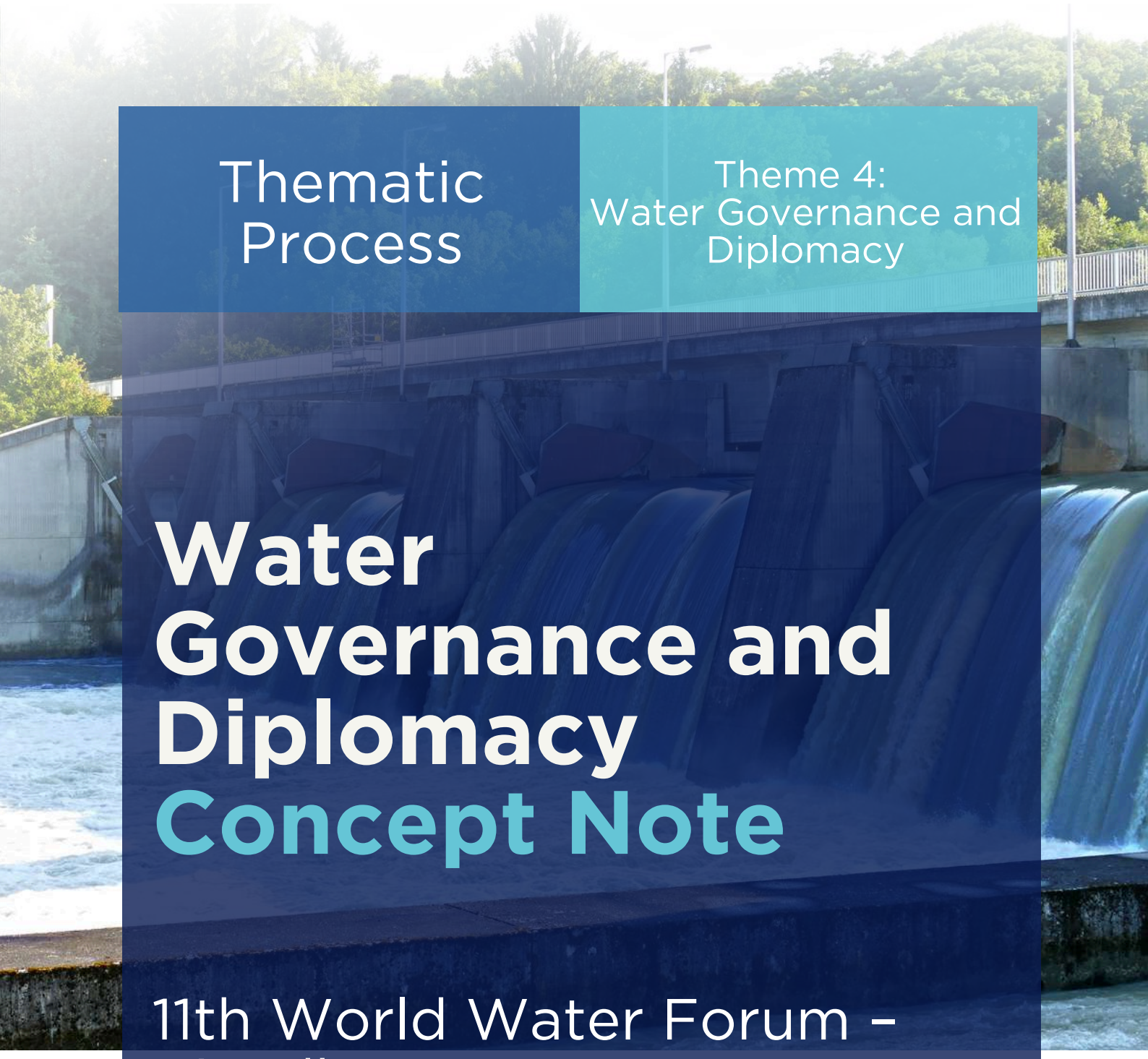
11th WORLD WATER FORUM
RIYADH 2027



Thematic Process

Theme 4: Water Governance and Diplomacy

Water Governance and Diplomacy Concept Note

11th World Water Forum – Riyadh 2027

وزارة البيئة والمياه والزراعة
Ministry of Environment Water & Agriculture
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia المملكة العربية السعودية

WORLD WATER COUNCIL

Foreword

From drying farmlands and depleting aquifers to rising seas and polluted waterways, the global water crisis is no longer a future concern; it is a present and intensifying reality. Water lies at the heart of food security, public health, resilience, peace, and economic stability. Yet billions still face water extremes such as scarcity and flood risk, contamination, and unequal access.

