

## 1. Background

The second International Conference on Water and Climate was hosted by the World Water Council and the CoP22 Presidency as represented by the State Secretariat for Water of the Kingdom of Morocco and took place on 3–4 October 2017 in Marseille, France.

As for the past edition, the principle objective for this meeting was to mobilize and encourage a range of political and institutional stakeholders to work together so that water remains an important element of climate discussions within the 23rd UNFCCC Conference of the Parties in November of 2017, strengthening the dialogue between the water and climate communities towards the implementation of the Paris Agreement and Sustainable Development Agenda 2030.

Aligned with the main focus of the high-level segments of the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action for the upcoming CoP23, the conference specifically drew attention to “SDG2: Zero Hunger” and “SDG11: Sustainable Cities and Communities”.

The event, endorsed by the CoP23 Presidency and presided by World Water Council Honorary President Loïc Fauchon and Charafat Afailal, Secretary of State for Water and Environment of Morocco, brought over 100 high level participants, such as international experts and political leaders at the forefront of the debate on climate and water, as well as several environmental ministers, including, Istiaque Ahmad, Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Forests of Bangladesh, Patrick Boamah, Deputy Minister for Sanitation and Water Resources of Ghana and Sindra Sharma-Khushal, from the UNFCCC CoP23 Presidency Team for Fiji. Climate negotiators and government representatives from Fiji, Sierra Leone, Algeria, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Bangladesh, Morocco, Germany, and El Salvador, as well as many representatives from key sectors all took part.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> ICWC was streamed live online, in order to enable anyone interested in the event to participate via internet (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uiV7WKX44GY>). In addition, people online could interact with the different sessions by sending questions through live tweets using the #ClimateIsWater hashtag.

## 2. Conference aims and discussions

Water is at the heart of the many challenges posed by climate change and calls for as many solutions. Even a slight increase in the Earth's temperature will have serious consequences: climate variability is increasing and its impacts are more numerous, more serious and longer lasting, particularly extreme water-related events (floods and droughts,

for example). Such phenomena has lead to intensified water pollution, higher incidence of malnutrition, increased number of people migrating and more significant losses, particularly in infrastructure and agricultural production.

The main purpose of these sessions was to find points of mutual comprehension and a sense of alignment between climate negotiators and members of the water community and to answer to some crucial questions such as:

- Can water facilitate dialogue on climate?
- How do participants perceive water within the climate change context in their own countries?
- How do we place water as a higher priority within the climate negotiations and UNFCCC processes?
- How can the water community better engage with others working on cities and food issues?
- What gaps exist in water community communications and engagement and what could improve this situation?

The conference strived to answer these questions through each of the four sessions that was organized:

**Session 1: Water and Climate Action today: Can water hydrate the climate dialogue?**

**Session 2: Starving for Water: Reducing hunger and improving health in the face of climate change**

**Session 3: Strengthening urban resilience through water management**

**Session 4: Focus on Water for Africa**

## Session 1: Water and Climate Action today: Can water hydrate the climate dialogue?

### Session Panellists:

- John Matthews, Coordinator and Co-founder, Alliance for Global Water Adaptation (AGWA) – Facilitator
- Tahar Aichaoui, Director at the Ministry of Water Resources, Algeria
- Usman Banya, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Transport and Aviation, Sierra Leone
- Antonio Cañas Calderon, Chief of Technical Cabinet, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, El Salvador
- Martin Kerres, Advisor Water and Climate Change. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
- Abdeslam Ziyad, Director of Water research and Planning, State Secretariat for Water, Morocco

There is a tendency that “water is everywhere and nowhere” in climate discussions, meaning that its implicit manifestation in water-related disasters (both flooding and drought), melting glaciers, rising sea level or changing weather patterns is often evoked, but sound management of water resources as a solution to climate change adaptation and mitigation is rarely discussed in an explicit way. Water is cited as a key adaptation issue in over 93% of the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) submitted by parties. At the same time, water is not officially acknowledged in the Paris Agreement and UNFCCC climate negotiations. It is crucial to acknowledge that a sufficient quality and quantity of water resources is a basic precondition in the successful fight against climate change, as well as for the successful implementation of most of the Sustainable Development Goals. The main question is how to do that?

