

Arab Region Joint Commitment to Accelerate Achievement of Water Security for Sustainable Development

UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event
Friday, 24 March 2023, 9:30 – 10:45, Conference Room 6

Background

The Arab region is one of the most water scarce regions in the world with 19 States of the 22 below the water scarcity threshold. This is further complicated by a high proportion of transboundary waters resources, high population growth rates, climate change, inefficient water use, occupation and conflict.

The Arab Ministerial Water Council adopted the Arab Water Security Strategy to Meet the Challenges and Future Needs for Sustainable Development (2010 – 2030), and receives annual reports on its implementation through its Technical, Scientific and Advisory Committee, both of which convene under the auspices of the League of Arab States. However, the achievement of water security in the region needs to be accelerated to meet agreed upon goals.

Arab engagement in the Water Action Decade is manifested through resolutions, recommendations and common positions adopted by Arab States in intergovernmental and regional forums, including those adopted under the auspices of the Arab Ministerial Water Council, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), and regional water conferences convened by the Government of Egypt (Cairo Water Week), the Government of Iraq (Baghdad Water Conference) and the State of Palestine (Arab Water Conference), among others.

The Arab regional preparatory meeting for the mid-term comprehensive review of the Water Action Decade was organized by ESCWA and the Technical Secretariat of the Arab Ministerial Water Council in May 2022. It consolidated regional priorities and progress on internationally agreed water-related goals to inform the UN 2023 Water Conference. The recommendations were grouped under thematic priorities and accelerators to move towards the achievement of the Decade's goals in the region.

The six regional thematic priorities focus on the need to advance: (i) integrated water resource management; (ii) water for all; (iii) transboundary water cooperation; (iv) water and climate change; (v) water use efficiency; and (vi) water across sectors, including non-conventional water resources.

The four identified accelerators prioritize the importance of: (i) financing for water; (ii) data to inform decision-making, monitoring and implementation; (iii) innovation; and (iv) capacity development and regional knowledge networks.

Objective

The side event will showcase Arab region commitments and efforts to transform the water sector, build cross-sectoral partnerships, and strengthen collective action. It will also highlight commitments made to the Water Action Agenda by Arab States and regional stakeholders, which aim to improve water security in the water-scarce Arab region.

Particular emphasis will be placed on means of implementation for achieving water and related cross-sectoral goals through the regional priorities and accelerators referenced above.

Related thematic interactive dialogue:

Interactive Dialogue 5: Water Action Decade: Accelerating the implementation of the objectives of the decade, including through the UN Secretary-General's Action Plan

Lead Organization: League of Arab States – Technical Secretariat of the Arab Ministerial Water Council

Organizing partners and contributors:

- **Member States:** Ministers of the Arab Ministerial Water Council (AMWC), which requested regional engagement in the UN 2023 Water Conference per Resolution 263/S.14 of 30 November 2022
- **Organizations:** United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA); Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)

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Side Event Agenda

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Moderator:	Mr. Ziad Khayat, Coordinator, IWRM for Water Security, Climate Change and Natural Resource Sustainability Cluster, ESCWA
	Opening Remarks
3 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Rola Dashti, United Nations Under-Secretary-General, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)
5 minutes	Setting the scene: Joint Priorities for Water Action in the Arab Region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ambassador Shahira Wahbi, Head, Technical Secretariat of the Arab Ministerial Water Council, League of Arab States
20 minutes	Panel 1: Water Security Challenges and Priorities to Water Security in the Arab Region
Panelist:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> H.E. Walid Fayad, Minister of Energy and Water, Lebanon (tbc) H.E. Mazen Ghoneim, Head of the Palestinian Water Authority, State of Palestine H.E. Dawelbeit AbdelRahman, Minister of Irrigation and Water Resources, Sudan H.E. Tawfiq Al-Sharjabi, Minister of Water and Environment, Yemen Mr. Hatem Al-Tameemi, General Director of National Center for Water Resources Management, Ministry of Water Resources, Iraq
10 minutes	Interventions from the floor
20 minutes	Panel 2: Initiatives and Commitments to the Water Action Agenda
Panelist:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> H.E. Hani Sweilam, Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation, Egypt H.E. Nizar Baraka, Minister of Equipment and Water and President of the International Network of Basin Organizations(INBO), Morocco H.E. Abdulaziz Alshaibani, Deputy Minister for Water, Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture, Saudi Arabia (tbc) Dr. Nizar Zaied, Water Lead, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Dr. Amgad Elmahdi, Water Sector Senior Specialist, Green Climate Fund (GCF)
10 minutes	Interventions from the floor
5 minutes	Closing Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Rola Dashti, United Nations Under-Secretary-General, Executive Secretary, ESCWA Ambassador Shahira Wahbi, Head, Technical Secretariat of the Arab Ministerial Water Council, League of Arab States