The 11th World Water Forum, under the overarching theme “Action for a Better Tomorrow”, marks a pivotal moment that promotes dialogue and drives concrete action. It calls on governments, innovators, youth, and communities to move from dialogue to action: scaling solutions, mobilizing financing, and forging inclusive partnerships. This is a global rally to break silos, localize action, and generate lasting impact across every region, river basin, and generation.

As the World Water Forum returns to an Arab country for the first time since 1997, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia offers a uniquely compelling setting: a nation shaped by extreme water scarcity due to its arid conditions, yet one that has emerged as a global leader, uniquely positioned to showcase its expertise in water policies, holistic governance, and efficient water management, including desalination, wastewater treatment, conservation technologies, and innovative water financing through Public-Private Partnerships.

This 11th World Water Forum is dedicated to fostering transformative discussions that move beyond theory to an action-oriented agenda, prioritizing policy implementation, cross-sector collaboration, regional problem-solving, and sustainable development.

As co-hosts, the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the World Water Council will bring together the human and intellectual capital accumulated across the first ten editions of the World Water Forum and the expertise and experience of the host nation, to guide every track of the 11th World Water Forum toward the best possible outcomes.

The 11th World Water Forum calls on all stakeholders and custodians of water sustainability to unite in this mission, ensuring a water-secure future for generations to come.

