

WORLD WATER QUALITY ALLIANCE

Representing a voluntary and flexible global experts, practitioners and policy network that advocates the central role of freshwater quality in achieving prosperity and sustainability; it explores and communicates water quality risks in global regional, national and local contexts and points towards solutions for maintaining and restoring ecosystem and human health and wellbeing with an aim to serve countries throughout the lifetime of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and beyond.

Declaration

Nairobi, January 2020

We,

(current list provided of approached entities actively involved or responding – to be revised/completed)

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| African Ministers' Council on Water | International Association for Water Law |
| ANA Brazil – National Water Agency Brazil | International Association of Hydrogeologists |
| ARCOWA | International Association of Hydrological Sciences |
| Asian Institute of Technology | International Centre for Water Resources and Global Change |
| Australian Rivers Institute | International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River |
| CDP | International Federation of Private Water Operators |
| Centre for Ecology & Hydrology | International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre |
| CEO Water Mandate / Pacific Institute | International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis |
| Deltares | International Institute for Sustainable Development |
| EOMAP | International Lake Environment Committee |
| EURECAT – Technology Centre of Catalonia | International Organization for Migration |
| European Environment Agency | International Water Association |
| European Space Agency | International Water Management Institute |
| Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (Germany) | International Water Resources Association |
| Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (Germany) | IUCN - International Union for Conservation of Nature |
| Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations | Joint Research Centre of the European Commission |
| GEO Aquawatch | Karlsruhe Institute of Technology |
| Global Sustainable Technology & Innovation Conference | |
| Google | |
| IHE-Delft Institute for Water Education | |
| Institute for Global Environmental Strategies | |

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency

Netherlands Water Partnership

Ocean University China

Odermatt & Brockmann

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Pacific Institute

SUST – Southern University of Science and Technology

Sustainable Water Future Programme

Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology

Switzerland FOEN - Federal Office for the Environment

Switzerland SDC - Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

UBA – German Environment Agency

UFZ - Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research (Germany)

UMVOTO Africa (Pty) Limited

United Cities and Local Governments

United Nations Children’s Fund

United Nations Development Programme

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

United Nations Human Settlements Programme

United Nations Institute for Training and Research

United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

United Nations University for Integrated Management of Material Fluxes and of Resources

United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health

United Nations Water

United States Geological Survey

University Bochum

University College Cork

University Dakar

University Florida

University Ghana

University Sun Yat-sen

University Sussex

University Wageningen

University West Indies

USA State Department

VITO

Water Lex

Water Europe

Women for Water Partnership

World Bank

World Conference on Creative Economy

World Economic Forum

World Health Organization

World Meteorological Organization

World Resources Institute

World Tourism Organization

World Water Council

World Wide Fund for Nature

World Youth Parliament for Water,

2030 Water Resources Group

are herewith, jointly with the **UN Environment Programme** creating the **World Water Quality Alliance**.

As members of the Alliance, we are resolved to come together and co-design a global water quality assessment, a knowledge and science technology innovation platform with an aim to serve countries throughout the lifetime of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and by engaging with partners at all relevant scales to move from data and information to solutions.

Our actions and framing are guided by various UNEA resolutions and reflect as well in a multiplicity of facets in the mandates and work programmes of the Alliance members. The Alliance is an operational mechanism and engagement platform which is being established and supported by UN Environment Programme coordination with UN-Water members and a growing number of scientific, private sector, non-state and governmental actors, as well as civil society to address water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems (UNEP EA 3/Res.10, 2017) as well as many other closely related intergovernmental as well as regional and national decisions and agreed goals.

We act within our respective competencies and mandates, build on our comparative advantages and forge a collaborative partnership.

Article 1: Co-design a global water quality assessment

We acknowledge that useful and impact-oriented water quality assessments and services to countries in the accelerating global water quality challenge relate to a wide range of governance frameworks, operational programmes, and normative principles. The proponents provide a thorough mapping of the World Water Quality Alliance design, its structure, objectives and means of operation to this context.

We note that water quality is getting more and more into focus of the global intergovernmental community and discourse, including in but not restricted to the 2030 Agenda.

We further note that achieving the impact addressing the water quality challenge requires a new, innovative consortia approach aimed to convene actors, expertise and means in operational and partnership terms and by enabling a global baseline assessment for subsequent continued updating and establishing the means for continued science technology innovation as a platform including in-country bottom up co-design and piloting social process and projects towards water quality solutions.

Therefore, the Alliance requires a solid coordination, networking capacity, communication and knowledge management as an open voluntary and inviting consortium effort and we commit to the following actions:

Article 2: Service to member states

We note that countries worldwide recognize the central role of water and the entire hydrological cycle in achieving prosperity, human and ecosystem health and that water quantity is intrinsically linked to water quality and polluted water restricts the availability for multiple purposes with risks to food and energy systems, human and ecosystem health, thus wellbeing and prosperity.

