



NOTE CONCEPT

2026

“Water as a Catalyst for: Peace, Shared Prosperity, and a Sustainable Planet”

25-29 October

Cairo, Egypt



BACKGROUND

Water as a Catalyst for: Peace, Shared Prosperity, and a Sustainable Planet

Water is the foundation of food security, public health, economic growth, and human dignity. Yet despite decades of global commitment, the world is falling behind. The choices made now will determine whether water becomes a driver of stability and cooperation or a source of deepening conflict and inequality.

Billions still lack reliable access to safe water and sanitation. When families spend hours collecting water and children fall ill from polluted sources, the conditions for shared prosperity are denied before they can take root. Climate change is compounding this reality: nearly half the world's population experiences severe water scarcity for at least part of the year, with droughts intensifying and water stress becoming the norm rather than the exception (IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, 2022, cited in UN WWDR 2024.) These pressures cross borders. While approximately 40% of the world's population lives in transboundary basins, only 1 in 5 countries has formal agreements to manage shared water resources jointly (UN WWDR 2024.) Where cooperation is absent, scarcity breeds tension, and tension, left unaddressed, is a path away from peace.

The cost of inaction is measurable. UN-Water estimates that achieving SDG 6 requires over one trillion US dollars in annual investment, a figure that grows with every year of delay. Yet when countries manage water cooperatively, they build stronger diplomatic ties, reduce conflict risks, and lay the foundations for common growth that depend on protecting watersheds, aquifers, and ecosystems that sustain a living planet.

Peace, shared prosperity, and a sustainable planet are not parallel ambitions. They are interconnected, and water runs through each one. As the international community prepares for the UN Water Conference 2026, Cairo Water Week 2026 (CWW) serves as a preparatory platform for that process. Under the main theme "Water as a Catalyst for: Peace, Shared Prosperity, and a Sustainable Planet," CWW 2026 will take place from 25 to 29 October in Cairo, Egypt. CWW 2026 will bring together governments, institutions, researchers, and practitioners to translate shared understanding into concrete commitments and water into one of the most powerful tools available to build a more stable, equitable, and sustainable world.

CWW 2026:

Shaping the Global Water Agenda

STEP 01

25-29 October

Cairo, Egypt

◀ CWW 2026

As the 2030 deadline for the Sustainable Development Goals draws closer, 2026 is a key year for global water policy. Water scarcity is increasingly threatening international stability, economic security, and the health of the planet. It is causing a rise in water-related conflicts, widening a financing gap that grows each year of inaction, and intensifying disruptions to water systems. Climate change continues to accelerate these challenges.

Against this backdrop, CWW has been building toward moments like this since its launch in 2018. The Egyptian Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation (MWRI) organized it annually under the esteemed auspices of His Excellency, President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi. It was planned as a response to growing water challenges across Africa and the world. Over eight editions, it has evolved from a regional convening into a multidisciplinary global platform. It consistently connects policymakers, scientists, civil society, and industry, and is always centered on climate resilience, transboundary cooperation, and water innovation. That track record is not incidental. CWW 2021 contributed directly to the preparatory process for the 2023 UN Mid-term Review Water Conference. CWW 2022 was formally embedded in that preparatory framework. CWW also served as a preparatory stage for the COP27 Water Pavilion. Each edition has translated regional expertise into inputs that shaped global dialogue.

STEP 02

2-4 December

**United Arab
Emirates**

◀ UN 2026 Water Conference

CWW 2026 carries that role forward at its most critical point yet. It is the principal technical and political forum preceding the UN Water Conference 2026, convening two months before world leaders gather in Abu Dhabi. The UN Water Conference 2026 will convene from 2 to 4 December in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Only the second UN Water Conference in over fifty years, it represents a rare and consequential opportunity for the international community to reaffirm its commitments and move from political declarations to measurable results. Its agenda covers the full breadth of the global water challenge: water for people, prosperity, the planet, cooperation, multilateral governance, and investment. CWW 2026's main theme "Water as a Catalyst for: Peace, Shared Prosperity, and a Sustainable Planet," is directly aligned with the UN Conference agenda, ensuring that the perspectives of the Global South, the MENA region, and, in particular, the African regions are not only present but also central to the decisions that will define global water governance for the decade ahead.

WATER THROUGH FIVE LENSES:

Conference Main Themes

Water is the fundamental bridge between diplomacy, economic vitality, and environmental integrity. CWW 2026 serves as a global platform to ignite scalable solutions under the main theme: '**Water as a Catalyst for: Peace, Shared Prosperity, and a Sustainable Planet.**' Our agenda is anchored in five core themes that address the nexus of water security and global prosperity, ensuring a resilient future for all.



Theme 1:

Managing Shared Water Resources under International Water Law for Peace and Regional Stability.

Subthemes

1. Water cooperation and international water law as drivers for peace and regional integration.
2. Shared rivers and aquifers support sustainable livelihoods.
3. Transboundary water quality and quantity management under international water law frameworks.
4. Modern technologies for shared water monitoring and data exchange.
5. Success stories of riparian cooperation for economic and ecological benefits.