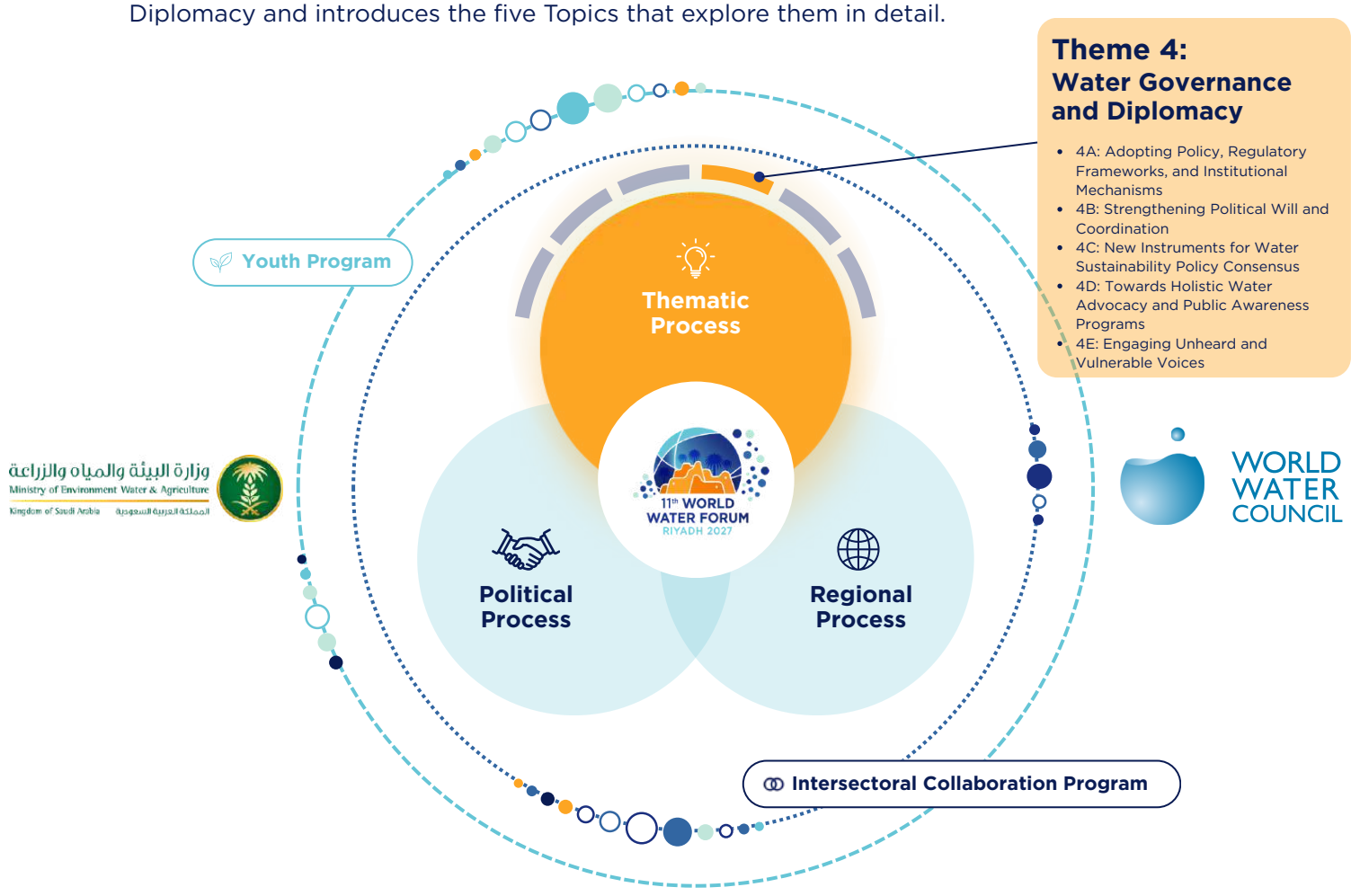
How the Forum Works

One Forum · Three Processes · Two Programs

Held every three years since 1997, the World Water Forum is the largest gathering of the global water community. Its 11th edition takes place in Riyadh from 21 to 25 March 2027 under the theme “Action for a Better Tomorrow”. It is the first World Water Forum hosted in the Gulf, in the year the Forum process turns thirty. It is co-hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, through the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture, and the World Water Council, which launched the Forum and carries its process from one edition to the next.

Three interlinked processes structure the 11th World Water Forum. The Political Process sets policy direction with four segments: Ministerial, Parliamentarian, Local & Regional Authorities, Basin & Watershed Authorities. The Thematic Process, divided into six Themes and thirty Topics, five per Theme, turns technical knowledge into evidence for political commitment. The Regional Process brings regional priorities and solutions into the global agenda. Two programs run across all three: the Youth Program and the Intersectoral Collaboration Program. Each concept note sets out the foundations of one part of this architecture.

This concept note presents the challenges addressed by Theme 4: Water Governance and Diplomacy and introduces the five Topics that explore them in detail.



“Our goal is to create not just a forum for discussion, but a powerful platform for collaboration, innovation, and action.”

Abdulrahman Al Fadley
Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture

“The 11th World Water Forum must be a platform for action—not just dialogue.”

