

UN HLPF 2026

Session 1: Transforming water systems with science, technology and innovation

**Statement by Roannie Ng Shiu, Executive Director of the Pacific Academy of Sciences, and member of the International Science Council delegation to the UN HLPF 2026
On behalf of the Scientific and Technological Community Major Group**

Distinguished Chair, Excellencies, colleagues,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Scientific and Technological Community Major Group, co-coordinated by the International Science Council and the World Federation of Engineering Organizations.

The world is not off track on SDG 6 because we lack knowledge. In many cases, we already know what works. The real challenge is implementation – through political commitment, stronger institutions, capacity building, sustained investment, and more effective science-policy interfaces.

As someone from the Pacific, I know what it means to be surrounded by water, yet increasingly uncertain about freshwater. Rising seas increase saltwater contamination of groundwater, while extreme weather damages fragile water infrastructure. For Pacific communities like mine, water security cannot be separated from climate resilience, food systems, or cultural identity.

That is why we must bring together the natural and social sciences, engineering, and Indigenous and local knowledge. Lasting solutions are not imported – they are co-produced with communities.

From a Pacific perspective, Small Island Developing States should not be viewed only through the lens of vulnerability. They are also places of innovation, where locally grounded knowledge and science are building resilience to some of the world's most complex water challenges – and offering lessons that can benefit us all.

Achieving SDG 6 is not simply about managing water. It is about whether Member States can turn evidence into action. For Pacific communities, water security is not a sectoral issue; it is the foundation for health, food systems, ecosystems, culture, and continuity.

We therefore call on Member States to make better use of scientific evidence and engineering expertise in shaping water policy. The science and engineering are available. The responsibility now is to act on them.

Thank you.