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United Nations Environment Assembly  
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## Resolution adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly on 1 March 2024

### 6/13. Effective and inclusive solutions for strengthening water policies to achieve sustainable development in the context of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution

*The United Nations Environment Assembly,*

*Recognizing* that water from terrestrial, coastal and marine sources is essential for human health, well-being and livelihoods, ecosystem functioning and services, and the survival of all living species,

*Emphasizing* that water is critical for sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and hunger, and recognizing that water, ecosystems, energy, food security and nutrition are linked and that water is indispensable for health, well-being and human development,

*Recognizing with concern* that the world is not on track, at the current rate of progress, to achieve the water-related Sustainable Development Goals and targets at the global level by 2030, which has a tremendous impact on human well-being and on the three dimensions of sustainable development,

*Highlighting* the fact that the second highest Sustainable Development Goal investment gap is in water and sanitation, with a growing need for sustainable and innovative investment in water and sanitation to ensure progress towards the achievement of water-related goals and targets,

*Recalling* the political declaration adopted by the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly (Sustainable Development Goals Summit), held in New York on 18 and 19 September 2023, in which leaders committed to addressing water scarcity and stress and driving transformation from a global water crisis to a world where water is a sustainable resource, ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all,<sup>1</sup>

*Highly concerned* about threats to water quantity and quality across the globe, in particular from pollution both on land and in seas, and that water-related ecosystems sustain the impact of climate change and severe pathogen pollution, among other factors, and of human activities, such as urbanization, increased industrial and agricultural activity, and poor sanitation,

*Recalling* its resolution 3/10 of 6 December 2017 on addressing water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems, as well as its resolutions 5/4 of 2 March 2022 on sustainable lake management, 5/5 of 2 March 2022 on nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development

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<sup>1</sup> General Assembly resolution 78/1, annex, para. 38 (f).

and 5/14 of 2 March 2022, entitled “Ending plastic pollution: towards an international legally binding instrument”,

*Recalling also* General Assembly resolution 64/292 of 28 July 2010 on the human right to water and sanitation, as well as General Assembly resolutions 74/141 of 18 December 2019 and 76/153 of 16 December 2021, on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation,

*Welcoming* the convening of the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028, held in New York from 22 to 24 March 2023, which generated significant momentum towards enhancing water action and political commitment, at all levels, to address water-related challenges, as well as General Assembly resolution 77/334 of 1 September 2023 on follow-up to the Conference, and taking note of the Water Action Agenda,

*Taking note* of the convening, in 2024, of the Tenth World Water Forum, in Bali, Indonesia; World Water Week, in Stockholm; the One Water Summit, in New York; and Cairo Water Week,

*Stressing* the importance of the ecosystem approach for the integrated management of land, water and living resources and the need to increase efforts to tackle desertification, land degradation and drought, water scarcity, biodiversity loss and pollution,

*Recognizing* the importance of traditional, local and Indigenous knowledge as part of possible solutions for sustainable water management and addressing water scarcity, such as the Cascaded Tank-Village System, which are designated as Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems and are resilient systems characterized by remarkable agrobiodiversity, traditional knowledge, invaluable cultures and landscapes, and also recognizing the value of these systems, which are sustainably managed by farmers, herders, fisherfolk and forest people in ways that contribute to their livelihoods and food security,

*Noting* the importance of water ecosystems and water quality for mitigating the risk of health challenges in accordance with the One Health approach and other holistic approaches that deliver multiple benefits for the health and well-being of people, animals, plants and ecosystems,

1. *Calls on* all Member States and members of specialized agencies, and invites relevant international organizations and relevant stakeholders, as appropriate, to:

(a) Implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation, as appropriate, and adopt coherent responses to water-related challenges and risks across sectors, regions and actors, taking into account, where applicable, the interlinkages of water, ecosystems, energy, food security and nutrition, along with their social, economic and environmental impacts;

(b) Mainstream sustainable water management and the protection, conservation, restoration and sustainable management of aquatic ecosystems into relevant intergovernmental processes, as well as national and local development strategies and relevant policies, with consideration of the One Health approach;

(c) Enhance the collection and monitoring of reliable, up-to-date water-related data, including on water quality and quantity, in accordance with national laws and policies; increase their use for evidence-based decision-making across sectors noting the water cycle; and implement sustainable, integrated, disaster-risk-informed water resources management as a necessary tool for successful disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, inter alia, as a contribution to the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030;<sup>2</sup>

(d) Promote integrated water resources management in agriculture to address water stress, and adapt agricultural systems, inter alia, to promote overall water efficiency and resilience to water stress, as well as to transition to sustainable food systems, and taking into account Indigenous and traditional knowledge and approaches, including those associated with tank cascade systems, as well as agroecological and other innovative approaches;

(e) Promote integrated water resources management in and between large water-consuming industry sectors to reduce water stress risks and pollution, and adapt water reuse strategies by, inter alia, enhancing wastewater reuse and strengthening pollutant discharge control to improve overall water efficiency and resilience to water stress;

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<sup>2</sup> General Assembly resolution 69/283, annex II.

- (f) Encourage investment in sustainable, climate-resilient water and sanitation infrastructure and nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches, including to close the investment gap in water and sanitation;
2. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, in collaboration with relevant United Nations system entities and other relevant stakeholders, subject to the availability of resources, to:
- (a) Scale up action by the United Nations Environment Programme on the protection, restoration, conservation and sustainable management of water-based ecosystems for their multiple benefits, including by assisting Member States, upon request, in their efforts to implement water-related national strategies and plans, and for their contribution to, inter alia, enhancing water-related climate information and early warning systems;
- (b) Present to the United Nations Environment Assembly at its seventh session a set of strategic priorities for how fresh water will connect across the medium-term strategy of the United Nations Environment Programme for the period 2026–2029 and accelerate the implementation, and for how the United Nations Environment Programme engages with the United Nations system-wide strategy on water and sanitation;
- (c) Enhance cross-divisional coherence between the United Nations Environment Programme’s fresh-water activities and other activities at the level of global programmes and in its support at the country level;
- (d) Reinforce United Nations Environment Programme engagement with the United Nations water mechanism and strengthen the Programme’s collaboration with members of UN-Water and other relevant parts of the United Nations system for enhanced coherence within the United Nations system, including at the country level;
- (e) Play an active role in the preparatory process of the 2026 United Nations Water Conference to Accelerate the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, and of the 2028 United Nations Conference on the Final Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028, in close cooperation with other members of UN-Water;
- (f) Compile, taking into account work in other relevant United Nations forums and in coordination with relevant United Nations entities and other organizations, best practices and case studies on the interlinkages between water, energy, food and ecosystems, and make them available to Member States;
- (g) Enhance action to improve data provision, including through capacity-building, and track progress relating to the Sustainable Development Goal 6 indicators for which the United Nations Environment Programme serves as one of the global custodians, in particular through its Global Environment Monitoring System/Water Programme and the integrated monitoring initiative on Goal 6, and continue to report on the progress achieved and challenges faced;
- (h) Promote dialogue and collaboration on water-related traditional, local and Indigenous knowledge, including, inter alia, integrated sustainable and climate-resilient tank cascade systems and management;
- (i) Report to the United Nations Environment Assembly at its seventh session on progress in the implementation of the actions set out in subparagraphs (a)–(h) above;
3. *Invites* Member States to scale up means of implementation to promote and implement integrated water resources management, in particular in developing countries.
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