Marrakech Partnership | Global Climate Action

UN Climate Change COP 29
Baku, Azerbaijan

Outcomes Report

Action Event: " Water Solutions for Climate Actions"

Date, Time: 19 November, 10:00 - 11:30
Venue: Nasimi

Organized by the following partners: MP Water Group, SIWI, AGWA, IWMI/CIGAR, INBO

Event Title: Water Solutions for Climate Actions

Key Headlines and Messages:

Water is a resilience multiplier. If climate finance, capacity development, technology and partnerships support water actions, water can connect sectors, stakeholders and promote a system view, reducing risk and increasing resilience. Through prioritizing adaptive freshwater management, including resilient water, sanitation, and hygiene services, countries and cities can build climate-resilient societies that benefit both people and the planet.

Water is not only important for adaptation and resilience, but also an essential ingredient for climate mitigation. From preserving carbon sinks like wetlands and peatlands or managing hydropower reservoirs, to balancing trade-offs between increased demand for electricity and agriculture production - how we manage water is make or break for net zero and a just energy transition.

A fair and just transition recognizes that for many vulnerable communities, the human right to water is threatened by climate change and should be prioritized in building climate resilience. The Water for Climate community urges parties to consider how management of water and sanitation systems can contribute to updated NDCs, particularly through policies and programs on water supply and sanitation; nature; agriculture, city planning and energy. It can ensure just resilient societies for all; especially those at the forefront of climate change impacts (youth, women, local communities and Indigenous peoples and First Nations)

The Marrakech Partnership Global Climate Action spotlighted three critical water solutions in the COP29 Water Action Event; namely through progress on protecting and restoring our freshwater ecosystems, building water-resilient food systems, and accelerating urban water resilience. These solutions are grounded in the 2030 Climate Solutions, which allow us to come together and to transform sectors and systems. These efforts are advancing progress toward the critical mitigation and adaptation goals we need by 2030. But let's be clear: there is no one-size-fits-all solution. While our climate goals are global, the pathways to achieving them must be local. Communities worldwide need to be empowered to ensure the transition is just, inclusive, and responsive to their unique needs, something that the water community understands very well.

Outcomes:

Outcome 1: *Creation and continuation of multi-stakeholder coalitions and collective action across divides*

The Water Action Event at COP29 showcased progress on the three water outcomes presented at COP28 in Dubai, namely protecting and restoring our freshwater ecosystems, building water-resilient food systems, and accelerating urban water resilience.

Protecting and restoring our freshwater ecosystems

The **Freshwater Challenge** (FWC) is a significant global initiative aimed at restoring 300,000 kilometers of degraded rivers and 350 million hectares of wetlands by 2030, alongside conserving intact freshwater ecosystems. The initiative, launched at the UN 2023 Water Conference, has since then grown from 6 country signatories to celebrating a major milestone, reaching 50 members after Kazakhstan and Australia officially joined the world's largest ever freshwater restoration and protection initiative. The FWC is a perfect example of an initiative that blends mitigation and adaptation targets.

Focusing on integration and acceleration, the challenge integrates freshwater ecosystem restoration into national strategies for climate adaptation, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable development. It accelerates actions by mobilizing financial resources and connecting national efforts with international support. The initiative aligns with global goals like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, emphasizing a collaborative, country-driven approach.

Additionally, during 2024 the FWC has secured catalytic funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF). This US$5 million investment in the Freshwater Challenge will accelerate action by addressing some of the most critical needs and challenges identified by the Member countries, by supporting:

- Countries and development institutions to monitor Freshwater Challenge objectives;
- Countries to operationalize their Freshwater Challenge objectives from source to sea;
- Country learning to strengthen national Freshwater Challenge objectives; and
- Communications to raise awareness locally, nationally and globally about the central role of healthy freshwater ecosystems in tackling the climate and nature crises and driving sustainable development

