

JOINT POSITION PAPER

G7 WATER COALITION: OUR CALL FOR A STRONG COLLECTIVE ACTION ON WATER

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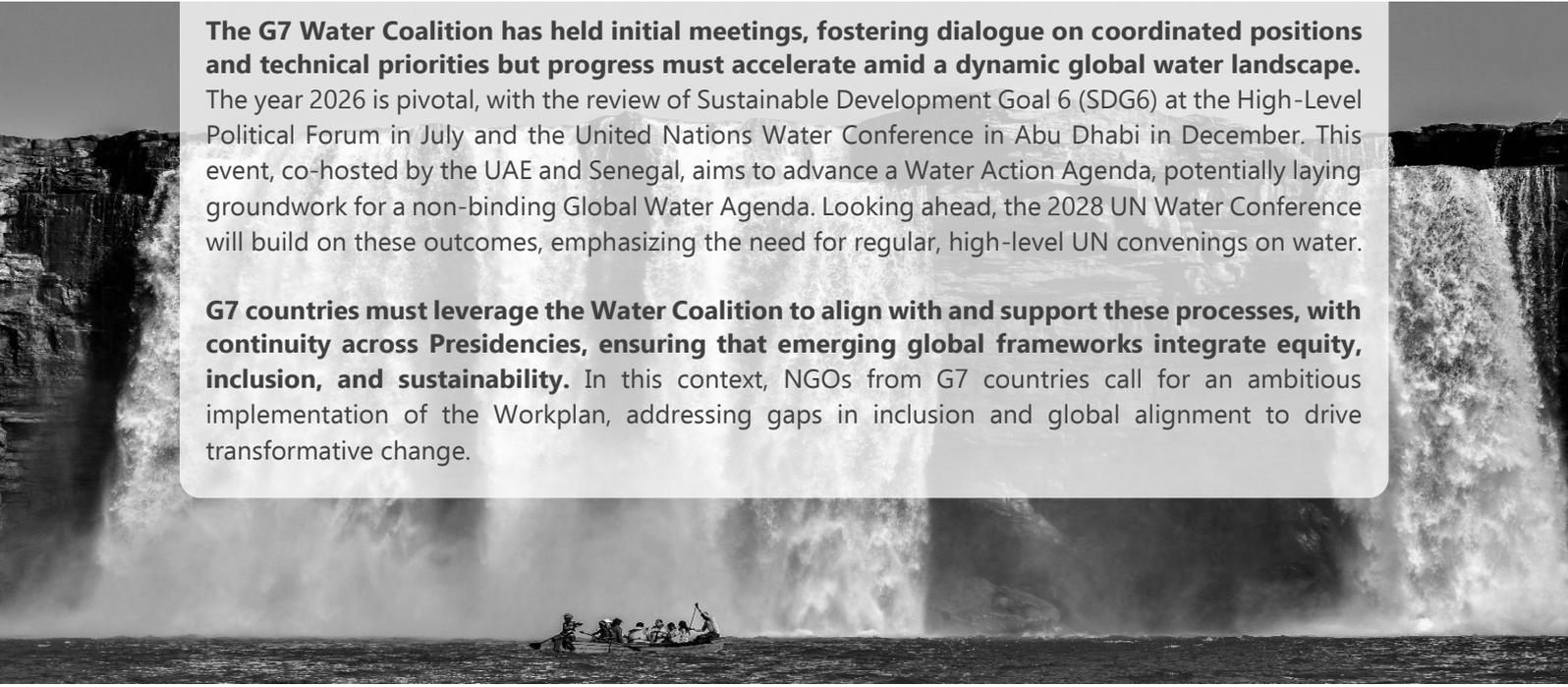
INTRODUCTION

Access to safe water and sanitation, alongside sustainable water resources management, remains one of the most pressing global challenges of our time. Over 2 billion people lack access to safely managed drinking water, and 3.5 billion lack safely managed sanitation. Water scarcity is exacerbated by climate change, pollution, and unsustainable use. According to the United Nations University report "Global Water Bankruptcy", the world has moved beyond a water crisis and entered an era of global water bankruptcy, as irreversible damage pushes many basins beyond recovery. 75% of humanity lives in countries classified as water-insecure or critically water-insecure.

The G7 countries, as leading economies and major donors of Official Development Assistance (ODA), hold significant influence in shaping global water policies. Historically, the G7 has engaged with water issues, notably during the 2003 G8 Summit in Evian, France – a city symbolic of water resources – which highlighted water's role in development and was marked by donors' commitment to substantially increase ODA for water and sanitation. Recently, the G7 Water Coalition was launched under Italy's 2024 Presidency and formalized with a 3-year Workplan (2025-2028) under Canada's 2025 Presidency. This Workplan emphasizes two core aims: collective action to mainstream water in international agendas and technical exchanges to share best practices on issues like water quality, nature-based solutions (NbS), innovation, finance, and meaningful engagement.

