

WORLD WATER QUALITY ALLIANCE

Representing a voluntary and flexible global multi-stakeholders 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)

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

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

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

Our actions and framing are guided by various of the United Nations Environment Assembly (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 promoted and supported by UN Environment Programme in coordination with UN-Water members and a growing number of multiple stakeholders including scientific entities, private sector, non-state and governmental actors, as well as civil society to address water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems.¹

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.

We note that concerns related to water quality continues to increase in the context of the global intergovernmental community and discourse, including in but not restricted to the 2030 Agenda.

We further note that achieving impact in 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 solid coordination, networking capacity, communication and knowledge management as an open voluntary effort and we commit to the following:

¹ UNEA Resolution UNEP EA 3/Res.10: Addressing water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems (2017), <https://papersmart.unon.org/resolution/uploads/k1800216.english.pdf>

Article 2: Service to countries

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 commit to draw on appropriate collaboration with UN Resident Coordinators to ensure broad engagement of national actors and uptake of results in the 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 commit to hold ourselves accountable in acting on our commitments.

Article 6: Membership

The Alliance is open for membership and is free and voluntary. Founding members of the Alliance fulfill the selection criteria and the obligations outline in the Annex to this Declaration; future members shall also do so. 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: Coordination and Governance

The UN Environment Programme’s Global Environment Monitoring Unit endeavors to provide the coordination for the Alliance, hence to facilitate communication and knowledge sharing. UNEP shall also put in place the governance arrangements of the Alliance including aspects relating to membership, advisory and technical structures, planning, decision making and fund-raising, amongst other.

Nairobi, January 2020

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

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