



To: Secretariat of the 2026 UN Water Conference

Copy: Permanent Missions of the United Arab Emirates

Copy: Permanent Missions of the Republic of Senegal

Riyadh, September 30th, 2025

Subject: Expression of interest from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to co-chair Interactive Dialogue (b) at the 2026 UN Water Conference

Dear Conference Secretariat,

Reference is made to the communication from Under-Secretary-General Li Junhua, DESA-25/01358, requesting contributions from Member States to the United Nations Conference on Water, to be convened in December 2026 and to be co-hosted by the Republic of Senegal and the United Arab Emirates.

Pursuant to that communication, as the Minister of the Environment, Water and Agriculture for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, I formally express our interest in co-chairing the Interactive Dialogue (b), on the topic of *Water for Prosperity: Valuing Water, Water–Energy–Food Nexus, Integrated and Sustainable Water Resources Management, Wastewater and Water-Use Efficiency across Sectors, and Economic and Social Development*.



As briefly described below, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is uniquely positioned to contribute to this topic, having made significant progress at the national level. Furthermore, we could provide tremendous opportunities to strengthen international cooperation on this vital topic.



Saudi Arabia's national contributions to the topic

In the national context, the SDG 6 Country Acceleration Case Study, launched during the sixth annual SDG 6 special event at the 2025 UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), highlights the significant progress made by the Kingdom in recent years in achieving prosperity through water. That Case Study demonstrates how increased political will and cross-sector engagement for water have been key to the Kingdom's progress towards becoming a water-secure nation. This has been made possible by breaking down silos through a Water–Energy–Food Nexus approach, and effectively implementing Integrated Water Resources Management, as demonstrated through the Kingdom's progress towards SDG indicator 6.5.1, from 57% in 2017 to 83% in 2023. Our nation considers water resources not as a sector, but as a connector at the core of our social and economic transformation. This point is underscored by the creation of the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture (MEWA) in 2016, which centralized functions that had



previously been in several ministries. The Saudi Vision 2030 provides a high-level roadmap that places water as the cornerstone of our nation's sustainable development.

The Kingdom has long faced the challenges of extreme aridity and limited freshwater resources, being ranked among the ten most water-stressed countries in the world. The demand for water from different sectors is growing at an estimated 7% annually. To overcome this challenge, we have supported research partnerships and developed globally recognized expertise in the development and utilization of non-conventional water resources, including desalination, wastewater treatment and reuse, and enhancing water-use efficiency across the agriculture, energy, and urban sectors.

Given the natural scarcity, water is a highly valued resource, both in economic and non-economic terms. To ensure that water is appropriately valued, we have conducted the pioneering National Water Valuation Study in collaboration with OECD, UNDP, and the World Bank Group. This Study aims to maximize sustainable economic growth and social benefits by valuing water resources to support decision-making processes at the national and regional levels. To do so, we developed a comprehensive and tailored model. The model estimates the value of water for each water source and for each direct use (agricultural, industrial, urban and environmental), as well as indirect benefits (ecosystem support, flood



protection, groundwater recharge and elimination of discharge pollutants), and “option values”, including the value of preserving water resources for potential future use, to benefit future generations.

By quantifying the actual value of water, the Kingdom has developed an invaluable tool to embed valuation into decision-making at both national and regional levels, addressing water scarcity while supporting economic and social development for current and future generations. The insights from this innovative approach will enable the Kingdom to prioritize investments in wastewater treatment and reuse to protect scarce groundwater reserves, guide conservation measures, optimize water allocation among competing demands, inform tariff-setting and efficiency improvements across sectors, and support agricultural planning that favors high-value crops over water-intensive ones to support a sustainable food security strategy. Looking ahead, the Kingdom is eager to share, scale, and extend this pioneering study and tool globally; contributing to collective efforts in sustainable water management and helping other nations confront similar challenges.

The Kingdom has become a living laboratory for advanced approaches, from large-scale desalination powered by renewable energy to cutting-edge wastewater reuse and leakage detection technologies, to integrated water–energy–food planning under the country’s Vision 2030. By combining policy innovation with technological investment and multi-



stakeholder partnerships, Saudi Arabia has consistently transformed challenges into opportunities. As co-chair of this Interactive Dialogue, the Kingdom will ensure that it remains forward-looking, focusing not only on identifying barriers but also on accelerating replicable solutions and pioneering approaches that can inspire other nations to rethink water management, strengthen resilience, and unlock prosperity.

These national experiences position the Kingdom as a credible and forward-looking partner, with highly relevant experience to be shared with other countries. We are eager to share this experience with others and foster dialogue that links water security with sustainable growth, climate action, and prosperity for all in a context of shared and actionable learning. In this sense, we are committed to ensure that the Interactive Dialogue is innovative and solutions oriented.

Saudi Arabia's international contributions to the topic

In the international agenda, Saudi Arabia has taken a pioneering role in elevating the importance of water issues within the context of the G20. During its G20 Presidency in 2020, the Kingdom convened the first-ever G20 Water Dialogue, which led to the establishment of the G20 Water Platform. This initiative has embedded water security on the G20's agenda, with water being part of the G20 Leaders' Declarations since then.



