

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

Geneva, Palais des Nations, and online, 12 – 13 April 2022

Session 5. Improve knowledge, management and protection of groundwater

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Groundwater is a vital resource that provides almost half of all drinking water worldwide, about 40% of water for irrigated agriculture and about 1/3 of water required for industry. It sustains ecosystems, maintains the baseflow of rivers and prevents land subsidence and seawater intrusion. Groundwater is an important part of climate change adaptation process and is often a solution for people without access to safe water.

Despite these impressive facts, groundwater (being invisible) is 'out of mind' for most people. At the same time, water scarcity is increasing, already affects about 2.7 billion people around the world for at least one month per year. As surface water availability decreases (due to human activities and climate change), reliance- and pressure on groundwater is growing. Yet we still do not know sufficient about the state of groundwater resources globally and we do not manage aquifers well enough.

Therefore we have started a campaign: Groundwater – Making Invisible Visible. The first major step was having groundwater as a theme of the World Water Day celebration this year. Further, the World Water Development Report 2022 is dedicated to groundwater. The third main step this year will be a Groundwater Summit, as a contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework.

The Groundwater Summit is envisaged as a major contribution to making the groundwater more visible in order to better manage and protect it. It will bring attention to groundwater at the highest international level. The Summit will use the World Water Development Report 2022 as a baseline and the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework as a guidelines to define actions towards more responsible and sustainable use and protection of this vital natural resource. The summit will unify the statements from all major water-related events in 2022 in one comprehensive groundwater message for the UN Water Conference in March 2023. The Summit will take place on 6-8 December in Paris, France, and if you are interested to attend or contribute to it in any way, just let us know to keep you inform. Thanks.