Loïc Fauchon
President of the World Water Council



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Theme Overview

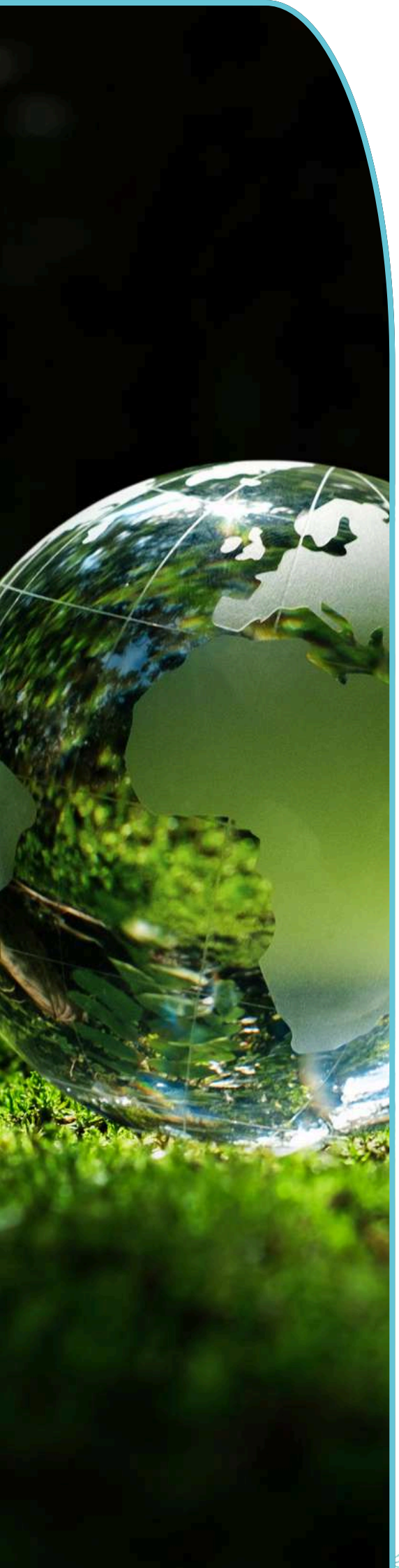
Rationale and Context

Water Governance and Diplomacy serve as the dual operating system for global security. Governance provides the rules, institutions, financing arrangements, and accountability mechanisms that determine how water is allocated, protected, and managed across sectors. Diplomacy provides formal and informal processes through which states and stakeholders negotiate priorities, manage asymmetries of power and information, prevent disputes, and sustain workable arrangements in shared basins and aquifers.

As climate change intensifies floods, droughts, and scarcity, and as social and geopolitical pressures rise, water decisions become more contested and the costs of weak institutions and fragile dialogue increase. This theme addresses the persistent "implementation gap" by strengthening coherent policies and regulations, capable multi-level place-based institutions, and practical tools that enable transparent, evidence-based decisions and resilient diplomatic engagement.

Water governance is often subject to institutional fragmentation, weak political will and inefficient coordination for policy implementation at different levels of government (Topic 4B).





The institutional architecture for transboundary water management is under strain, including slower development of new legal arrangements since 2010 and uneven support for existing mechanisms in some contexts. At the same time, transboundary settings face growing stress from variability, competing development priorities, and uneven capacities, which require adaptive legal and institutional frameworks (Topic 4A) and fit-for-purpose diplomatic instruments that can translate policy dialogue into sustained, basin-scale implementation (Topic 4C).

Theme 4 therefore combines governance reforms (clarifying mandates, improving integrity and accountability, strengthening regulatory coherence and data governance) with diplomacy-oriented approaches (structured dialogue platforms, joint fact-finding, confidence-building measures, and procedures for managing disagreements). It also recognizes that durable governance and credible diplomacy depend on legitimacy: strengthening water literacy and public engagement to support difficult trade-offs (Topic 4D) and moving from procedural consultation to meaningful participation of unheard and vulnerable groups (including women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, displaced communities, and fragile and conflict-affected contexts) throughout the policy cycle (Topic 4E).

The theme directly advances SDG 6 (incl. 6.5 and 6.b) and enables progress on SDG 2 (food systems), SDG 11 (cities), SDG 13 (climate), SDGs 14/15 (ecosystems), SDG 16 (peace, justice and institutions) and SDG 17 (partnerships).

Cross-cutting integration

Theme 4 integrates cross-cutting dimensions as core components of effective governance and diplomacy:

1 **Climate Resilience: By promoting climate-adaptive legal frameworks and institutional mechanisms that prioritize risk-informed planning, drought and flood protocols, and early warning systems to manage uncertainty.**

2 **Gender and Youth Inclusion: By adopting rights-based approaches that ensure meaningful, sustained participation, moving beyond one-off consultations to institutionalized influence, while establishing safeguards against tokenism.**

3 **Digital Innovation: By leveraging interoperable data systems, citizen science, and transparent information-sharing platforms to create inclusive, evidence-based decision-support tools.**

4 **Partnerships: By fostering multi-actor platforms that bridge governments, basin organizations, cities, civil society, Indigenous organizations, academia, and the private sector (leveraging Corporate Water Stewardship and ESG standards) to co-create solutions.**

5 **Financing Mechanisms: By aligning governance milestones with investment pipelines to unlock and leverage resources from development banks, climate funds, and blended finance models.**

Hosting the 11th World Water Forum in Riyadh offers a strategic opportunity to demonstrate governance innovation in water-scarce and arid contexts. This includes regulatory approaches for non-conventional water resources, desalination governance and cost-recovery reforms, aquifer protection and allocation mechanisms, and cross-sectoral resilience planning linking water, energy, food, and climate adaptation. By grounding global governance dialogue in the realities of water scarcity, Theme 4 can translate abstract principles into operational models relevant to arid and semi-arid regions worldwide.

