Inter-Parliamentary Union
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FEDERAL NATIONAL COUNCIL
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Parliamentary Event on the occasion of the 2026 UN Water Conference

Parliaments for water: From commitments to action

8 December 2026

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Organized jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and
the Federal National Council of the UAE

Concept note

Background

Water is essential to all aspects of sustainable development: it is linked to health, food security and energy, but also to economic growth, poverty reduction, natural resources, and peace and security. Access to safe drinking water and sanitation is also recognized as a fundamental human right. Yet progress towards ensuring access to water and sanitation for all remains far too slow, and climate change is making this challenge even harder.

Over the past decade, access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene has expanded significantly, benefiting billions of people. However, progress has been uneven within and among countries. According to United Nations data, an estimated 2.1 billion people still lack access to safely managed drinking water, while 3.4 billion people do not have access to safely managed sanitation services. Women, girls as well as communities in vulnerable and/or marginalized contexts are particularly affected. In 2024, least developed countries were around two to three times more likely to lack essential services compared to the global average. Addressing these challenges in a structural manner requires sustained political commitment, effective action, investment and cooperation among all concerned stakeholders, including parliaments.

The United Nations Water Conference, taking place in Abu Dhabi (UAE) from 8 to 10 December 2026, offers an important opportunity to turn political commitments into concrete action. Parliaments are essential to this effort. Through their core functions such as legislation, oversight and representation, they can secure appropriate legal frameworks, hold governments accountable, allocate suitable resources and ensure that the needs of all are duly reflected in laws, policies, national development plans, strategies and budgets.

Parliaments also play a key role beyond national borders. Through parliamentary dialogue and diplomacy, they can help accelerate the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 on clean water and sanitation, by promoting discussions on water security and responsible water technologies, and fostering mutual understanding and cooperation on shared water resources, while taking into consideration respective national priorities, needs and contexts.

Format

The parliamentary event will take place on Tuesday, 8 December 2026, from 13:00 to 14:30 (UAE time), in the Blue Zone, Special Events 1, at the ADNEC Centre Abu Dhabi. The venue has a capacity of 300 participants.

The substantive discussion will be organized around the three strategic pillars of the UN Water Conference: water for shared prosperity; investment for lives and livelihood; and resilient future together. The format includes keynote addresses by UN officials, host country, IPU officials, as well as contributions from Speakers of Parliament and other parliamentarians, followed by an interactive discussion and a closing segment.

Objectives and outcomes

The parliamentary event will bring together parliamentarians, parliamentary staff as well as other interested participants attending the UN Water Conference to:

- Highlight the role of parliaments in advancing SDG 6 and water-related commitments.
- Share experiences and good practices related to the event's subject matter among parliamentarians and other stakeholders.
- Discuss how parliaments can use legislation, budgets and oversight to advance water security, climate resilience, and access to water and sanitation.
- Explore how parliaments and other stakeholders can work together to develop and implement effective and cross-cutting water policies.
- Adopt, at the close of the event, the *Abu Dhabi Parliamentary Call to Action on Water*, with the aim to inspire concrete action and raise awareness of how parliaments can contribute to advance water-related commitments.

The "Abu Dhabi Parliamentary Call to Action on Water" will be aligned with the Conference's main themes. It will identify practical actions that parliaments could undertake through their core functions, namely law-making, budget review, oversight, representation and parliamentary diplomacy. It will also highlight concrete measures to accelerate the achievement of SDG 6 through adequate budgetary allocations, strengthened cooperation and innovative solutions. Cross-cutting attention will be given to technology, data and the responsible use of artificial intelligence, as well as inclusive participation.

The *Abu Dhabi Parliamentary Call to Action on Water*, together with a brief summary of the discussions, will be shared with the UN Water Conference to highlight the contribution of parliaments to the implementation of water-related commitments.

Registration

All delegates should obtain accreditation to the UN Water Conference, including access to the Blue Zone, through their respective national delegations. Information on Conference accreditation and the mandatory host-country registration is available on the official Conference website.

Where it is not possible, delegates should contact the FNC and the IPU for guidance. The FNC and the IPU will coordinate with the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the relevant United Nations teams to facilitate the appropriate accreditation pathway. Delegates are kindly reminded that accreditation remains subject to confirmation by the competent Conference and United Nations authorities, and that contacting the FNC and the IPU does not by itself constitute confirmation of accreditation.

Delegates are also requested to register separately for the parliamentary event through the IPU website by 25 November 2026. Registration for the parliamentary event does not replace UN Conference accreditation or provide Blue Zone access.