The Freshwater Challenge depends on the collaboration between countries, its member organisations and active engagement from business and civil society. Along with the contribution from the GEF International Waters focal area, over US$10 million in co-financing has already been identified from a broad range of actors, including the private sector, NGOs, and member countries. In the coming months, the Freshwater Challenge will seek to increase the amount of co-financing and work with member countries to define project detail. During events like World Water Week in Stockholm and New York Climate Week, FWC members facilitated significant engagement with private sector actors and governments to encourage collective action. Future plans include launching a Business Supporter Program in 2025 to strengthen private sector collaboration, refining methodologies for restoration and conservation, and establishing a global tracking system to monitor progress. FWC needs local communities and civil society organisations to take better care of freshwater ecosystems, and to work collaboratively with governments and businesses who rely heavily on water to maximise the skills and resources they have to restore freshwater ecosystems. The Freshwater challenge was also recognised by the COP29 Presidency declaration on Water for Climate Action and will receive support from specific countries. Brazil is also considering how best to support the FWC in the lead up to COP30.

Building Water-resilient Food Systems

*The Water Action Event also followed up on the **Water Resilient Food Systems** which was the focus of last year's first-ever Ministerial Roundtable on the same theme that launched the Water-Resilient Food Systems Partnership hosted by the CRFS Alliance. This is another area where we can emphasize the importance of climate resilient water management for both mitigation and adaptation goals. The food and agriculture sector has massive potential for emissions reduction; and a big part of that relates to water use.*

Non-state actors are collaborating to explore opportunities to support Parties in the update of their NDCs, providing water management solutions for sustainable food production in an era marked by increasingly uncertain precipitation patterns. The segment on water-resilient food systems during the event focused on how to enhance food system sustainability while adapting to and mitigating climate challenges. Key highlights included:

1. ***Integration of Water and Food Systems**: Addressing water resilience in food systems requires balancing water use with planetary boundaries, recognizing hydrological uncertainties, and adjusting food production methods to reflect changing water availability. This includes adopting sustainable irrigation, improving soil moisture retention, and integrating nature-based solutions among the solutions.*
2. ***Technological and Policy Innovations**: Stakeholders emphasized the importance of leveraging data-driven tools, precision agriculture, and governance reforms to promote climate-resilient and equitable water use in agriculture. Enhanced governance mechanisms can support adaptive allocation of water resources*

across food systems and other vital sectors, and support programmes that offer collective risk reduction measures for farmers and agricultural communities affected by climate change.

3. ***Collaborative Frameworks**: Achieving water-resilient food systems necessitates partnerships among national and local governments, communities, private sectors, and international organizations. Bundled solutions combining policy innovation, financing, and community engagement were highlighted as key enablers.*
4. ***Solutions Showcase**: Specific initiatives, such as water-smart crop choices, regenerative farming practices, and the use of recycled water for irrigation, were discussed as scalable approaches. Examples from small island nations and global drylands demonstrated practical applications.*

The discussion concluded with a call for enhanced global action, particularly through policy alignment with climate goals, increased investment in water-resilient infrastructure, and sharing best practices through international platforms as well as acknowledging the importance of addressing water resilience in the entire food supply value chain. The outcomes of the discussion will feed upcoming interactions between non-state actors and country representatives under the Water-Resilient Food Systems Partnership as well as potential connections with the COP29 Presidency initiatives, such as the Harmonya Initiative and the Food call for Action.

Accelerating Urban Water Resilience

*Finally, we caught up with the coalition of actors working for **Urban Water Resilience** under the auspices of the Sharm el-Sheikh Adaptation Agenda. Historically, cities have been underrepresented in international climate forums, despite their significant role in combating climate change impacts. Engaging non-state actors who work closely with local governments, such as UWR Working Group Partners, ensures that cities' voices are amplified in global decision-making processes. This inclusion is vital for mainstreaming urban water resilience in international adaptation frameworks, ensuring that national climate commitments fully reflect urban water-related priorities.*

