



General Political Process Concept Note

11th World Water Forum

Context and objectives

The World Water Forum has become a platform for open dialogue and informal hydro-diplomacy. It supports consensus building, initiative incubation and coalition building beyond formal multilateral negotiations. It helps translate technical knowledge and regional priorities into political momentum. This strengthens multi-stakeholder commitment and cooperation on water.

As Water is inherently political, decisions on water allocation, financing and management involve trade-offs between sectors, territories and generations. These choices require political leadership, institutional coordination and public accountability to ensure water security for all. Achieving water security is therefore not only a technical issue. It also depends on governance, institutional innovation and collective political action.

The 11th World Water Forum will take place at a time of increased political attention to water. Water scarcity, climate extremes, demographic pressures and financing gaps are growing. Water is now central to development, stability and prosperity agendas. At the same time, geopolitical tensions are slowing progress on multilateral goals. Progress towards water-related targets remains insufficient to meet the 2030 Agenda.

Global water governance also remains fragmented. No single agency or convention holds an overarching mandate. This calls for stronger coordination across stakeholders, thematic agendas and processes. Such efforts are essential to move towards a water-secure world.

The Forum's political process connects all levels of decision-making. It highlights the links between local, national, regional and global action. With strong leadership from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the World Water Council, and in collaboration with international organizations, the Forum will serve as a key global milestone. It will ensure that thematic, regional and political processes reinforce each other. Technical, institutional and financial analyses will inform political decisions. In turn, political priorities will shape the thematic agenda. This will support ambitious and achievable outcomes.

Strategic objectives

The political process at the 11th World Water Forum should aim to achieve a limited set of strategic objectives across all segments, in addition to the specific objectives of each individual segment.

- **Elevate water as a strategic political priority.** The Forum will mobilize high-level leadership from political figures in central governments that can position water as a priority within the context of economic growth, climate resilience and territorial development.
- **Build a multilevel governance guidance on water.** The Forum will give shared political direction across international, national, sub-national and basin levels, strengthening the institutional, financial, regulatory and governance conditions to support implementation of commitments.





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- **Translate knowledge into political commitment to action.** The Forum's political process will be reinforced by recommendations and messages from the thematic and regional processes, which will outline opportunities for political commitments that advance water security.
- **Catalyze coalitions and partnerships of the willing.** The Forum will deliberately foster a limited number of high-impact voluntary coalitions within and across political stakeholder groups, such as ministerial and parliamentary alliances, city/basin initiatives, cross-sector platforms, etc.
- **Ensure continuity and follow-up.** The Forum will seek to formally establish mutually beneficial synergies with ongoing multilateral processes, including the UN Water Conferences and regional political processes, through common and cohesive political agendas.

The Forum for bringing together political constituencies

The political process for the 11th World Water Forum is structured around five segments, with a customized process that will focus on a limited number of deliverables or outputs with cross-referenced across segments. It will form a portfolio of political mobilization tools, which may include political signals, declarations and statements, political roadmaps, the forming of coalitions, platforms and initiatives, legacy structures and monitoring mechanisms.

1. **Heads of State (to be confirmed):** Provide high-level political direction by elevating water as a strategic priority and issuing a strong global signal or declaration to guide international agendas.
2. **Ministers:** provide a key platform for political dialogue and define water shared priorities and actionable directions on water through a Ministerial Declaration, linking political ambition with practical implementation.
3. **Parliamentarians:** Strengthen water governance by shaping legislation and ensuring accountability, while also sharing legislative best practices and promoting practical cooperation to improve enabling conditions.
4. **Local and Regional Authorities:** Drive territorial implementation and service delivery, with a focus on concrete commitments and solutions reflected in a dedicated declaration and practical initiatives.
5. **Basin and Watershed Authorities:** promote integrated water management at the basin scale, moving from dialogue to implementation by scaling initiatives, strengthening cooperation and partnerships, and seeking to advance a voluntary, action-oriented roadmap for practical water management.

Common elements across segments

The political process for each segment consists of those main elements:

- **Constituency consultations:** this may include preparatory meetings, policy dialogues and institutional workshops, among representatives of each political constituency, focused on developing the deliverables from that process (see below).
- **Multi-process cross-process integration:** workshops, consultations (including at the 2nd Stakeholder Consultation Meeting) and exchanges of messages, recommendations, case studies, examples, initiatives, etc. between thematic and regional processes and each political process.



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- **Inter-political exchanges:** drafting loops between political segments, shared milestones (in person or online), and structured dialogue sessions across the different political groups during the 11th World Water Forum, aiming to foster cross-constituency commitments, coalitions and initiatives.
- **Follow up actions:** Each political segment will be documented in a report that summarizes key outcomes and identifies follow-up actions.

Coordination and oversight

The political process will be organized under the overall authority of the Political Process Commission (PPC), which serves as the apex governance body, providing strategic oversight and ensuring alignment with the Forum's political objectives and governance framework, as well as fostering synergies across segments.