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Furthermore, Saudi Arabia is the host country of the 11th World Water Forum, to be held in 2027 in Riyadh, under the theme "Action for a Better Tomorrow". The Forum will build on the solid foundations set by previous editions (such as the 9th Forum held in Dakar, Senegal, in 2022, and the 10th Forum held in Bali, Indonesia, in 2024). Given the UN Water Conferences scheduled for 2026 and 2028, we humbly offer the World Water Forum platform, as a multi-stakeholder platform attended by tens of thousands of water experts and policy makers, as a means of maintaining momentum and advancing commitments through the thematic, political, and regional agendas, between these two UN events. In particular, the 11th World Water Forum is organized around six themes, at least two of which (Theme 5 on valuing water, and Theme 1 on water security) should inform the scope of Interactive Dialogue (b) at the 2026 UN Water Conference. In this way, our country proposes to develop a robust, multi-stakeholder, and multi-annual roadmap on this topic in the lead-up to the 2026 Conference, through the Forum process, which including during the Forum itself in 2027, and then extends to the 2028 Conference and beyond. This process would foster shared thematic understandings and enhance political will around firm commitments, which will boost the implementation of the Water Action Agenda. In May 2025, in Riyadh, the newly established Global Water Organization (GWO) commenced its operations, following the signing of its founding



charter by eight UN Member States. The objectives of the GWO are closely in line with the focus of Interactive Dialogue (b), in terms of promoting social, economic, health, and environmental development through equitable access to water and sanitation. GWO is therefore a major player that may make a significant contribution to this topic, both and on behalf of its founding members.

Internationally, we recognize the importance of efforts such as the High-Level Panel on Water (HLPW), convened by the United Nations Secretary-General and President of the World Bank Group in 2016, which led to the publication, in 2018, of "Making Every Drop Count", including the five Bellagio Valuing Water Principles; the creation in 2019 of the Valuing Water Initiative, hosted within the Dutch government, and which built upon the findings of the HLPW, aiming to operationalize approaches towards valuing water; the findings of the Global Commission on the Economics of Water, the report of which, launched in 2024, talks about "Valuing the Hydrological Cycle as a Global Common Good".

One further ongoing example is the Water Futures Community, coordinated by the World Economic Forum, and with a collective of 60 leading organizations. That multi-stakeholder group has identified five pathways to water resilience, including one focused on Holistic Water Valuation, which may further inform the debate during the Interactive Dialogue. One related initiative that has emerged from the Water Futures



Community is the proposed Global Reuse Alliance, led by the 2030 Water Resources Group, the World Bank Group, Global Water Intelligence, the IFC, and the Mohamed bin Zayed Water Initiative, all from the United Arab Emirates. This Alliance will likely be launched at the 2026 UN Water Conference, and the Interactive Dialogue (b) would provide a perfect platform for such an initiative to be shared with a relevant audience.

These are just some of the many relevant initiatives that we propose to be considered as the starting point for the future drafting of the concept paper for Interactive Dialogue (b). In this way, the debate during the Dialogue will build on the intellectual leadership and stakeholder buy-in necessary for it to lead to actionable and forward-looking consensus, which both displays and tracks global water leadership.

Saudi Arabia's commitment to a successful Interactive Dialogue

If we were to be honored with co-chairing this Interactive Dialogue , Saudi Arabia would act in a spirit of impartiality and inclusivity, ensuring that the Dialogue amplifies the perspectives of all Member States, especially developing countries, and non-UN stakeholders. We would work closely with the conference co-hosts, the United Nations system, and our fellow co-chair to facilitate a constructive and action-oriented exchange, marking a milestone in a longer process. In the spirit of integration that is central to the topic of this Dialogue, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is uniquely positioned to break down silos between national and



international processes, working with the co-hosts of the 2026 United Nations Water Conference and with the broader United Nations system.

To support the success of this Dialogue, as well as the proposed longer-term process, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia stands ready to:

- Lead the Interactive Dialogue at the ministerial level, humbly nominating myself, Abdulrahman Al-Fadhli, Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture, on behalf of the Kingdom, for this critical role, along with the necessary support structure.
- Convene thematic consultations at regional and global levels in the Conference's preparatory process, seeking efficiencies and synergies with the preparatory process for the 11th World Water Forum;
- Mobilize world-leading expertise from Saudi research and policy institutions to inform the Dialogue's concept note, along with the input received from Member States and other stakeholders from the current consultation process; and
- Encourage the registration of new voluntary commitments under the Water Action Agenda, as well as registering our own commitments, to boost progress on the topic of the Interactive Dialogue.

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وزارة البيئة والمياه والزراعة

Ministry of Environment Water & Agriculture

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Saudi Arabia would be honored to contribute its experience and commitment to the success of the 2026 UN Water Conference. We respectfully request your consideration of our candidature and remain at your disposal for further discussion.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.



Abdulrahman Al-Fadhli

Minister of Environment, Water, and Agriculture

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

