**REPORTING FORMAT FOR RAPPORTEURS**

*Rapporteur’s name:* Chelsea Hayward, Krisztian Mark Balla

*Rapporteur’s nationality:* Australia and Hungary, respectively.

**Title of session**: Interactive dialogue 3: Water for climate, resilience and environment - source to sea, biodiversity, climate, resilience and disaster risk reduction

**Number of attendees**: More than 100

**Date and Location:** 23rd March, 1000 hrs to 1300 hrs, UN HQ Conference Room 4

**1- Objective(s) of session**:

* Highlight the current status and challenges related to water, climate and the environment.
* Raise opportunities for progress and transformative solutions for SDG 6, recognising water’s close linkages to climate and biodiversity.
* Call for collaboration and action.
* Highlight some practical examples of linking water, climate, resilience and environment.
* Discuss the barriers to providing data and information for improved water management. What is needed for water-related data and information to be available
* Discuss how ecosystems and nature can be better valued and their protection incentivized

**2- Key point(s)**:

*Current problem*: The IPCC’s latest report states that we only have one more decade to take action against climate change before it is too late. As climate change predominantly manifests in water (e.g. floods and droughts), the climate crisis is the water crisis so action towards SDG 6 is paramount. Water issues, including water scarcity, are compounded by climate change.

*Potential consequences and impacts:* Climate and water issues are showing up around the world in the form of floods, drought, desertification, soil degradation, coastal erosion and more. These impact people’s health and well-being, as well as environmental health.

*Importance of the topic:* The world is not on track to achieving SDG6 or the Paris 1.5°C target. Urgent action is required for water and climate issues before the consequences and impacts are irreparable.

*Synergies and trade-offs with other topics:* Climate change is inseparably connected to water. Linkages of the water cycle to human rights. Water and climate issues are also closely linked to biodiversity loss.

**3- Key Challenges:**

*What are the knowledge gaps identified during the discussion?*

* Lack of / poor funding and governance are key barriers to progress on water and climate solutions.
* People most impacted by the issues are often not included in discussions and solutions.
* Policy and action are not designed in an integrated manner.

**4- Key recommendations/solutions presented (key actions to address the problem)**:

* Need to take action against the water and climate crisis now with a focus on Indigenous and community stakeholders and with solutions that are gender inclusive. Solutions should include the participation of those who are most impacted by the issues.
* Need to break down policy silos and provide clear policy guidance.
* Need to take a holistic approach to management across the whole water cycle and consider water pollution, water quality and water use. Rather than debating mitigation vs adaptation, focus on solutions that contribute to both with co-benefits. This is where many nature-based solutions come in - should be investing in green and grey infrastructure and nature-based solutions.
* Adaptation and mitigation solutions should have co-benefits that contribute to addressing a range of issues, including (but not limited to):
  + soil and land management, aim for land degradation neutrality
  + climate adaptation and mitigation
  + water pollution
  + biodiversity loss
* Water should be managed as a strategic asset through trans-disciplinary and transboundary efforts.
* Collaboration and partnerships are key towards driving action.
* Need roadmaps and sector-specific solutions that are scalable.
* Solutions must be just and not make things worse elsewhere.
* Establish water-friendly green development to limit the increase of water demand and reduce the pollution load to the natural water system. Balance natural and human needs together.
* Enhance strategic water reserves to ensure water security during extreme events.
* Set up regulatory framework and policy to establish and regulate human water behaviours.

**5- Quotes from speakers**:

“Let’s work for water so water can work for us” - H.E. Mrs. Mariam Almheiri

“Trust this body will work together to achieve a just transition towards a future where no community and no ecosystem is left behind” - the representative from the Philippines

“To protect people, we must protect nature” - source unknown

“Water and climate change have one sad thing in common, the world is not on course to meet the goals set by the international community regarding them” - Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention

“Climate change does not recognize borders” - the representative from Iraq

“If we do not control the large industries, these summits are pointless” - Leticia Tituana

“Those who prepare can be sheltered from danger” - the representative from Madagascar

**6- Notes from the speakers’ talk**:

H.E. Mr. János Áder:

* Providing sanitation services to all is not a far-fetched idea. Sanitation services could be provided to everyone in Africa in the next 15-20 years for as little as $50 per capita.

H.E. Mr. Senzo Mchunu:

* Ensuring water and wastewater service providers are properly governed is key to achieving sustainable development goals.
* In South Africa, there will be a 17% gap between demand and available water by 2023. Need to look at both sides of supply and demand and find solutions that are complementary and work in parallel. Need good management of both supply and demand for water security and resilience.

