



**International
Science Council**

The global voice for science

The ISC at the UN 2023 Water Conference Statement



INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE COUNCIL

UN 2023 Water Conference Plenary Statement

Friday 24 March, 15:00-17:00, General Assembly Hall, UNHQ, New York

Presenter: Anne-Sophie Stevance
Spoken version may differ from written version

This statement is delivered on behalf of the International Science Council, which federates 230 national science academies and international unions in the field of natural, social and human sciences in support of actionable knowledge and sound decision-making.

The International Science Council – ISC – wishes to stress that there is a need for a strong commitment to implementation across science, policy and practice communities coming out of this conference to address long-standing water challenges with known solutions through to issues on the horizon that require innovations.

The science to action opportunities for impact are clear.

The water cycle transcends national and sectoral boundaries. Multi-level and multi-sectoral coordination and coherence around the shared goals agreed by the international community are essential to enable real and long-lasting progress on the people and planet agenda.

There is a need to drastically improve water and sanitation facilities to curb the spread of waterborne diseases and confront the socio-economic, governance and political causes that impede implementation in different parts of the world. Solutions need to be developed with and for local communities.

Climate change and the loss of nature create or amplify water crises around the world. No technological fix will be able to make up for that. Restoring nature and addressing the climate crisis is at the heart of development and risk-reduction and will build resilience to future water-related risks. Counteracting the disjointed and promoting a coordinated approach and coordination across sectors, ministries and global instruments on the drivers of the water crises is of the essence.

The need for deep transformations is evident in the SDGs, but the requirements and cross-sectoral implications have not been assessed holistically. Achieving the green energy transitions and decarbonization targets (with the development of renewables, hydrogen and other technologies) means major increases in mineral resources extraction and energy consumption. We need a better understanding and governance of the Water-Energy-Food-Resource-Nexus to meet global goals sustainably and equitably.

Finally and importantly, we need robust and agile science advisory systems that can inform anticipatory action and prevention on new and emerging issues and build bridges across institutions and sectors. The pace of change in the global environment as well as rapid urbanization and other dynamics require a stronger partnership between science-policy-society to build an effective and agile knowledge to action continuum particularly to address emerging issues such as the impacts of warming water on pathogens and public health, the net effects of climate change on water across regions, or the full scale and impacts of contaminants in water on our health and wellbeing.

The International Science Council convenes the scientific community across the natural and social sciences and is working with the policy community to provide actionable knowledge and support decision-makers in assessing holistic options and solutions pathways. We are committed to working with you all beyond this Conference to achieve positive change underpinned by science.

The International Science Council (ISC) is a non-governmental organization with a unique global membership that brings together 40 international scientific Unions and Associations and over 140 national and regional scientific organizations including Academies and Research Councils