*Urban water resilience is increasingly recognized as a critical component of climate adaptation and sustainable urban development. Recent efforts to foster multilevel collaboration and coordinated messaging from actors in the field concluded in the: **Launch of the report: Advancing Urban Water Resilience through Multilevel Governance: A Collaborative Call to Action** - This report shows the efforts of cities and national governments to advance sustainable water systems, aligning with global efforts to achieve the Global Goal on Adaptation and the Sharm El-Sheikh Adaptation Agenda 2030. It highlights the role of collaboration with non-State actors and the leadership of cities on climate action and water resilience.*

*The SAA Urban Water Resilience Working Group's overarching objective is **to foster multilevel collaboration and coordinated action between local, regional, and national levels of governments** and **stakeholders to effectively address water-related climate challenges in urban areas.** The next steps for SAA Working group on Urban Water Resilience will include:*

- ***Scaling Initiatives:** Expand the implementation of frameworks like City Water Resilience Approach (CWRA) and WaL globally, fostering resilience in cities facing rapid urbanization and climate challenges.*
- ***Integrated Planning:** Strengthen the integration of water management into urban governance frameworks, leveraging tools like the CWRA's comprehensive assessment capabilities.*
- ***Capacity Building:** Establish training platforms to empower practitioners and decision-makers with knowledge and resources for effective water resilience strategies.*
- ***Funding Mobilization:** Secure multi-annual funding to support project implementation and scaling efforts, ensuring a sustainable impact.*

These efforts collectively aim to transform urban water systems into resilient networks that mitigate risks, adapt to climate pressures, and enhance community well-being.

Outcome 2: *Illustrations of promising and inspiring water solutions for climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience building that can support the implementation of NDCs*

Further recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples in international water policy discourse.

Phil Duncan, Galambany Professorial Fellow at the University of Canberra, member of the Gomeroi Nation, Australia advocated for integrating Indigenous knowledge into water management, highlighting the critical role of Indigenous perspectives in addressing water resilience challenges at various forums. He emphasized the interconnectedness of land, water, and people in Indigenous worldviews, advocating for collaborative approaches that combine Indigenous knowledge with scientific recommendations to improve environmental outcomes and support community-driven solutions.

Dr. Duncan underscored the necessity of involving Indigenous communities in decision-making processes affecting natural resources. He pointed out that Indigenous knowledge systems offer valuable insights for sustainable water management and climate adaptation, particularly in protecting freshwater ecosystems and enhancing resilience against climate change impacts. He called for frameworks that respect cultural values while promoting equity and accountability in water governance. His work also focuses on fostering trust and collaboration through tools and approaches that bridge cultural and scientific perspectives, as demonstrated in initiatives like the Freshwater Challenge and other water-focused global events. Duncan's advocacy is pivotal in promoting systemic change for water security and inclusion in climate resilience strategies.

Mobilize private investment for addressing local water resilience challenges

Dr. Adnan Aziz, representing the Global Islamic Finance Program for Climate, Nature, and Development (GIFP), highlighted the urgent need to increase finance as a tool to address climate and nature challenges. With over $3 trillion in Islamic financial assets worldwide, only a fraction is currently directed toward climate finance. The GIFP aims to mobilize Islamic capital for climate mitigation, adaptation, and nature-based solutions, focusing especially on the Global South.

Key initiatives include leveraging instruments like **Green Sukuk** (Islamic green bonds) to fund renewable energy and conservation projects, and **Waqf** (designated assets) for sustainable agriculture and environmental restoration. These approaches align with Islamic principles of ethical and sustainable investment, providing an avenue to bridge gaps in climate financing.

Challenges in scaling Islamic finance for climate goals include limited awareness, the complexity of creating Shariah-compliant climate finance tools, and regulatory hurdles. However, programs like GIFP are engaging diverse stakeholders, including multilateral banks and local Islamic institutions, to overcome these barriers and build pipelines for bankable projects.