H.E. Mrs. Mariam Almheiri:

* Consultation on what stakeholders want to see by COP28:
  + A sharp increase in investments in water, particularly in vulnerable countries
  + Early warning systems to generate data for future climate events
  + Decoupling power and water and introducing next-generation innovations and solutions

H.E. Mr. Petteri Taalas, Secretary-General, WMO

* Commitment to a Global Water Information system
  + Promoting free data policy for hydraulic modelling / early warning systems/decision and policy makings
  + Show-casing WMO’s capabilities to monitor and report on water storage status globally, hydrological events observed each year (floodings, droughts)
* Commitment to improvement of Global Early Warning Services
  + Deliver better, more accurate and timely weather, hydrology and climate-related services to all
  + Future objective: expand the Global Basic Observing Network with hydrological parameters

H.E. Ms. Leticia Tituana, Youth from Future Rising Fellows

* Stress the importance of holistic and comprehensive policies, and the need for governments to work collaboratively with other stakeholders
* Note that many of the participants in the dialogue were focused on investment and finance, but failed to mention controlling industries such as textile, food and oil that contribute to water pollution
* Warning that new technologies to address water pollution or early warning may be adopted by industries to continue polluting natural resources

H.E. Hani Sewilam, Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, Egypt

* To achieve water sustainability and climate resilience, it is important to separate water consumption from economic activities
* Call for the establishment of mutually beneficial policies for cooperative water adaptation and global water information system

**7- Relevant stakeholders and organizations present or mentioned**:

Panellists and discussants:

* H.E. Mr. János Áder, Former President of Hungary, Member of the Water and Climate Leaders, Former Member of the High-Level Panel on Water
* H.E. Mr. Senzo Mchunu, Minister for Water and Sanitation of South Africa
* H.E. Mrs. Mariam Almheiri, Minister of Climate Change and Environment of UAE
* H.E. Mr. Christophe Béchu, Minister for Ecological Transition and Territorial Cohesion of France
* Mr. Petteri Taalas, Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
* Mr. Bruno Oberle, Director-General of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
* Ms. Mami Mizutori, Head of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)
* Ms. Leticia Tituana, Youth from Future Rising Fellows

Countries and organisations participating in interactive dialogue:

* Niger
* Bulgaria
* Portugal
* Phillipines
* Spain
* High Level Expert Panel on Climate
* UN Environment Program
* UNFCC
* St Martin / Netherlands
* Iraq
* Brazil
* USA
* China
* Slovenia
* Chile
* Ireland
* European Union
* Japan Water Forum
* Madagascar
* Jamaica
* Solomon Islands
* Laos
* Slovakia
* Greece
* Fiji
* Uganda
* Mexico
* Sweden
* UK
* Italy
* Türkiye
* Russia
* Malta

**8- Innovative ideas and/or approaches from the session** *(What was new and novel from your perspective?)*

* While not a new idea, a common solution that was discussed was nature-based solutions. These solutions have the potential to contribute to addressing multiple issues and can be considered as both mitigation and adaptation strategies.
* Treating water as a strategic commodity was in focus during the discussions. The ideas about treating water as a strategic commodity involves policies and practices that balance competing demands for water among different sectors, e.g., agriculture, industry, and households and that promote the efficient use of water resources. This initiative, might not be new but was promoted for instance by the representative of the Philippines. Further debates on this might help for the bigger picture of “valuing water”.

**9- How do the session outcomes impact the Water Action Agenda? How to translate the discussion into commitments and actions?**

* A common point from many speakers/countries was that urgent action is required. Governments and organisations need to put water and sanitation services at the top of the international agenda.
* Call for everyone to contribute to the Water Action Agenda and hold each other accountable.
* Calls for more work on the water within the UN and for a Special Envoy on Water.

**11- How does this session relate water to other SDGs?**

SDG13 - Climate action. The undeniable link between water and climate issues. Climate change impacts are often seen in water issues from flooding to drought. Water crisis compounded by climate change.

SDG15 - Life on land. Climate change and water scarcity are leading to desertification and soil degradation. Water solutions should have co-benefits, including soil and land management. Additionally, the water, climate and biodiversity crises are closely linked so solutions should look to contribute to multiple issues.

**12- Short personal analysis of the session.**

**Chelsea Hayward:**

I was happy to hear from a range of speakers from different contexts, ranging across the socio-economic scale. It was good to hear many commonalities between what speakers were saying, what is being implemented in different countries and the calls to action (urgent action, greater collaboration, solutions with co-benefits); however, I would have liked to have seen more interaction between speakers with speakers building off each other points and ideas to avoid the significant amount of repetition. The undeniable link between water and climate issues was clear amongst participants, but governments, organisations and the whole water sector need to make this clear to the rest of the population. The general atmosphere within the session made me feel that those involved had a sense of urgency, with the realisation that we don’t have much time to act so I hope that meaningful pledges in the Water Action Agenda have been made and that those who have made them will hold themselves accountable.

**Krisztian Mark Balla:**

This session was a great opportunity to hear from a variety of stakeholders, including those at the country and organizational levels. What was particularly inspiring was learning that many of these countries have implemented science-based approaches, recognizing that innovation is crucial to tackling emerging risks and vulnerabilities associated with climate hazards. What particularly resonated with me was the emphasis on public data sharing and the need for a joint effort to build a global early warning and risk assessment system with worldwide collaboration. Another key takeaway was the urgent need for action. It was great to hear that many country representatives are moving from agreement to implementation and are reporting progress on joint projects and collaborations.

Although the session was designed as an interactive dialogue, I couldn’t help but notice that there was little reflection on a real conversation between the participants. At times, it was unclear if this was just a status meeting or an actual platform for collaboration. Despite this, I came always from the session feeling optimistic about the possibilities for international cooperation and progress on climate change.