Objectives



Through the 11th Forum, Theme 4 aims to achieve the following policy and institutional goals:

Strengthen institutions and policies: promote adoption and implementation of coherent policy, regulatory frameworks, and institutional mechanisms that enable inclusive water governance at different scales (Topic 4A and 4B).

Build political will and accountability: bridge global and national commitments and place-based implementation and measurable progress through multi-level governance, evidence-based regulatory reforms, accountability, and coordination (Topic 4B and 4A).

Advance water diplomacy: showcase practical fit-for-purpose instruments and approaches that translate policy consensus into sustainable and inclusive implementation across local-to-transboundary scales (Topic 4C).

Build societal support: improve public understanding and the legitimacy of governance decisions, particularly regarding difficult trade-offs, through targeted advocacy, education, public awareness, and inclusive dialogue (Topic 4D).

Champion equity and protection of the vulnerable: ensure governance systems institutionalize meaningful participation and safeguards for unheard and vulnerable voices, including in humanitarian and fragile contexts (Topic 4E).

Key Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges: The sector faces a convergence of structural, geopolitical, and emerging sectoral pressures. Governance is often paralyzed by fragmented roles and responsibilities and weak coordination across levels of governments (Topic 4B), frequently failing to integrate surface water, groundwater, and land-use management (Topic 4C), often lacking necessary "Source-to-Sea" coordination to link freshwater management with land and sea management.

1

These gaps are particularly acute in groundwater management, where limited monitoring, weak abstraction control, and diffuse pollution undermine trust, accountability, and cooperation within and across basins (Topic 4C).

2

These challenges are now compounded by the rapidly expanding water footprint of digital infrastructure and AI, where data centers are creating new, often unregulated competition for surface and groundwater resources in already stressed basins (Topic 4C).

3

These pressures are exacerbated by a "hollowing out" of transboundary cooperation and the systematic exclusion of vulnerable groups (Topic 4E) and low public water literacy (4D), which deepens inequalities and undermines the societal trust needed for difficult policy trade-offs.

4

A growing opportunity and risk driver is corporate water stewardship and disclosure: aligning private-sector water use, efficiency, and pollution control with basin rules, transparent reporting, and conflict-of-interest safeguards to support water security and investment confidence.

5

Key Challenges and Opportunities

Opportunities: Conversely, there is renewed global momentum to leverage digital tools, including through AI, and citizen-generated evidence (4C, 4E) to enhance transparency and accountability. **6**

There are strategic opportunities to advance circular water systems through new policy instruments that align digital and industrial water demand with basin-scale governance, stakeholder engagement, and sustainable implementation (Topic 4C). **7**

The urgency of the climate crisis offers a strategic opening to integrate "Green Water" and climate foresight into legal frameworks (4B), moving beyond narrow blue-water allocations. **8**

Simultaneously, growing interest from financiers in bankable, cooperative basin-scale programs creates a powerful incentive to scale successful governance models (4A) and rebuild trust through tangible investment. **9**

Linkages with Global Agendas

WATER CONVENTION

Aligns with international water initiatives and conventions supporting cooperation, including the 1992 UN Water Convention and the 1997 UN Watercourses Convention.

Aligns with the SDGs (especially SDG 6, 16 and 17).

PARIS CLIMATE AGREEMENT

Aligns with the Paris Agreement (adaptation and resilience).

SENDAI FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION 2015-2030

Aligns with the Sendai Framework (risk reduction and preparedness).

It also supports climate-water dialogues and regional and basin cooperation platforms.

Thematic Logic

The theme follows a cohesive narrative: It begins by establishing the necessary rules and institutions (Topic 4A) and securing the political will (Topic 4B) to enforce them. It then introduces specific new instruments (Topic 4C) to solve emerging problems, builds the necessary public support (Topic 4D) to sustain these efforts, and ensures the process includes everyone (Topic 4E) to guarantee legitimacy.