Additionally, **Gary White, co-founder and CEO of Water.org**, emphasized innovative approaches to addressing the global water crisis during the event. He discussed initiatives such as WaterConnect, a project development company established by Water.org to accelerate the construction of climate-resilient water and sanitation infrastructure in low- and middle-income countries. The program focuses on addressing the gap in investment-ready projects and mobilizes early-stage financing and technical expertise to scale impactful solutions.

WaterConnect aims to bridge the financial challenges in emerging markets by collaborating with private-sector partners, including infrastructure developers and utilities. Its projects are designed to

enhance water access, improve quality, and ensure resilience against climate challenges. By integrating private investment and technology, this initiative supports sustainable development goals and climate adaptation efforts.

Promote integrated approaches in ensuring sustainable food systems

Ginya Truitt Nakata, Director of Global Agriculture and Food Systems Policy at The Nature Conservancy (TNC), emphasized the critical role of integrated approaches in ensuring sustainable food systems, particularly under the pressures of climate change. Her statements highlighted the importance of nature-based solutions, such as improving soil health and promoting agroforestry, to enhance resilience in agricultural practices. She stressed the need to bridge policy gaps and engage multiple stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, and local communities, to achieve scalable impact.

Additionally, Nakata advocated for targeted investments in regenerative agriculture and water management practices, which align with both climate mitigation and adaptation goals. These strategies aim to secure food systems while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and safeguarding biodiversity.

Furthermore, **Sharon Cherono, representing the Kenya National Farmers' Federation (KENAFF) and the World Farmers' Organisation**, emphasized efforts to enhance farmers' capacity to adapt to changing climate conditions while safeguarding biodiversity and ecosystems**.** These include several key strategies and initiatives aimed at addressing climate resilience and sustainability for farmers from KENAFF:

- **Promoting Farm Forestry and Afforestation**: KENAFF has been working to reforest degraded lands and enhance agro-biodiversity as part of climate mitigation and adaptation strategies. The organization encourages farmers to allocate 15% of their land to these practices, improving soil and water conservation while increasing tree cover to combat climate change. This effort supports Kenya's goal of achieving 10% forest cover by 2030.
- **Building Farmer Capacity**: Initiatives include educating farmers, especially youth and women, on the benefits of sustainable tree-based enterprises and integrating silvopastoral systems. These systems combine timber, fruit trees, and fodder shrubs with high-yield pastures, improving land productivity and livestock health while reducing environmental degradation.
- **Resilience to Climate Shocks**: Recognizing the impact of extreme weather events, KENAFF has implemented capacity-building programs that incorporate climate-smart agriculture, including drought-tolerant crops, soil conservation practices, and alternative livelihoods like biofuel production. These approaches help mitigate risks and enhance food security.
- **Ecosystem Services and Value Chains**: KENAFF is developing payment for ecosystem services (PES) initiatives and promoting tree-based value chains. This involves establishing tree nurseries, producing timber and fruits, and fostering local enterprises to ensure economic and environmental sustainability.

Sharon Cherono highlighted how such programs improve food and nutritional security, reduce poverty, and enhance farmers' capacity to adapt to changing climate conditions while safeguarding biodiversity and ecosystems.

Enhance water infrastructure and sanitation services for vulnerable communities

Mara Ramos, Executive Assistant, Sustainability, Water and Sanitation Company of the State of Sao Paulo, SABESP, Brazil), emphasized the SABESP commitment to sustainability and climate resilience through innovative initiatives. Key efforts include the *Integra Tietê* program and strategic partnerships to enhance water infrastructure and sanitation services for vulnerable communities in São Paulo. The

program focuses on improving the water quality of the Tietê River and connecting underserved households to sewage systems. This initiative supports biodiversity, mitigates climate change, and serves over 360,000 people in low-income areas.

Additionally, SABESP has undertaken natural infrastructure projects to restore degraded forests near São Paulo's water systems. These reforestation efforts aim to improve sediment filtration, reduce turbidity in reservoirs, and lower water treatment costs. By collaborating with farmers and other stakeholders, SABESP has planted over 1,000 hectares of trees and plans to expand restoration activities to improve water supply and resilience to droughts.

