



21 February 2022

Information note

Pan-European Regional Preparatory Meeting for the United Nations 2023 Water Conference

Geneva/hybrid, 12–13 April 2022

Background

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the period from 2018 to 2028 as the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development” (resolution [71/222](#)). The Decade aims to ensure a greater focus on the sustainable development and integrated management of water resources for achievement of social, economic and environmental objectives, as well as to foster further cooperation and partnership in order to help to achieve internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

To successfully implement the goals and objectives of the Decade, including Sustainable Development Goal 6 and other internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, in 2018 the UN General Assembly adopted resolution [73/226](#) on the midterm comprehensive review of the implementation of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028. In this resolution, it decided to convene, in New York, from 22 to 24 March 2023, 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, or the “United Nations 2023 Water Conference”.

The modalities for the United Nations 2023 Water Conference are set in the General Assembly resolution [75/212](#) of December 2020. The Conference will be co-hosted by the Netherlands and Tajikistan and will be preceded by regional and global preparatory meetings. Regional preparatory meetings will be convened by all five Regional Commissions in the first half of 2022. The Secretary-General will prepare a report for the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly, to assess progress in the implementation of the first half of the Decade.

The [Pan-European Regional Preparatory Meeting for the United Nations 2023 Water Conference](#) (Geneva/hybrid, 12–13 April 2022) will provide input to the report of the Secretary-General, to the United Nations 2023 Conference more broadly and to its thematic dialogues.

In addition, the outcomes of the Pan-European Regional Preparatory Meeting will be communicated to the Second Dushanbe Water Decade Conference (Dushanbe, 6 – 9 June 2022), the United Nations Ocean Conference (Lisbon, 27 June – 1 July 2022) and the UN-Water Groundwater Summit (Paris, 7– 8 December 2022) and will provide input to the preparation of the 2023 World Water Development Report “Accelerating change: Partnerships and cooperation”.

Objectives

The Pan-European Regional Preparatory Meeting for the United Nations 2023 Water Conference (Geneva/hybrid, 12–13 April 2022) is a preparatory event for the UNECE region, aimed at contributing a regional perspective to the effective review and implementation of the Decade, in order to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It will identify and further inspire commitments and initiatives that create impact and contribute to the implementation of the Decade.

More specifically, the Pan-European Regional Preparatory Meeting sets out to achieve the following objectives:

- Assess the progress made by the Pan-European region in the implementation of the objectives of the Decade, including the Secretary General's Plan: Water Action Decade 2018–2028, while reaffirming the internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda;
- Identify specific challenges and obstacles in the Pan-European region, as well as opportunities and innovative ways and means to support the implementation and acceleration of progress in the region and globally;
- Increase awareness on the legal frameworks and tools available in the Pan-European region to support States and other stakeholders in achieving the objectives of the Decade and acceleration of progress;
- Share ongoing efforts, best practices and experiences;
- Inspire new actions, initiatives and partnerships, needed for accelerating progress in the Pan-European region towards implementation of the objectives of the Decade;
- Encourage States and other stakeholders from the region to announce voluntary commitments at the United Nations 2023 Water Conference;
- Raise awareness of the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework and build commitments to action among governments and stakeholders in the region on the five accelerators identified in the framework.

Organizers

The Pan-European Regional Preparatory Meeting is organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in cooperation with the Regional Discussion Group (RDG) on Water for the Pan-European region, created in the framework of the UN-Water Expert Group on regional-level coordination.

Organization of work

The Meeting will start at 10:00 (CET) on Tuesday, 12 April 2022, and close at 13:00 (CET) on Wednesday, 13 April 2022. Simultaneous interpretation in English, French and Russian will be provided.

The meeting will be held in a hybrid format: at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, and online. The number and duration of remote (online) interventions will be strictly limited in line with the rules for hybrid meetings with interpretation at the United Nations Office in Geneva. Government representatives participating remotely and wishing to make an intervention, are strongly encouraged to involve their respective Permanent Mission in Geneva in delivering the statement in-person.

The opening session will be followed by six plenary sessions and a closing session.

Each plenary session will bring together several panelists from member States and major stakeholders. Plenary sessions will additionally include statements from the floor (2 min per statement).

Plenary sessions will address the following topics:

- **Session 1.** Make drinking water and sanitation available, safe and affordable for all
- **Session 2.** Tackle water pollution, conserve ecosystems and biodiversity and apply circular economy policies
- **Session 3.** Strengthen water governance at national and transboundary levels
- **Session 4.** Strengthen climate resilience, reduce risks of floods and droughts and strengthen cooperation among water using sectors (agriculture, energy, etc.) to reconcile competing needs
- **Session 5.** Improve knowledge, management and protection of groundwater
- **Session 6.** Accelerate progress through partnerships, financing, data, research and innovation

Expressions of interest to contribute to one of the sessions by sharing success stories on the implementation of the Decade and/or highlighting new initiatives and partnerships to be brought to the United Nations 2023 Water Conference can be submitted to the organizers **by 22 March 2022**.

A detailed programme will be issued in late March 2022.

Participation

The Meeting will be attended by senior government representatives from water, energy, agriculture, environment, foreign affairs and other relevant authorities, international and regional organisations, basin organizations, private sector, academia, civil society representatives and other stakeholders.

Registration

All participants need to register online **by 22 March 2022**, using the following link: <https://indico.un.org/e/unece-prep-meeting-2023-water-conference>.

Participants are requested to indicate whether they intend to participate remotely or in person.

Participation in the meeting is subject to the approval of the registration by the Secretariat.

Limited funds may be available to support participation of governmental representatives and non-governmental stakeholders from eligible countries. Participants eligible for financial support should register and submit their requests **by 8 March 2022**. Requests for financial support received after this date will not be processed. Due to the limited funds available, priority will be given to experts providing inputs to the meeting.

Virtual participation

If you wish to participate virtually, please register using the registration link above. The connection details and further guidance on how to use the virtual platform will be shared with registered participants a few days ahead of the meeting. Kindly bear in mind that time for remote interventions is strictly limited and the option of involving Permanent Missions in Geneva to deliver statements should be explored.

When logging into the virtual meeting platform, please label yourself in the following way: COUNTRY/ORGANIZATION – First name_Last name.

In-person participation

The meeting will be held at the Palais des Nations (Avenue de la Paix 14, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland) in conference room XVIII (subject to change – please check the [website](#) closer to the date of the meeting). A map of the Palais des Nations is available [here](#).

Travel

Travel restrictions put in place to address the spread of the coronavirus are subject to change, and we recommend to confirm directly with Swiss authorities for the most current information (please visit the website of the [Swiss Federal Office of Public Health](#)).

Please visit the Swiss Government Travel Check Website to verify which entry requirements apply to your entry to Switzerland: <https://travelcheck.admin.ch/home>.

Please do not make travel arrangements before your participation is approved.

Visa support

Participants requiring entry visas to Switzerland should initiate visa procedures at least five weeks before the meeting. The Secretariat will provide approved participants with an invitation letter, which should be used to apply for a visa at the nearest consular office of Switzerland. For requesting visa letters, please contact the Secretariat as early as possible.

Meeting page

Further information and background materials are available at the meeting webpage: <https://unece.org/prep-meeting-2023-water-conference>.

Contact information

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