Topics under the Theme

Topic No.	Topic Title	Brief Focus Description
4A	Adopting Policy, Regulatory Frameworks, and Institutional Mechanisms	Focuses on evidence-based regulatory reforms and implementable legal and institutional frameworks that strengthen water diplomacy and cooperation across borders (including transboundary aquifers), sectors and scales, including climate-adaptive governance, inter-sectoral nexus coordination, and inclusive mechanisms for stakeholder participation.
4B	Strengthening Political Will and Coordination	Targets the 'commitment-to-implementation' gap by improving multi-level governance, place-based and coherent policies, integrity and accountability, and coordination, finance and capacities, including in fragile and humanitarian contexts and in transboundary settings.
4C	New Instruments for Water Sustainability Policy Consensus	Introduces innovative fit-for-purpose governance instruments that connect science, policy, and society to translate consensus into sustained implementation across basin and transboundary scales, including inclusive policy-process methodologies, science–policy interface tools, case compendia on what worked/failed and basin dialogue platforms for trust-building and adaptive learning.

Thematic Logic

Topics under the Theme

Topic No.	Topic Title	Brief Focus Description
4D	Towards Holistic Water Advocacy and Public Awareness Programs	Advances education ("blue curricula"), media and civic engagement and inclusive dialogue to improve water literacy, navigate trade-offs (e.g., agriculture–ecosystems–WASH), rebuild trust, and coordinate advocacy beyond the 11th Forum through actionable roadmaps, coalitions and communication products.
4E	Engaging Unheard and Vulnerable Voices	Centers equity and rights in water governance by embedding early, continuous and formal participation of unheard and vulnerable groups (women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, displaced and FCV-affected communities) and by recognizing vulnerable ecosystems and groundwater as 'unheard voices' in decisions.

Cross-Process Dialogue and Cooperation

Below is a brief summary of proposals for Cross-Process Dialogue Topics submitted by the 5 topic groups in their respective concept notes.

Cross-Process Dialogue Topics

4A **Adopting Policy, Regulatory Frameworks, and Institutional Mechanisms**

Ministerial and Parliamentarian Segments: A dialogue on translating policy and regulatory recommendations into actionable commitments, legislative reforms, and governance frameworks that support water diplomacy and transboundary cooperation.

Local & Regional Authorities and Basin & Watershed Authorities Segments: Joint exchanges to connect national and transboundary policy frameworks with basin-level implementation, operational coordination, and local governance practices.

Regional Collaboration: Close collaboration with the Regional Process, specifically focusing on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa.

4B **Strengthening Political Will and Coordination**

Ministerial and Parliamentarian Segments: A dialogue between ministries and mayors to enhance multi-level governance to enable effective and coordinated water management and presentation of the Humanitarian WASH Call to Action to Ministries and Parliamentarians to secure high-level political support and alignment.

Regional Collaboration: Possible focus on the Mediterranean & Arab Region, as the world's most water-scarce region, as well as Africa with a focus on basin level.

Cross-Process Dialogue and Cooperation

Cross-Process Dialogue Topics

4C

New Instruments for Water Sustainability Policy Consensus

Ministerial Segment: A Ministerial Dialogue on "New Instruments for Action." This involves presenting a concise menu of practical policy instruments that ministers can reference, adapt, and endorse to strengthen implementation.

Basin & Watershed Authorities Segment: In coordination with the stakeholders of the Basin & Watershed Authorities Segment, this dialogue will advance basin-level implementation of policy consensus through practical governance tools, transparent data-sharing systems, inclusive participation frameworks, and sustainable financing approaches, ensuring coherence between basin realities and Ministerial commitments.

Regional Collaboration: Through the Asia-Pacific Regional Process, this dialogue will advance climate-resilient, basin-scale water diplomacy by promoting adaptable governance tools, strengthening transboundary trust, fostering inclusive participation, and mobilizing innovative financing, ensuring Asia-Pacific experience informs and strengthens global policy and implementation.