We note that localizing the “Water Agenda 2030” and having knowledge, services and technology solutions at hand that can be operationalized and help prioritize targeted action is still lagging behind.

We further note that achieving informed targeted action in and beyond the water sector towards good quality and quantity requires zooming in on national and system scale and providing a well-defined and regularly improved/updated baseline of water quality.

We commit through an “intervention logic” for a global water quality collaborative initiative to improve or maintain water quality and advocating good environmental quality of water bodies to be a core target in national and cross sectoral policies.

We commit that technical, scientific and social information products shall be co-designed and tailored to present and long-term demands of national operational services advising policy action in contexts such as health systems, food systems incl. agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy systems and transport, weather and climate (to name a few).

We commit to engage in countries and focus on cases to work with local / national stakeholders towards a co-design of water quality solutions, management and improvement of information products and to advocate mid to long-term operationalization of those; and to highlight causal change dynamics and possible solution pathways towards scalable projects. We draw on appropriate collaboration with UN Resident Coordinators to ensure

broad engagement of national actors and uptake of results in Common Country Analysis and development action.

Article 3: Draw on a broad and dynamic expert and stakeholder pool

We acknowledge that one organization in isolation cannot cover all the different aspects including to establish, maintain and moderate a substantial social process of co-design with stakeholders in countries to define the priorities of a “local water agenda 2030”, key knowledge and service products needed and how to operationalize them.

We note that the water quality challenge covers a broad variety of scales in spatial and temporal terms as well as in the context of actors involved and addressing those dimensions calls for a broad, participatory and dynamic, constantly reviewed and demand oriented approach which can rely on a multidisciplinary expert and user community.

We commit to include key actors in civil society, across sectors and academia to provide the evidence base, assessment and knowledge products that feed into the normative foundation including legal and economic instruments as well as into technology frameworks in countries and across boundaries.

We commit to convene a pool of expertise, and innovators to develop a data fusion approach and a science technology innovation platform to deliver a global assessment of the world water quality which in the mid-term shall comprise surface and groundwater and following the delivery of a global baseline shall be designed to continue, technically with regular updates.

We commit to a peer exchange and agenda setting mechanism among experts and stakeholders including countries and donors and civil society to identify priorities (global/regional unknowns, including persistent and emerging water quality issues of priority concern such as ground water, prioritization of water investments, trade-offs, urban water quality pressure, emerging pollutants incl. Plastics in all forms, etc.), and set up an appropriate mechanism to investigate these priorities and provide relevant knowledge products.

Article 4: Better cooperation for better effectiveness and sustainability

We embrace for members and stakeholders the principles of inclusiveness, interdisciplinarity, providing for an interactive and interoperable platform for science-technology innovation, data sharing and participation; we embrace further the principles of effective cooperation, country ownership, focus on results, and mutual accountability.

We acknowledge the urgency of mobilizing public and private funding for the World Water Quality Alliance at scale to ensure its sustainability.

We commit to foster program-based approaches, beyond individual projects, to systematically strengthen integrated national, regional and global operational processes and information flows, and taking advantage of technical advice provided by the alliance members.

We commit to provide for innovative means and further development of knowledge management, data analysis, visualization and sharing; this includes to track progress through assessment reports, story maps, tools and other digitized products that facilitates knowledge generation, learning, and innovation.

Article 5: Accountability

We hold ourselves accountable in acting on our commitments.

Article 6: Membership

The World Water Quality Alliance represents a commitment among its members. The Alliance is open for membership and is free, voluntary and with no mandatory obligation. For orientation some general criteria for membership are listed in the Annex.

The Alliance operates following the four guiding principles to be, “inclusive, interdisciplinary, interactive and interoperable” which ensures a sense of synergy and co-benefits. Relying on this flexible, professional membership the Alliance promotes and encourages collaboration among global expert organizations, policy networks, private sector and civil society advocating the central role of freshwater quality in achieving prosperity and sustainability.

Article 7: Secretariat and Governance

The UN Environment Programme’s Global Environment Monitoring Unit provides the Secretariat for the Alliance that facilitates communication, knowledge sharing, and manages the registry of Alliance members. A Strategic Advisory Committee and a Technical Advisory Committee oversee the priority agenda setting and provide technical and scientific guidance. Specific tasks to be addressed by the Alliance in a self-organizing, moderated or any other appropriate format are encouraged to explore appropriate governance structures and workflows to achieve commonly agreed goals.

Nairobi, January 2020

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Inger Andersen
Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme

Annex

General criteria for establishing mutually beneficial membership

- Member organizations are internationally and technically recognized in their work on water, the environment, civil society etc.
- Member organizations base their work on sound scientific knowledge, methods and practices including, where applicable, social engagement processes
- Member organizations are striving to work collectively by sharing knowledge and best practices with the goal to improve lives and the health of the environment all around the globe and at system scale
- Members express interest by providing written proof of the above and indication of specific excellence, objectives and suggestions for their role, leadership or contribution to the Alliance