One critical aspect emphasized during the event was the necessity to engage directly with the UNFCCC national focal points in order to understand how countries perceive water from a climate change perspective so as to be able to improve communications between the communities and strengthen water’s role within climate discussions.

It was mutually agreed by all the panellists that water can and should foster dialogue on climate. To achieve that, it is still crucial to demonstrate to the climate community that water is not a "theme", nor a "sector", but a "connector", especially with regard to climate adaptation. One of the suggestions was to introduce water as a required part of the planning phases within other sectors such as human settlements, agriculture, industry, or energy, particularly when related to climate change mitigation and adaptation (e.g. National Adaptation Plans). Furthermore, better links and stronger communication with Governments need to be established, as well as strategic ties with UNFCCC processes such as subsidiary body meetings, where climate priorities are developed and discussed. Even though CoPs are important milestones for climate change work, these key events should not be conceived as an end point. The water community’s focus should be wider, addressing the climate community and UNFCCC institutions as a whole, since the efforts undertaken between CoPs are essential for a strong, long-term engagement on water issues.

As climate change moves faster than our human decisions, a global institutional space for water management, which is currently missing, could encourage, on one side, an improved mobilisation of the water community and, on the other, the support and coordination of all the global efforts towards the fundamental shift in the way the world looks at and addresses water.

### Session 2: Starving for Water: Reducing hunger and improving health in the face of climate change

Session Panellists:

- Eric Tardieu, General Director, International Office for Water – Facilitator
- Sonja Koepfel, Environmental Affairs Officer, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
- Janette Uhlmann, Senior Programme Officer, Centre for Mediterranean Integration, The World Bank
- Olcay Ünver, Deputy Director of Land and Water Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

SDG2 aims to “*end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.*” Food security and sustainable agriculture are directly related to water availability, quantity and quality. Water is one of the resources the most affected by climate change impacts. Therefore, effective water management is directly interlinked with SDG2 and its successful implementation.

The link between water and food is taken for granted. Crops and livestock need water to grow. Water is key to food security, as agriculture uses the most water of any sector, accounting for approximately 70% of all water withdrawn. The food and agriculture sector as a whole have a large water footprint when compared to other sectors, especially during the production phase. According to FAO<sup>1</sup>, approximately one-third of all food produced for human consumption in the world is lost or wasted. Without accounting for GHG emissions from land use change, the carbon footprint of food produced and not eaten is estimated 3.3 Gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. Considering this statistic, if it were considered as a country, food wastage would rank as the third top emitter of CO<sub>2</sub> after the USA and China. Furthermore, the blue water footprint for the global agricultural production of total food wastage in 2007 is about 250 km<sup>3</sup>, which is almost three times the volume of Lake Geneva, or the annual water discharge of the Volga River. In addition, produced but uneaten food vainly occupies almost 1.4 billion hectares of land, which represents close to 30 percent of the world’s agricultural land area.

While the water footprint in food production and general food loss globally is shocking, country representatives from Algeria, Morocco and Sierra Leone, stressed that the lack of water for food in the face of climate change is

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i3347e/i3347e.pdf>

alarming and requires urgent action. Therefore, merging adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) priorities for future emergency situations is crucial, while ensuring climate change finance for resilient agriculture.

The central role of women's engagement and empowerment in decision making and consequent implementation was also strongly highlighted, due to their role at the forefront of ensuring food and water security on the ground.

### Session 3: Strengthening urban resilience through water management

Session Panellists:

- Mohamed Boussraoui, Executive Officer, United Cities and Local Government – Facilitator
- Istiaque Ahmad, Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests Government of Bangladesh
- Simeran Bachra, Data Analyst, Carbon Disclosure Project
- Neuni Farhad, C40
- Carlos de Freitas, Director of Programs, Global Fund for Cities Development
- Fatimetou Mint Abdel Malick, Mayor of Tevra Zeina, Mauritania and UNISDR Champion for Resilience

SDG 11 aims to “*make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.*” Half of humanity is currently living in cities and this figure is projected to increase by 2030, when more than 60% of the world's population will live in cities. Such rapid urbanization poses a huge threat to freshwater accessibility, supply and management within any city. Moreover, water is key to increasing city resilience to floods and droughts. For this reason, water has to be well planned, managed and secured. The fact that water is crucial in any well-functioning sustainable city seems obvious. At the same time, lack of official acknowledgement from climate negotiations and country commitments pose a major threat to the achievement of SDG11. The focus of this interactive session was to discuss urban climate adaptation and water issues both under the national and local government perspective, so as to develop integrated plans with the objective to make cities more resilient and sustainable.