Each political segment shall be strategically framed and overseen by the Forum co-hosts, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the World Water Council (WWC), within the framework of the Political Process co-chairs (PPC), and in line with the decisions and prior guidance of the ISC Bureau.

For each segment, specific coordinator(s) and/or facilitator(s) and contributor(s) shall be designated by the co-hosts on the basis of relevant expertise, institutional capacity, and networks, to support coordination in accordance with plans approved by the ISC Co-chairs. All coordinators / facilitators / contributors will work on a voluntary basis, reflecting the collaborative and multi-stakeholder nature of the Forum.

The process, activities, deliverables or outputs, and the respective roles and responsibilities of each political segment are set out in individual concept notes as below.

Linkage to other processes

The Forum's political segments will be structured around the set of the six thematic priorities that reflect the main challenges and opportunities for advancing water security and sustainable management.

- **Water Security:** Risk-smart management of groundwater, surface water and water-related disasters.
- **Water Finance:** Innovative, inclusive finance to scale WASH, resilience and climate adaptation.
- **Water for people and Ecosystems:** Universal services and restored ecosystems through One Health approaches.
- **Water Governance & Diplomacy:** Policies, coordination and voices that turn goals into implementation.
- **Innovation for Water Management:** From AI and data to tech deployment and citizen science.
- **Value of Water:** Reflecting water's true value in economies, pricing and national accounting.

It will also be closely linked with **the Regional Process**, ensuring that local and regional priorities inform political discussions and that political commitments are based in on-the-ground realities.

In addition, stakeholder contributions—including from international organizations and non-governmental actors—will be integrated throughout the process, alongside a dedicated Youth Program to ensure meaningful inclusion of youth perspectives through their participation in consultations, preparatory meetings, and dialogue platforms.



Concept Note: Ministerial Segment of the 11th World Water Forum

1. Objectives

The Segment will:

- Provide a platform for strategic dialogue among countries' high-level ministries representatives
- Strengthen international cooperation and policy coherence on water security, resilience, governance and financing
- Deliver action-oriented outcomes, including a Ministerial Declaration and best practices initiatives

2. Guiding principles and coordination

The process will be country driven and co-host facilitated, the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MofA), Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture (MEWA) with the collaboration of international organizations as facilitators and / or contributors.

3. Timeline, milestones and Forum's session

The Ministerial Segment will follow a phased and structured preparatory process beginning 2026 with the establishment of governmental arrangements, and initial consultations with stakeholders.

A Ministerial Consultation Meeting, held alongside the 2nd Stakeholders Meeting, will help define priorities, working modalities and initial inputs for the Ministerial Declaration.

Throughout 2026, the process will potentially include bilateral and multilateral consultations with governments, integration of inputs from thematic and regional processes, and analysis of key international milestones (including UN-related tracks). Drafting of the Ministerial Declaration will begin mid-year and evolve through iterative consultations.

Preparatory Meetings will structure the process, with the first (September 2026) to review the initial draft and define key priorities and roundtable themes. And the second (late 2026) to update and refine the text.

In parallel, Ministerial Roundtables will be developed to support focused, solution-oriented discussions during the Forum.

The process will culminate at the Ministerial Conference in March 2027, where the Declaration will be adopted **and** key political messages **and** initiatives announced

The Conference will include High-Level Ministerial Roundtable(s) **and** a one-day Plenary Session for the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration **and** presentation of concrete outcomes.

4. Expected outputs

The Ministerial Segment is expected to produce the following outputs:

- Ministerial Declaration of the 11th World Water Forum, reflecting shared updated priorities, political messages and directions for action;
- Political messages contributing to global water dialogue in the period following the Forum;
- Initiatives from the co-host such as development of ministerial partnerships or coalitions for water;
- Optional voluntary commitments or initiatives announced by participating governments;





Concept Note: Parliamentarian Segment of the 11th World Water Forum

1. Objectives

The Segment aims to:

- Provide dialogue on the role of Parliaments, budgets and oversight responses to water challenges
- Facilitate exchange of legislative practices and financing mechanisms on water policies
- Promote parliamentary diplomacy and cooperation, and joint action plans

2. Guiding principles and coordination

The process will be guided by voluntary participation of international organizations or working groups of parliamentarians with a focus on practical and implementable outcomes.

It will be implemented in collaboration with the Saudi Shura Council and international parliamentary partners and contributors.

3. Timeline and Forum's session

Mid 2026, the coordination structure will be activated, and initial consultations will define the scope, objectives and expected outputs of the Segment. After mid-2026, the program framework and background materials will be developed, while ensuring coherence with the Ministerial and other political segments of the Forum.

In the second half of 2026, the meeting structure, agenda and expected outcome document will be refined. Official invitations will be issued, moderators and resource people identified, and logistical preparations advanced. Preliminary background documentation will be circulated to delegations.

In early 2027, final delegations and speakers will be confirmed, the final programs and background materials will be shared, and a draft parliamentary outcome document will be prepared for consideration during the meeting.

The segment will finally take place during the Forum in March 2027 in Riyadh, in an open one-day parliamentarians' plenary session.