These programs are supported by financing mechanisms like sustainability-linked loans, showcasing the role of public-private partnerships in driving inclusive and environmentally conscious growth. They reflect SABESP's leadership in addressing Brazil's water and sanitation challenges while aligning with climate adaptation goals.

Additionally, **Martin Shouler, London Water Leader, ARUP, UK** highlighted the **City Water Resilience Approach (CWRA),** an initiative developed by organizations like Arup and the Stockholm International Water Institute, CWRA provides cities with a five-step framework: understanding systems, assessing resilience, developing action plans, implementing solutions, and evaluating outcomes. This approach has been implemented in cities such as Cape Town, Miami, and Rotterdam to address water-related risks like flooding and droughts while promoting sustainable urban development.

Outcome 3: Linkages between the MPGCA, COP29 Presidency initiatives, Water for Climate Pavilion, UN 2026 Water Conference and the Water Action Agenda

Meike van Ginneken, the Special Water Envoy for the Kingdom of the Netherlands, emphasized the importance of integrating water considerations across sectors and geographies to tackle global water challenges. Van Ginneken stressed the need for cross-sectoral cooperation, particularly in linking water management with agriculture, as approximately 70% of global water use is tied to this sector. She noted that innovative partnerships, such as those facilitated through Dutch expertise in sustainable water practices, can unlock synergies and improve resilience in food and water systems.

A key milestone she referenced is the 2023 UN Water Conference, which resulted in the Water Action Agenda—a platform of over 800 commitments aimed at accelerating progress toward global water security. Looking forward, she underscored the importance of implementing these commitments through collaboration and avoiding siloed approaches across disciplines and countries ahead of the UN 2026 Water Conference.

Kamala Huseynli, speaking **on behalf of the COP29 Presidency,** presented the **Baku Declaration on Water for Climate Action** which calls upon stakeholders to take integrated approaches to combat the causes and impacts of climate change on water basins and water-related ecosystems, as well as to integrate water related mitigation and adaptation measures in national climate policies, including NDCs and NAPS. The Baku Declaration is a clear and positive manifestation of 4 years of effort to create a formally recognized space for water within the UNFCCC processes and with the ambition to establish stronger connections with the other Rio Conventions. Huseynli emphasized the importance of situating water perspectives into multilateral climate talks and promoting integrated water resilience into climate action strategies. Huseynli also presented the **Baku Dialogue on Water for Climate Action**, which together with the Declaration will commit to COP-to-COP continuity, promoting sustained attention to water issues across successive climate conferences, ensuring that water remains central to global climate discussions.

Kamala, highlighted the need for collaboration among governments, private sectors, and local communities to support and achieve the ambition of the Declaration. The water community has committed to support the Declaration, through the continued chairing and delivering of the Water for Climate Pavilion at each UNFCCC COP and ensuring the continuity and coordination of its work between the COPs. Additionally, the Marrakesh Partnership water content group will continue its work for the Global Action Agenda and the Sharm El Sheik Adaptation Agenda, supporting the development of non-state actors' voices and their collaboration with Parties. The MPGCA will be an important platform to support the necessary Multi-Stakeholder Engagement of the Declaration, both in aspects of cross-sectoral approaches and in facilitating the interactions between non-state actors and state actors.