The G7 Water Coalition has held initial meetings, fostering dialogue on coordinated positions and technical priorities but progress must accelerate amid a dynamic global water landscape. The year 2026 is pivotal, with the review of Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG6) at the High-Level Political Forum in July and the United Nations Water Conference in Abu Dhabi in December. This event, co-hosted by the UAE and Senegal, aims to advance a Water Action Agenda, potentially laying groundwork for a non-binding Global Water Agenda. Looking ahead, the 2028 UN Water Conference will build on these outcomes, emphasizing the need for regular, high-level UN convenings on water.

G7 countries must leverage the Water Coalition to align with and support these processes, with continuity across Presidencies, ensuring that emerging global frameworks integrate equity, inclusion, and sustainability. In this context, NGOs from G7 countries call for an ambitious implementation of the Workplan, addressing gaps in inclusion and global alignment to drive transformative change.



OUR CALL TO G7 COUNTRIES: Strong collective action on water through an ambitious implementation of the G7 Water Coalition workplan

The G7 Water Coalition Workplan provides a robust framework for action, but its success hinges on ambitious, inclusive execution. We urge G7 countries to prioritize collective action over isolated technical discussions, aligning with the Workplan's aims to coordinate positions, mainstream water across sectors, and engage diverse stakeholders. This includes explicitly integrating the voices and rights of Indigenous Peoples, women, youth, local communities, and low-income populations – who are disproportionately affected by water insecurity – into all activities. By doing so, the Coalition can foster equitable, resilient solutions that complement global initiatives like the UN Water Conferences and a potential Global Water Agenda.

ON AXIS 1 OF THE WATER COALITION WORKPLAN: COLLECTIVE ACTION

The G7 Water Coalition Workplan's emphasis on coordinated G7 engagement in international processes is critical for 2026 and beyond. With the SDG6 review and the Abu Dhabi UN Water Conference approaching, followed by the 2028 conference, the Coalition must forge unified positions to elevate water globally. This includes supporting the development and implementation of a Global Water Agenda emerging from these conferences, even if non-binding, by committing resources, expertise, and advocacy to ensure it addresses transboundary cooperation, climate resilience, and equity towards shared prosperity.

Our Recommendations:

- ▶ **Raise the Political Focus on Water at the Global Level and Elevate Water on the International Agenda:** G7 leaders should champion water as a cross-cutting priority in multilateral fora, including the UN General Assembly. This also involves advocating for water's integration into climate, biodiversity, health and food security discussions, recognizing its interconnections with energy, ecosystems, and economic stability.
- ▶ **Affirm Support for Regular United Nations Conferences on Water Beyond 2026 and 2028:** Commit to biennial or triennial UN Water Conferences, providing financial and technical support to ensure inclusive participation. Specifically, for the 2026 Abu Dhabi Conference, G7 countries should coordinate inputs to shape a comprehensive Water Action Agenda that prioritizes human rights to water and sanitation.
- ▶ **Relaunch the Collective Call to Strengthen the Integration of Water Across the Three Rio Conventions:** Push for explicit water linkages in the UNFCCC, CBD, and UNCCD, including through joint initiatives on NbS and IWRM that protect green and blue water resources.
- ▶ **Advocate for International Goals on Water in a Post-2030 Agenda:** Propose international water targets in the successor to the SDGs, emphasizing measurable outcomes for access, quality, and management, with indicators co-developed with affected communities.
- ▶ **Ensure Harmonization of G7 Water Coalition Work with Global Water Platforms and a Future Global Water Agenda:** Align the Workplan's renewal (post-2028) with outcomes from UN Water Conferences, such as supporting a Global Water Agenda through dedicated funding mechanisms, policy harmonization, and monitoring frameworks. G7 countries should pledge to integrate this agenda into national strategies, providing ODA and technology transfers to developing nations.

► **Improve International Funding for Water and Sanitation by Orienting G7 Countries' ODA Around Equity and Leave No One Behind:** In light of declining ODA, commit to increasing water allocations, prioritizing grants over loans, toward the countries and sub-sectors with the greatest need.

- Focus on high-need contexts and most vulnerable populations, including those living in fragile contexts and humanitarian emergencies.
- Explicitly align financing with the Leave No One Behind principle, using participatory tools to identify and prioritize underserved groups, and incorporate community-led assessments to target Indigenous Peoples, women, youth, children, local communities, and low-income populations.
- Support human rights-based approach and public goods approaches, including concessional financing and debt relief tied to water investments.
- Recognize that equity builds long-term resilience, mandating inclusion of marginalized voices in funding decisions.
- Promote aid effectiveness and sector alignment: G7 donors need to align their water investments with the national water strategies of partner countries, reducing fragmented 'project based' approaches in favour of strengthening national and sub-national service delivery systems.
- Support regulatory frameworks creating predictable conditions for financing, and strengthen civil society's ability to hold governments and investors accountable for delivering safe, affordable, and climate-resilient water services.
- Institutionalize G7 ODA Reporting: Use the biennial GLAAS Development Partner Survey to transparently report ODA commitments and disbursements, specifically disaggregating data to show alignment with the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation and the Leave No One Behind principle.