Cities are facing a wide range of issues with regard to water usage and provision. Water supply, wastewater treatment and drainage services are among the basic requirements for sustainable cities. Furthermore, water is essential to safeguard many indirect benefits including health, well-being and biodiversity. It must also be considered when ensuring cities' resilience against extreme events, such as flooding. Finally, climate change and water resources, amongst other factors, force refugees to migrate towards cities, creating a significant stress in urban capabilities to deal with increased water demand and pollution.

During the discussion, panellists agreed that in order to improve cities' resilience, States need to enhance their collaboration with local and regional authorities, since they are the best positioned to make changes on the ground. At the same time, to effectively deal with these potential threats, cities must strengthen their understanding of crucial water interconnections, improving their own technical capacities and integrating water throughout city planning

phases. In addition to that, engaging mayors is key to fostering political will for water issues and building cooperation with major stakeholders on the city level.

Further urgent needs in water management on the city level were identified as including:

- Public and private investments in water supply and supporting cities in accessing financing
- Diversification of water supply sources, including rainwater harvesting, recycling, reuse and desalination
- Engage key actors in water consultation process

#### **Session 4: Focus on Water for Africa**

Session Panellists:

- Mariam Sou Dakouré, Head of Water and Sanitation Department, The International Institute for Water and Environmental Engineering, Burkina Faso – Facilitator
- Safaa Bahije, Head of Cooperation and Communication Division, Secretary State in charge of Water, Morocco
- Patrick Boamah, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources
- David Hebart-Coleman, Climate Change and Water Resources Specialists, Africa Water Facility, African Development Bank

African countries are among the lowest GHG emitters, but are the ones the most affected by the consequences of climate change. The “Water for Africa” initiative was launched at CoP22 by the Government of Morocco with the goal of engaging the international community and developing a water action plan to address climate change in African countries and thereby mobilize necessary financial resources. To implement this initiative, an inter-institutional Working Group was established and met on 10 July 2017 in Rabat (Morocco) to start planning the activities and draft a Core Document for the initiative to be presented at CoP23.

The interactive session focused on the update of the “Water for Africa” initiative and future aims, but also on the status of current financial streams and how to access financial resources.

Climate finance remains difficult to access for developing countries, especially regarding the funding of water projects, which must respond to climate criteria. In order to submit bankable water projects, organisations and countries must fully understand the necessary requirements and use the right language in their proposals to respond sufficiently to what funding institutions are seeking.

### Key messages:

- The water community needs to remain unified (or at least coordinated) in relation to the UNFCCC processes. At the same time, the water community should work consistently to learn the language, issues, and institutions relevant to the climate community, so as to demonstrate how water can support and enable climate-related goals.
- CoPs are important milestones, but no single CoP should be viewed as an end in itself. The work around water and climate needs to address the larger climate community and the UNFCCC institutions in particular. Ongoing efforts between CoPs are necessary to maintain a strong, long-term engagement and solid recognition for water issues.
- The water community should cooperate with Governments to develop messages which they could bring to the UNFCCC subsidiary bodies' meetings.
- Messages and engagement should be simple, focused, relevant, and helpful for the climate community: #ClimateIsWater.
- The water community needs to reach out to non-water networks in order to understand other communities, become aware of their issues first hand, and then convince them to enlist water solutions within their sectors.
- National and local authorities, supported by the water community, need to cooperate more closely to overcome climate change challenges together. Engaging with city networks can help reach actors on the ground.
- Food security and sustainable agriculture are entirely dependent on water resource availability, which is directly affected by climate change.
- Enabling and empowering women in water resource management and climate change adaptation and mitigation decision making is crucial.
- Youth is key to building a sustainable future and therefore must be capacitated through education and early involvement in water and climate change activities.