

PARLIAMENTARY MEETING ON THE OCCASION OF THE 10TH WORLD WATER FORUM (NUSA DUA, INDONESIA) 19/05/2024 – 22/05/2024

Mobilizing parliamentary action on water for shared prosperity

NUSA DUA COMMUNIQUÉ

Parliamentarians from 43 countries gathered at the Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the 10th World Water Forum in Bali, Indonesia, reaffirmed the importance of mobilizing parliamentary action on water for global security and prosperity.

The Parliamentary Meeting, which was co-organized by the Indonesian House of Representatives and the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU), formed a critical part of the political process at the Forum. With the world on the verge of a water crisis, the debates, divided into four plenary sessions, focused on the following key issues: (1) access to water and sanitation: a deal-breaker for achieving sustainable development; (2) innovative practices for inclusive and equitable access to water; (3) water at the heart of climate action; and (4) water diplomacy, cooperation and science for peace. The sessions enabled participants to benefit from the expertise of renowned representatives of international organizations, civil society organizations and parliamentarians from various countries.

The following is a summary of the key points and recommendations discussed at the event.

Access to water and sanitation: A deal-breaker for achieving sustainable development

Water affects every human being and ecosystem, and water and sanitation are fundamental human rights. However, water scarcity affects more than 40% of the global population and 4.2 billion people lack sanitation. Women and girls are especially affected, as well as vulnerable and marginalized groups facing barriers and discrimination in access to water. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will not be achieved without progress on SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation whose implementation is currently off-track. Water and sanitation are essential to health and well-being, but also to poverty reduction, sustainable livelihoods, improved education – especially for girls and women – peace, human rights, as well as natural resources and ecosystems. The achievement of SDG 6 can lay a strong foundation for sustainable development and the achievement of all the SDGs. The main challenges in accelerating progress on SDG 6, include underlying inequalities and gaps within and among countries; financing and low levels of investment; the fragmentation of water management across multiple sectors; and political will.

Parliamentarians discussed concrete strategies for parliaments to promote a comprehensive approach to water and sanitation in the context of the SDGs. To that end, the following key actions were identified: -

- Ensure water is a standing item on parliamentary agendas and is included into existing parliamentary committees or other structures.
- Use the SDG framework to foster comprehensive, long-term policies on access to water for all using water as a resilience multiplier.
- Protect the human rights to water and sanitation, and promote a human-rights based approach to water management.

- Include water and sanitation into laws and policies aimed at addressing gender and social inequalities.
- Promote parliamentary dialogue and cooperation at the regional and international levels.
- Establish an ad hoc committee dedicated to the assessment and implementation of identified key actions, recommended approaches and strategies adopted during parliamentary meetings at world water forums.

Innovative practices for inclusive and equitable access to water

The session promoted a dialogue between parliamentarians and water stakeholders to ensure a better understanding of the needs and perspectives of local communities and populations facing disparities in access to water. Participants discussed how innovation and new technologies could help make progress on both access and quality, mindful that technology was not neutral, and noting the importance of investing in water solutions tailored to local contexts. Data systems on access to water, including disaggregated data, and data sharing needed to be strengthened. Furthermore, it was recognized that access did not suffice, water needed to be clean and safe.

The following key actions were identified: -

- Use parliamentary oversight and public engagement mechanisms to identify existing barriers to access to water and sanitation, and ensure that new technologies and innovation in the water sector benefit the most vulnerable and marginalized.
- To enable increased access to safe and clean water and its sustainable use, ensure that innovative policy and technological practice is accompanied by increased water literacy of communities. - Review existing and new legislation from an access to water perspective to ensure it does not create barriers or discriminate against any group or population, and to ensure water justice and security.
- Take steps for greater inclusiveness in decision-making processes to make sure water solutions – including technology-based solutions – are adapted to local needs and take into account traditional knowledge.

Water at the heart of climate action

The session discussed the linkages between water and climate change, as climate change was exacerbating water scarcity, and affecting water access and water safety. The session provided insights into parliamentary efforts to promote water efficiency, reduce water pollution and preserve water ecosystems. Concern was expressed that over two billion people were already living in countries where water supply was inadequate, which also affected the production of food and energy. The importance of the water sector in addressing climate change was also discussed. Sustainable water management was viewed as a key opportunity to build the resilience of societies and ecosystems, and support climate change adaptation in line with internationally agreed climate goals.

The following key actions were identified: -

- Implement the Paris Agreement and other climate commitments, ensuring that water is included in national climate strategies and legislation.
- Promote adaptive measures, such as more resilient water supply and sanitation systems that can withstand growing climate change impacts.
- Work with civil society and research institutions to better understand how climate-related water issues are affecting food and energy production, and support legislation that considers the impacts of water scarcity across sectors. –
- Support investment and explore innovative financing for sustainable water resource management, particularly in the agricultural sector, that builds the resilience of communities and societies most exposed to climate change.

Water diplomacy, cooperation and science for peace

Acknowledging that water-related challenges transcend national borders, and require collective action and cooperation at regional and global levels, the session highlighted the responsibility and pivotal role of parliamentarians in water governance and in fostering international cooperation to make the water pie bigger. It emphasized the critical need for enhanced diplomacy in managing water resources, necessitating open dialogue, cooperation and sharing of scientific knowledge and good practices to address water scarcity, access to water and quality issues included.

Drawing on the report of the first IPU Science for Peace Schools on water, held in December 2022, and the outcomes of the IPU Science for Peace Parliamentary Meeting on Water security and insecurity: Rebuilding peaceful coexistence with science, held in September 2023, the session highlighted that parliamentary water diplomacy, with the guidance of science, could turn elements of conflict into reasons for coexistence.

The following recommendations emerged during the discussion:

- Leverage evidence-based decision-making to strengthen policies and legislation on water and sanitation through cooperation with relevant researchers and experts, and by prioritizing formal and informal dialogue between the legislative and inter-disciplinary scientific communities.
- Facilitate the creation of and access to comprehensive and transparent data in relation to water and climate change.
- Engage local communities in ensuring the success and sustainability of water management and sanitation initiatives.
- Promote strengthening of international cooperation on transboundary rivers.
- Establish a global parliamentary expert community on water to facilitate knowledge exchange and collaboration among legislators to effectively address water-related issues.

The Parliamentary Meeting reiterated the call on the parliamentary community to prioritize action on water to realize the commitments set out in the 2030 Agenda

for Sustainable Development, and the vision of a fair and prosperous world for today's and future generations. The IPU will continue providing a platform to exchange parliamentary experiences and practices on the issue of water. The conclusions of the meeting will be brought to the attention of the IPU Governing Council at the 149th IPU Assembly.