4D

Towards Holistic Water Advocacy and Public Awareness Programs

Basin & Watershed Authorities Segment: A joint dialogue designed to equip basin authorities with practical tools and methodologies for mediating water governance conflicts and engaging diverse stakeholders.

Local & Regional Authorities Segment: A dialogue with municipal, regional, and parliamentary representatives on how water literacy campaigns, media engagement, and participatory education can strengthen public awareness and advocacy at the local level.

Regional Collaboration: Focus on media and curricula for water literacy in India. Dialogue on basin-level advocacy and inclusive water governance in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Cross-Process Dialogue and Cooperation

Cross-Process Dialogue Topics

4E

Engaging Unheard and Vulnerable Voices

Political-Thematic Processes (Ministerial-Parliamentarian-Community): A "Ministerial-Parliamentarian-Community Dialogue on Institutionalizing Inclusion." This is a high-level dialogue on embedding equity, meaningful participation, and accountability into national water laws, policies, and investment frameworks.

Local & Regional Authorities and Basin & Watershed Authorities Segments: A "Multi-Level Governance Dialogue" on practical mechanisms to integrate marginalized voices into water service delivery, sanitation, and climate adaptation, linking local experience to national and regional decision-making.

Regional Collaboration: Relevant across multiple regions including Sub-Saharan Africa, West Asia and North Africa, South/Southeast Asia, SIDS, and fragile/conflict-affected contexts globally.

Flagship Dialogues

Below proposed 2–3 flagship dialogues from Theme 4 for Cross-Process Dialogue Topics based on priorities indicated by the 5 topic groups in their respective concept notes.

Political Process.
Focus: High-level commitments to implementation, crisis readiness, and inclusion.

1

Flagship Dialogue 1: "From Commitments to Implementation: Water Governance and Diplomacy Deliverables". Converting political commitments into implementable reforms in water governance and diplomacy (policy coherence, regulatory instruments, institutional mandates, coordination across sectors, measurable indicators). Lead Topics: 4B (Political Will), 4A (Frameworks), and 4C (New Instruments). Intended Outcomes: Inputs to Ministerial Declaration text (action-oriented); an implementation package (3–5 priority actions with milestones); identification of pilot basins and countries to demonstrate reforms.

Local & Regional Authorities / Basin & Watershed Authorities Segments. *Focus: Operational coordination for service delivery, risk management, and implementation at basin/city scale.*

2

Flagship Dialogue 2: "Multi-Level Place-Based Governance for Local Implementation and Resilience". Clarifying mandates and strengthening coordination between local and regional authorities and national and basin institutions for service delivery and risk management. Lead Topics: 4B (Multi-level Governance) & 4A (Frameworks). Intended Outcomes: Multi-level coordination "playbook" (roles, escalation routes); capacity needs assessment; shortlist of pilot localities.

Flagship Dialogue 3: "Governing Shared Basins Under Climate Stress". Operational basin governance under variability: joint monitoring, information-sharing arrangements, drought/flood operating procedures, and transparent decision rules. Lead Topics: 4A (Frameworks) and 4C (New Instruments). Intended Outcomes: "Minimum operational package" for basin cooperation; template drought/flood protocols; shortlist of basins for pilot implementation.

Flagship Dialogues

3

Legitimacy and Implementation Support (cross-process).
Focus: Strengthening legitimacy for difficult trade-offs by combining credible evidence pathways with public trust and meaningful participation.

Flagship Dialogue 4: "Legitimacy, Evidence, and Trust for Better Water Decisions". Strengthening legitimacy for difficult trade-offs through a combined approach: (i) participatory monitoring and citizen science to improve evidence quality, transparency, and accountability; and (ii) water literacy, advocacy, and dialogue approaches to help institutions communicate trade-offs and build durable public trust. Lead Topics: 4C (Citizen Science/Groundwater), 4D (Advocacy/Literacy), and 4E (Inclusion).

Regional Process Interactions

(illustrative)

Central Asia & MENA: Focus on "Regional Forums as Instruments for Water Diplomacy", demonstrating how regional platforms can feed into global policy.

Africa: Address the "Implementation Gap" in African RBOs, focusing on transitioning them from consultative bodies to empowered institutions.