► **Use the Water Coalition as a Platform to Improve Coherence Between Water, Resilience, and Climate Adaptation Global Agendas and Policies:** Position water as central to disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and economic growth, given that 90% of disasters are water-related.

- Invest in early warning systems and preparedness, co-designed with local communities and Indigenous knowledge holders.
- Ensure climate adaptation strategies, including National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), mandate access to WASH as core outcomes, integrating gender-responsive and youth-inclusive approaches.
- Promote cross-sectoral linkages, increasing funding for sustainable water management in climate policies and climate finance mechanisms, with dedicated streams for vulnerable populations.

ON AXIS 2 OF THE WATER COALITION WORKPLAN: TECHNICAL EXCHANGES

The Workplan's technical focus, including on water quality in 2026, must center health, ecosystems, and inclusion. Exchanges should draw on diverse knowledge systems, incorporating Indigenous practices and community innovations alongside advanced technologies.

Our Recommendations:

► **Prioritize Health and Well-Being in Discussions on Water Quality:** Address pollution's impacts on people and biodiversity and pollution reduction as a priority.

- Discuss regulations on toxic substances like PFAS and plastics and incentive-based regulatory or financial mechanisms such as the polluter-pays principle.
- Advance the plastic pollution treaty by advocating reduced production of single-use items, promoting public water access as an alternative.
- Balance high-tech solutions with Nature based Solutions (NbS), such as wetland restoration, informed by local and Indigenous expertise.

- ▶ **Expand Technical Exchanges to Include Finance, Innovation, and Engagement:** Per the Workplan, discuss mobilizing finance for water resilience and best practices for community partnerships.
 - Identify barriers to private and philanthropic funding, prioritizing investments that benefit low-income and marginalized groups.
 - Share innovations in monitoring and NbS, ensuring accessibility for youth and women-led initiatives.
 - Reinforce indigenous knowledge and technologies exchanges to strengthen policies and action in water, climate change adaptation and health.

CROSS-CUTTING ASKS

- ▶ **Engage Inclusive Dialogue on G7 Water Coalition Activities:** Foster ongoing, meaningful engagement with civil society, ensuring safe, accessible participation for Indigenous Peoples, women, youth, local communities, and low-income populations. This includes co-creating agendas and decision-making roles, not just consultations.
- ▶ **Strengthen Accountability and Monitoring:** Develop transparent mechanisms to follow G7 water coalition's activities, with targets, timelines, and civil society oversight. Report annually on commitments, bridging to future G7 Presidencies and aligning with a Global Water Agenda.
- ▶ **Ensure Continuity and Support for a Global Water Agenda:** Ensure continuity across G7 future presidencies and commit to renewing the Workplan post-2028 in harmony with UN outcomes, providing sustained G7 leadership to implement and fund a Global Water Agenda, emphasizing inclusion, equity and binding agreements.

This position paper is endorsed by civil society organisations and networks from the G7 countries:

- ◆ **Coalition Eau** brings together 30 French NGOs engaged in the water and sanitation sector. (contact@coalition-eau.org)
- ◆ **The German WASH Network** brings together 30 German civil society organisations active in global humanitarian assistance and development cooperation. The network aims to increase political will and prioritisation for WASH through joint advocacy and awareness raising. It also promotes professionalisation through knowledge exchange, and enhances collaboration across the humanitarian–development nexus. (info@washnet.de)
- ◆ **International Secretariat for Water - Solidarity Water Europe (ISW-SWE):** Headquartered in Canada and France, ISW-SWE is an international non-governmental organization committed to the universal right to water and sanitation. By fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships, the organization leads the Butterfly Effect Coalition and empowers the next generation through the Global Youth Movement for Water. (info@sie-isw.org)
- ◆ **Millenium Water Alliance (USA) :** The Millennium Water Alliance and its 30 member organizations (WASH implementers, research institutions, and private sector partners) help bring safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene to more than 50 million people in 100 countries each year, and advocate for greater global water and sanitation commitments by governments and the private sector. (www.mwawater.org)
- ◆ **WeWorld** is an independent Italian organisation engaged in development cooperation and humanitarian aid projects over the last 50 years, operating today in more than 20 countries. Children, women, and young people, agents of change in every community, are at the centre of WeWorld's projects and campaigns in the following areas of intervention: access to water hygiene, and sanitation; education; food security, livelihoods and local development; gender and protection; environment and climate. (info@weworld.it)
- ◆ **Oxfam GB** is Oxfam International's British affiliate and the co-chair of the UK WASH network.
- ◆ **WaterAid** is an international non-profit organisation active in 22 countries across Africa, Asia, South America and the Pacific region, working together with governments, local partners and communities towards our vision: a world where everyone, everywhere has access to clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene (WASH). (supportercare@wateraid.org)