Content:

In addition, the session illustrated and highlighted the issues and progress made in the different targets defined within the 2030 climate solutions for mitigation, adaptation and resilience in the areas listed below

1. Restore 300,000 kms of rivers and 350 million hectares of wetlands by 2030 and protect healthy rivers and wetlands

2. By 2028, all communities living in the overlap of high climate hazard exposure and insufficient water, sanitation, and hygiene access have been targeted with climate resilient water, sanitation, and hygiene services

3. Coherent national policy frameworks and climate strategies are enhanced to integrate water planning that enables transformative climate outcomes in agriculture

4. By 2030, 1% of annual water sector spending is invested in NbS via watershed investment programs - *like water funds* – resulting in improved management and/or protection of rivers, lakes and wetlands, driving water security benefits and improving critical habitat for biodiversity

5. Water systems are smart, efficient and robust with a reduction in water loss through leakage, and wastewater systems maximize recycling and reuse alongside natural wetland filtration with zero environmental spillage

6. Protection of 30% of the world's lands and inland waters, 2 billion hectares sustainable management and 350 million hectares restoration of land securing legal Indigenous and local communities with use of nature-based solutions to deliver the integrity of natural ecosystems for climate, water, food, health and other biodiversity life supporting roles

7. By 2025, financial institutions contribute to halting land conversion by eliminating commodity-driven deforestation from portfolios and all actors tap into nature-based solutions investment opportunities of US$484 billion/year needed by 2030

Speakers:

Event organisers were requested to ensure events were inclusive of age, gender, geography, and represented a spectrum of stakeholders across all levels of government and sectors. Please share below the number of speakers represented in each group at this event. The data shared below will be reflected in the reporting for the HLCs/MP Agenda at COP 29.

Total number of speakers in event: 15

Speaker demographics

Full Name	Role in event	Youth <30	Geography	Developing country	Gender	Indigenous person	Stakeholder group
	Speaker/ Moderator	Yes/No	Country, region: Africa, Asia, Europe, LAC, North America, Oceania,	Yes/No	Female/Male/ Other	Yes/No	**Business** / **Finance** / **CSTAR** City, State & Regions) / **Party** (Gov rep) / **Civil Society** (Youth, NGO) / **Academia** (Science, Research, Thinktank) / **Multilateral organisation** (UN, IGO etc)
Maggie White	Master of Ceremony	No	Europe	No	Female	No	Civil Society
Meike van Ginneken	Key Note Speaker	No	Europe	No	Female	No	Party
Eric Oyare	Moderator	No	Africa	Yes	Male	No	Civil Society
Dr. Adnan Aziz	Panelist	No	Asia (MENA)	Yes	Male	No	Finance
Professor Leslie (Phil) Duncan	Panelist	No	Oceania	No	Male	Yes	Academia
Chiara Christina Colombo	Moderator	No	Europe	No	Female	No	Civil Society, Academia
Sharon Cherono	Panelist	Yes	Africa	Yes	Female	Yes	Civil Society , Farmer
Ginya Truitt Nakata	Panelist	No	North America	No	Female	No	Civil Society
Martin Shouler	Moderator	No	Europe	No	Male	No	Business
Gary White	Panelist	No	North America	No	Male	No	Finance
Mara Ramos	Panelist	No	LAC	Yes	Female	No	Business
Ahmed Elhadj Taieb	Speaker & Moderator	Yes	Africa	Yes	Male	No	Civil Society ,
Ingrid Timboe	Speaker	No	North America	No	Female	No	Civil Society
Kamala Huseynli	Key Note Speaker	No	Asia	Yes	Female	No	Party
Nigar Arparderai	Key Note Speaker	No	Asia	Yes	Female	No	Party

Audience - Please share the number of guests who attended your session:

An estimate or percentage is welcome.

- *Approximately 85% capacity of the room*

Materials & Assets from the session:

Please share links below to:

- Concept note: Final_COP_29_Action_Event_Concept note.pdf - Google Drive
- Run of Show: COP29 Run of show TEMPLATE- please make a copy (1).docx
- Information note: Action on Water: Water solutions for climate actions | UNFCCC
- Photos: COP29 | 19 Nov 24 | Water Solutions For Climate Actions | Flickr & COP29 - 19 Nov 24 - GCA - Action on Water | Flickr
- Slides or any other materials from the session: Copy of COP29 Holding Slides.pdf

- Recording: MP Action on Water: Water solutions for climate actions - YouTube