4. Expected Outputs

The Parliamentarian's segment is expected to produce the following output(s):

- **A Parliamentary Communiqué:** with key messages, complementing the Ministerial Declaration;
- **Creation of a dedicated platform:** This segment could also lead to the creation of a platform for knowledge sharing and peer-to-peer learning networks, with technical advisory services on public policy, budgeting, and legislation, effectively serving as a "parliamentary help desk.";
- **Joint initiatives:** initiatives led by groups of international parliamentarians could emerge in the form of partnerships or memorandums of understanding.





Concept note - Local and Regional Authorities (LRAs) segment of the 11th World Water Forum

1. Objectives

The Segment aims to:

- **Enhance multi-level water governance** : Strengthen coordination across local, national and global levels through concrete cooperation mechanisms, joint planning and policy alignment.
- **Showcase local and regional leadership in water management** : Highlight replicable, on-the-ground solutions led by LRAs, positioning those actors as key drivers of implementation.
- **Strengthen links between local solutions and global water policies** : Scale up proven local practices and ensure they inform global agendas, Forum outcomes and policy frameworks.
- **Mobilize partnerships and financing** : Connect LRAs with donors, development banks and private sector actors, and promote investable, ready-to-scale projects.

2. Guiding principles and coordination

The Segment will be consensus-based, inclusive and transparent, action-oriented, and designed to ensure complementarity with other Forum processes while focusing on voluntary and implementable outcomes. The Riyadh Region Municipality and the Royal Commission for Riyadh City (RCRC) in collaboration with the designated international coordinating institution will support preparation, coordination and delivery in cooperation with relevant partner(s).

3. Timeline, milestones and Forum's session

The segment will start with the establishment of the L&RA working group, and preparatory materials. Consultation alongside the 2nd SCM will help define priorities and provide initial inputs for the Riyadh Declaration.

Throughout 2026, regional dialogues and engagement with others Forum's processes will support the iterative development of the Declaration, along with key outputs such as a roadmap for concrete joint actions, flagship initiatives such as the Cities and Regions Pavilion.

This segment will also connect to global platforms such as the World Urban Forum, meetings of the Rio Conventions, 2026 UN Water Conference, and multilevel climate/biodiversity governance platforms.

The segment will finally be held during the Forum in March 2027 in Riyadh, in an open one-day plenary session, political dialogue with other Forum segments, and city and region-focused events at the Expo, including workshops and partnership exchanges.

4. Expected outputs

The Local and Regional Authorities' segment is expected to produce the following outputs:

- The Riyadh Declaration of Local and Regional Authorities on Water, reflecting shared priorities, political messages and directions for action;
- Formal recognition of local and regional authorities in ministerial and parliamentary declarations, affirming their role in water basin governance;
- Identification of new funding opportunities, and development or strengthening of city-to-city city-to-basin or city-to-region alliance networks, to promote the exchange of good practices;
- Voluntary commitments or initiatives announced by participating governments;
- Political messages contributing to global water dialogue in the post-Forum period.





Concept note – Basin and Watershed Authorities segment of the 11th World Water Forum

1. Objectives

The Segment aims to:

- Provide a platform for discussions among basin and watershed authorities and relevant stakeholders
- Strengthen recognition of basin and / or watersheds management as a key implementation level
- Scale up successful initiatives and governance mechanisms
- Launch new basin-level partnerships and actions at national and international levels
- Ensure voluntary uptake and alignment with national sub-national contexts

2. Guiding principles and coordination

The process will be focused on practical, scalable and non-binding outcomes that foster cooperation and implementation. The designated international coordinating institution will support preparation, coordination and delivery in cooperation with relevant partner(s).

3. Timeline, milestones and Forum's session

Beginning 2026, the process will focus on consultation and co-generation through basin consultations including the 2nd SCM, the integration of other processes inputs, the initial framing of the Riyadh Implementation Roadmap, and engagement with international basin networks and relevant global events. Those milestones include the meetings of the Rio Conventions, the 2026 UN Water Conference, and the 2026 RIOB World Basin Summit.

In late 2026, efforts will shift toward consolidation, including the refinement of initiatives and partnerships to be showcased in Riyadh, as well as the development of knowledge products and policy-oriented materials.

The segment will culminate during the Forum in March 2027 in Riyadh, in an open one-day plenary session and political dialogue with other Forum segments.

4. Expected outputs

The Basin and Watershed Authorities segment at the 11th World Water Forum is expected to produce the following outputs:

- **Core output:** Riyadh Implementation Roadmap for Basin and Watersheds Cooperation, that would be voluntary and non-binding and structured around scalable coalitions and pilot initiatives;
- **Knowledge & partnership products:** Update on the implementation status of the Water and Nature Action Plan and Policy brief on innovation in basin management;
- **Additional initiatives (subject to validation and funding):** such as twinning Awards among twin basins, showcasing progress under the One Water Vision Initiative (that mobilizes space-based technologies to better manage water resources), launch of practical guidance materials including handbooks etc.

