fulfilment of all human rights. More than a decade later, this most fundamental human right is still unrealized. This session will feature a discussion on the responsibility of States as “duty bearers”, defining in broad strokes the ways and means by which a human rights perspective must permeate all public policy for water and sanitation.</p> <p>Leading questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the practical policy implications of looking at water and sanitation through a human rights lens? • How can this human right be realized despite growing privatization and financialization of water services? Do private actors need to take human rights considerations into account? How can states address this challenge?
13:00–15:00	Lunch break
15:00–16:30	Climate change and water scarcity: Building resilience to avoid the worst
	<p>The more the global average temperature rises uncontrollably, the more renewable water resources are at risk, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Global warming due to climate change is expected to increase water stress in many regions. More than 80% of natural disasters, involving billions of dollars in lost investments, human life and ecosystem damage, are water related.</p> <p>More frequent and extensive droughts and floods, as well as sea level rise, linked to climate change carry significant social and economic consequences: they will drive farmers out of business, accelerate migration and urbanization, and aggravate the global hunger problem. Water basins may dry out, undermining livelihoods and investments.</p> <p>In short, climate change has a direct impact on water; creating resilience is paramount to preventing more damages to lives, livelihoods, and ecosystems particularly by protecting and restoring water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes.</p> <p>Leading questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can water management and the establishment of a Global Water Information System support resilience to climate change and water-related shocks? • What key investments are needed to strengthen climate-related adaptation and resilience? • How can regulatory frameworks be used to protect key ecosystems? How can international agreements be translated into local action?
16:30–18:00	Water conservation: The low hanging fruit
	<p>Ensuring water services and sanitation for a growing world population requires a multiplicity of actions, from very costly infrastructure investments to supply water to homes, factories and farms to relatively low-cost conservation measures to preserve water reserves and avoid unnecessary water waste.</p> <p>Conservation, making the most of the water we have, is the low hanging fruit of water policy in that it can lead to considerable gains at relatively low cost to state budgets,</p>

	<p>citizens and industry. Conservation measures can involve education and awareness raising of the value of water among the general population and key groups, regulations to drastically curb pollution and overutilization of ground water, as well as measures to preserve key water ecosystems such as mangroves.</p> <p>Leading questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can unsustainable consumption and production patterns of water be changed? • How can the “polluter pays” principle be more consistently legally applied? • What incentives for water conservation are available that promote equitable access?
Tuesday, 14 February	
10:00–12:00	Financing infrastructure for sanitation and water services: The trillion-dollar challenge
	<p>It is estimated that the financial gap to reach SDG 6 by 2030 will require mobilizing an additional US\$ 1.7 trillion, three times more than the current level of global investments. Consistent with the development cooperation agenda, the most important source of finance for water infrastructure and key water services should consist of public revenues channeled through the state budget. This requires raising more revenue through taxation and prioritizing public investments for water as key to the economy and human wellbeing.</p> <p>Closing the financial gap in water-related infrastructure will also require a whole-of-society partnership from governments with a diverse group of stakeholders, including the private sector. In particular, “blended finance” and public-private partnerships leveraged through public resources, are playing a growing role in the provision of water and sanitation services.</p> <p>This session will look at the various ways in which water and sanitation infrastructure can be financed and the issues that may arise from the tension between public vs. private sources of finance. A live survey of participants will help drive the discussion.</p> <p>Leading questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What role can and should public finance play in providing universal access to water and sanitation? Do states have a duty to supply such services? • What are the risks to blended finance and public-private partnerships in incentivizing water investments? • How can the affordability of water services be guaranteed, particularly for the most vulnerable?
12:00–13:00	SPECIAL BRIEFING The 2024 Summit of the Future
	<p>In September 2024, the United Nations will convene the Summit of the Future as a way of “reaffirming the Charter of the United Nations, reinvigorating multilateralism, boosting implementation of existing commitments, agreeing on concrete solutions to challenges and restoring trust among Member States.” Preparations for this major Summit are already underway with discussions on an agreement on the specific issues (scope) to be addressed. This will be followed by United Nations negotiations of a <i>Pact for the Future</i> as the political outcome of the Summit.</p>

	<p>This special briefing by leading ambassadors and UN officials will review the background to the Summit of the Future and invite participants to discuss priorities for the upcoming negotiations.</p>
13:00–15:00	Lunch break
15:00–16:15	Toward a more inclusive water policy: Leaving no one behind
	<p>A lack of participatory decision-making processes with affected and relevant stakeholders is often at the root of deficient water policies. Local communities, women, youth, indigenous peoples and vulnerable groups should be involved in framing national policies for water with an eye to equity and social justice. In contrast, in too many instances water policies are designed under pressure from large commercial and private interests as opposed to the public good.</p> <p>This session will look at the ways in which accounting for the specific needs and views of women, youth and vulnerable communities can greatly improve the formulation and implementation of water commitments nationally and globally. The unique responsibility of parliamentarians as representatives of the people in ensuring that all are included in decision-making processes will be emphasized.</p> <p>Leading questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we ensure decision-making in water policy delivers for the public good? • How can a human rights-based approach ensure that women, youth, indigenous peoples and other communities be included meaningfully and effectively in policies for safe water and sanitation? • What are the critical concerns of local communities with regard to water policy and how can they be addressed?
16:15 –17:30	Transboundary waters: From competition to cooperation for peace
	<p>Many freshwater sources transcend international borders. While most water-related disputes are resolved peacefully, growing demand of water, decreasing availability, and the intensifying impact of climate change and its effects, including migration, increase the risk of violent conflict. Many conflict-affected countries are facing extreme weather events, including droughts and floods. Many countries are currently experiencing tensions with their neighbours due to unresolved water management disputes whose resolutions are critical to meeting economic and environmental needs.</p> <p>This session will consider current multilateral and regional mechanisms for water diplomacy as well as the practical ways and means by which water can serve as a tool of cooperation rather than competition between nations.</p> <p>Leading questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are effective “water diplomacy” tools, and what determines their success or failure? • Where water scarcity is the primary driver of conflict, what are the lessons learned? How can climate related disputes be mitigated to prevent outbreaks of violence?
17:30 –17:45	Wrap up session: What is next in water policy making?

	<p>Mr. Duarte Pacheco, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union</p> <p>UN Official (tbc)</p>
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