



HLPF 2026 SIDE EVENT CONCEPT NOTE

Water at the Heart of the Rio Conventions: From Commitments to Action

Tuesday, 7 Jul 2026, 13:15–14:30 - In-person (UNHQ) Conference Room 12

[Registration form](#)

Introduction

Water is increasingly recognized across climate, biodiversity, and land restoration agendas, yet implementation remains fragmented and underfinanced. While many countries include water-related priorities in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and ecosystem restoration strategies, these commitments are often pursued in isolation across institutions, funding streams, and policy frameworks. As a result, opportunities to accelerate delivery across the Rio Conventions (Convention on Biological Diversity, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification) remain underutilized.

Water is not a separate sectoral issue; it is the connective system through which climate resilience, ecosystem integrity, and sustainable land management are delivered. Healthy freshwater ecosystems support adaptation, biodiversity conservation, drought resilience, and food security, while climate change intensifies water-related risks including floods, droughts, glacial melt, and sea-level rise.

Co-hosted by the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Stockholm International Water Institute, this high-level side event will examine how water can serve as an implementation entry point across the three Rio Conventions. The discussion will focus on moving from policy ambition to action by identifying barriers to implementation, strengthening political prioritization, and improving financing pathways for integrated water-climate-nature solutions. Aligned with the HLPF 2026 Theme, this side event will also showcase the potential for realizing efficiencies in multilateral governance for water and optimizing resources for transformative, equitable, innovative and coordinated actions on SDG progress.

Building on momentum toward the 2026 United Nations Water Conference and COPs, the event aims to generate practical recommendations and share political messages to strengthen coordinated implementation across multilateral frameworks and accelerate delivery of SDGs 6, 13, 14, and 15.

Expected Outcomes

- **Shared political messages** on how water can accelerate implementation across climate, biodiversity, and land agendas under the Rio Conventions.
- **Practical pathways for implementation**, identifying how water-related commitments already included in NDCs, NAPs, NBSAPs, LDN Targets and restoration strategies can be translated into coordinated action and financing.
- **Stronger coalition-building and momentum** toward the 2026 United Nations Water Conference and future COP processes by aligning governments, UN actors, science, and civil society around water-climate implementation.

Co-Organizers

This event is organized as a multistakeholder event in line with SDG6, 13, 14 and 15, led by the Government of the Netherlands with the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI).

Indicative Agenda

Time	Session
13:15–13:30	<p>Welcome Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Meike van Ginneken, Water Envoy, Government of The Netherlands Ms. Susanne Halling Duffy, Director World Water Week and Global Engagements, SIWI
13:30–13:35	<p>Keynote presentation</p> <p>Ms. Retno L.P. Marsudi, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Water</p>
13:35-14:05	<p>Panel Discussion</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Meike van Ginneken, Water Envoy, Government of The Netherlands</p> <p>Panelists</p> <p>Panelists will touch on water synergies, opportunities and hurdles in enforcing the three Rio Conventions with a focus on water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> H.E. Minister James Brown, Ministry of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Ireland H.E. Ambassador Ihab Mostafa Awad Mostafa, Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations Ms. Ana Paula Fioreze, Superintendent of Hydrological and Socioeconomic Studies, Brazilian National Water and Basic Sanitation Agency Prof. Emer. Kenzo Hiroki, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS), Japan and Coordinator of the High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP) Ms. Sonja Koepfel, Secretary, Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) and Baku Dialogue on Water for Climate Action
14:05-14:25	<p>Interactive Q&A – Open Dialogue</p> <p><i>A pre-established list of speakers for the interactive discussion; However, priority will be given to interventions at the ministerial level and stakeholders as communicated to the organizers via pre-registration. Accredited participants may also request the floor by pressing the microphone button on the console. To maximize participation within the available time, interventions should be limited to two minutes. This time limit will be strictly enforced, including through the use of a timing device and/or microphone cutoff. Depending on the number of requests for the floor in a given discussion, the time allocation may be adjusted downward, as necessary. Participants are encouraged to deliver concise remarks that contribute to dynamic and interactive exchange.</i></p>
14:25-14:30	<p>Call to Action and Closing Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Ishata Shaheen Rostamkhan, Youth representative – governance engagement for global to local implementation



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- | | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms. Susanne Halling Duffy, Director World Water Week and Global Engagements, SIWI |
|--|---|

Contacts

Sara Castro Hallgren Sara.CastroHallengren@siwi.org

Rozenberg, Evita evita.rozenberg@minbuza.nl

Hordijk, Ineke ineke.hordijk@minbuza.nl (focal point New York)

Registration

To register as a participant and for official statements open the form link here:

[Registration Form - HLPF Side Event – Fill out form](#)