

UNDRR submission on the possible themes for the six Interactive Dialogues for the 2026 United Nations Water Conference

Nine out of ten disasters in the past decade were water-related—floods, droughts, storms—causing immense human and economic losses¹. The 2023 Water Conference underscored these connections, particularly through Interactive Dialogue 3, which addressed the interlinkages between water, climate, resilience, and disaster risk reduction. As we look ahead to 2026, we encourage Member States to build upon this foundation, ensuring that disaster risk reduction remains a central theme.

There is a close interlinkage between water and disaster risk reduction. Water-related disasters, such as floods, droughts and storms, have caused most of the human and economic impact of all disasters combined². Risk-informed decision-making and investment in preventing and reducing water-related risks before they become shocks or disasters is a development priority – whether to public health, food systems, energy systems, transportation or other.

These linkages were reflected prominently in the UN 2023 Water Conference through Interactive Dialogue 3 on ***Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment: Source to Sea, Biodiversity, Climate, Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction***. With temperatures rising and water-related disasters continuing to affect people across the planet, these linkages must continue to be a priority in the UN 2026 Water Conference and in the context of the implementation of the UN System-Wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation³.

Water – both in terms of water-related risks and as a source of life – therefore plays an essential role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework. It is all our responsibility to act on the commitments made during the UN 2023 Water Conference, as well as the findings, recommendations and calls to action of the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework⁴.

To address water-related risks, it is essential for all stakeholders to work together with a multi-hazard and multi-sectoral risk governance approach, both at international and national levels. Translating this approach to the national and local levels is key. For example, integrating disaster risk reduction into national water strategies will help countries better manage and prepare for drought periods and extreme flood events.

A significant strengthening of the data ecosystem that underscores water-related disasters is also urgently needed, both to better understand the extent and nature of water-related losses and damages, and to inform risk-reducing and adaptive measures to prevent future hazards.

¹ UNDRR, [Sendai Framework Monitor](#).

² WMO (2021), [Water-related hazards dominate disasters in the past 50 years](#)

³ The Strategy “[...] recognizes that a comprehensive whole-of- system response, including greater cooperation, coherence, coordination and complementarity among development, disaster risk reduction, humanitarian action and sustaining peace, is fundamental to most efficiently and effectively addressing needs and attaining the Sustainable Development Goals [...]”

⁴ The Political Declaration of the Midterm Review reiterated that “sustainable, integrated, disaster risk-informed water resource management is necessary for successful disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation and that the achievement of the water-related goals and targets contributes to the successful implementation of the Sendai Framework”

Building momentum towards the 2026 Water Conference, the year 2025 presents multiple opportunities to advance the global dialogue on water and disaster risk reduction. The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction scheduled from 2 to 6 June in Geneva will be a milestone event on the way to the UN 2026 Water Conference Water, where water-related risks and resilience will be addressed as cross-cutting issue in different sessions.

UNDRR's Contributions to Advancing the 'Water for Resilience' Agenda

UNDRR continues to advance a multi-hazard risk approach to water, supporting global initiatives like the UN System-Wide Strategy on Water and Sanitation, the Water Action Agenda, and the 2026 UN Water Conference. In collaboration with UN entities and partners, UNDRR helps Member States reduce water-related risks to achieve SDG6 and SDG13.

UNDRR has made progress on its three commitments to the **Water Action Agenda**:

- [Better data for water-related disasters](#);
- [Leveraging the Principles for Resilient Infrastructure and UNDRR's Stress-testing tool to advance water infrastructure resiliency](#); and
- [Water at the Heart of Climate Action](#) (commitment by the Kingdom of the Netherlands in collaboration with UNDRR and other partners).

UNDRR is in the process of establishing a new **disaster tracking system**, partnering with UNDP and WMO, to enable countries to systematically collect, analyze and apply data on hazardous events and losses and damages. UNDRR has also scaled up collection of officially reported data against the Sendai Framework and SDGs, where now over 160 countries are reporting through the Sendai Framework Monitor⁵. With such an enhanced data ecosystem, UNDRR will enhance risk-informed development and risk accountability.

UNDRR is also actively engaging on **water resilient infrastructure**. For example, UNDRR has recently successfully completed an infrastructure resilience review in Tonga in collaboration with the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI). The assessment highlighted the critical need to strengthen the capacity of village water committees, which play a pivotal role in managing water resources in rural areas. To address this, the government is, among others, developing comprehensive guidance manuals and standard operating procedures (SOPs) to promote good governance practices.

The **Early Warnings for All (EW4All) initiative** is another important contribution to the water agenda. Important progress has been made, including through tailored support at national level in more than 20 countries and EW4All Multi-stakeholder Forum events at regional and global levels. UNDRR also implements the Netherlands-funded **Water at the Heart of Climate Action** project as an EW4All-aligned project to support five countries in the Nile River basin to understand and manage water related hazards and build community-level resilience in alignment with best practice on end-to-end Early Warning Systems.

⁵ UNDRR, [Sendai Framework Monitor](#).