Theme 2:

Securing Agri-Food Systems through Desalination and Wastewater Treatment.

Subthemes

1. Renewable energy-powered desalination for sustainable food security
2. Best practices for safe wastewater and saline/brackish water use for agricultural production.
3. Water-Energy-Food nexus frameworks for informed decision-making.
4. Governance and institutional frameworks enabling WEF nexus implementation.
5. Innovation in wastewater treatment and desalination technologies.



Theme 3:

Enhancing Climate Resilience through Sustainable Water Resources and Coastal Zone Management Solutions.

Subthemes

1. Nature-based solutions for flood and drought risk reduction.
 2. Sustainable water demand management under climate change.
 3. Protecting rivers, aquifers, and coastal zones from pollution and degradation.
 4. Clean energy solutions for water transport and recreation.
 5. Safeguarding freshwater ecosystems against human pressures.
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Theme 4:

Harnessing AI and the Digital Wave for Water Resources Sustainability

Subthemes

1. AI-driven water resources assessment and hydrological modeling.
 2. Digital technologies for forecasting extreme hydrological events.
 3. Reliability and uncertainty of AI-based water management tools.
 4. AI applications for data-scarce and vulnerable regions.
 5. Early warning systems for floods and coastal hazards.
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Theme 5:

Addressing Water Challenges through Technical Tools, Social Frameworks, Financing, and National Water Governance.

Subthemes

1. Technical and social solutions bridging water demand–supply gaps.
2. Simulation models supporting integrated water resources management and decision-making.
3. Sustainable agricultural practices reducing water demand.
4. Community awareness, gender inclusion, and national water legislation in water governance.
5. Financing mechanisms and capacity building for future water and climate challenges.

FROM DIALOGUE TO DELIVERY:

Conference Objectives

CWW 2026 seeks to achieve the following overarching objectives:



Secure high-level political commitment to accelerate water action before the 2026 UN Water Conference.



Promote evidence-based policy dialogue connecting the water crisis to peace, security, economic development, and climate resilience.



Showcase innovations, financing, and governance, with a focus on the Global South and Least Developed Countries.



Establish partnerships to deliver funded projects addressing the financing gap for SDG 6.



Elevate the voices of vulnerable communities, youth, and women in the global water agenda.



Present actionable CWW 2026 recommendations to the UN General Assembly and the 2026 Conference.



ONE TABLE, MANY VOICES:

Target Stakeholders and Partners

- 1** Heads of State, Government Ministers, and Senior Officials from Water, Environment, Finance, Agriculture, and Foreign Affairs.
- 2** UN agencies and Multilateral Financing Institutions (UN-Water, UNICEF, FAO, UNDP, UNESCO, WHO, World Bank, GEF, Green Climate Fund).
- 3** African and Arab Regional Bodies.
- 4** Research and Academic Institutions.
- 5** Private Sector (Water, Energy, Agri-food).
- 6** International and national NGOs, community-based organisations, women's groups, and related civil society organizations.
- 7** Youth leaders, student organizations, and emerging water professionals.
- 8** Media and Communications.



FIVE DAYS THAT COUNT:

What to Expect ?



High-level Sessions

Ministerial and high-level sessions on water diplomacy and policy.



Technical Sessions

Technical sessions and workshops across the week's five core themes.



An Exhibition

An exhibition showcasing water innovation and solutions.



Competitions Recognizing

Competitions recognizing outstanding contributions to the water sector.



Side Events

Side events convening regional and international stakeholders.



Partnerships

Partnerships announcements and concrete policy recommendations.



UN Water Conference 2026

A closing statement feeding directly into the UN Water Conference 2026.



THE ROAD TO CWW 2026

Save the Dates

ABSTRACTS

March

March 17

Call for Abstracts.

April

April 19

Abstract Submission Deadline.

May

May 24

Notification of Acceptance & Invitation to Submit Extended Abstracts.

Jun

June 20

Extended Abstract Submission Deadline.

Jul

July 11

Full paper Submission Deadline.

Aug

August 30

Notification of Presentation Format (Oral/Poster).

COMPETITIONS

Feb

February 2

Submissions Open for the 9th Farmers' Competition.

April

April 20

Submissions Open for the 3MT Competition.

May

May 1

Submissions Open for the Save Our Water Campaign Competition.

Jun

June 1

Submission Deadline for the Save Our Water Campaign Competition.

Jul

July 15

Submissions Open for the BGP Competition.

Aug

August 15

Submission Deadline for the BGP Competition.

May 20

Submission Deadline for the 3MT Competition
Submissions Open for the YWI Competition.

June 20

Submission Deadline for the YWI Competition.

May 31

Submission Deadline for the 9th Farmers' Competition

REGISTRATIONS

May

May 15

Conveners' Registration Opens.

Jul

July 15

Participant Registration Portal Opens.

Aug

August 30

Participant Registration Closes.

Sep

September 1

Conveners' Registration Closes.



Contact Us

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