Asia-Pacific: Showcase large-scale water literacy campaigns and "blue curricula" from India as replicable models for public engagement.

Intended Outcomes of Dialogue

1

Draft language and concrete commitments for 11th Forum political declarations (governance, inclusion, integrity, climate-adaptive cooperation, data sharing).

2

Agreed roadmaps for 1-2 transferable instruments: (e.g., basin dialogue platform model, inclusive participation standards, synthesis-to-action mechanism, green/blue water accounting integration, and crisis-sensitive WASH governance).

3

Identification of pilot basins and cities and a pipeline of partnership-backed, investment-ready initiatives.

Proposed Timing and Venue / Online

- Online preparatory dialogues and webinars after the 2nd Stakeholders Meeting (2026), including targeted regional clinics.
- Flagship cross-process sessions at the 11th World Water Forum (March 2027), with follow-up virtual check-ins and reporting toward the 12th World Water Forum and UN Water Conference follow-up.
- Each flagship dialogue will have one preparatory online clinic, one session at the 11th Forum, and one post-Forum check-in led by the relevant Topic leads, with reporting into Theme 4's follow-up mechanism.

Expected Outcomes and Deliverables



Policy and Strategic Outcomes

Shared priorities proposed by 2 or more topic groups:

- Climate-adaptive governance and diplomacy package: guidance for applying relevant water conventions and national legal frameworks under climate variability, including drought/flood governance protocols and risk-informed decision rules. [4A/4B/4C]
- Integrity and accountability commitments: integrating water integrity principles into strategies and institutional practice; strengthening transparency and accountability for service delivery and for implementation of agreed governance arrangements (including in fragile and crisis contexts). [4B/4E/4D]
- Declaration inputs: concrete, action-oriented text contributions for Ministerial / Parliamentarian / Local & Regional Authorities / Basin & Watershed Authorities Segments on governance, inclusion, data-sharing, and climate resilience. [4A/4B/4C/4D/4E]

Illustrative examples:

- Humanitarian WASH Call to Action: A roadmap endorsed by Member States to prioritize water supply financing and policy in fragile contexts (4B).
- "Climate-Ready Water Law" Policy Brief: Guidelines for interpreting UN Water Conventions to explicitly address flow variability and drought management (4B).
- Climate-Responsive Water Diplomacy Manifesto: A strategic declaration calling for the integration of climate adaptation metrics into transboundary agreements (4B).
- Youth Engagement Recommendations: standards endorsed at the 11th Forum for meaningful youth participation, aligned with the UNESCO Water Youth Strategy (4E).



Technical and Knowledge Deliverables

Shared priorities proposed by 2 or more topic groups:

- "What Worked and What Didn't" Case Compendium of governance and diplomacy (successes, failures, unintended consequences), including implementation lessons and investment and financing implications relevant for scaling. [4C/4B]
- Practical toolkits and guidance notes (multi-level governance; inclusive participation standards; water diplomacy/mediation instruments; water literacy and engagement methodologies; integrity and accountability tools). [4B/4D/4E (+4A)]
- Data and monitoring assets: dashboards and interoperable information systems; data governance guidance; and citizen-science approaches (e.g., participatory groundwater monitoring using digital tools), including practical guidance on data-sharing technologies. [4A/4B/4C/4E]
- Post-Forum synthesis-to-action package: session outputs translated into short action briefs, implementation guidance, and pilot-ready proposals, supported by an agreed follow-up and accountability approach. [4D/4E (+4B/4C)]

Illustrative examples:

- "Blue Curricula" Toolkit: Educational frameworks and resources to integrate water literacy into formal school systems (4D).
- Inclusive Governance Methodology: A step-by-step guide for designing multi-actor policy processes that effectively engage vulnerable groups (4C).
- Framework for Integrated Hydrological Assessment: A methodology for transboundary basins incorporating "Green Water" accounting (4B).
- Storytelling and testimony repository (lived experience) to inform policy choices, accountability, and legitimacy, with specific attention to FCV and humanitarian contexts. (4E)

Partnership and Financing Outcomes

Shared priorities proposed by 2 or more topic groups:

- New and strengthened multi-actor partnerships linking governments, river basin organizations, cities, civil society, youth/women networks, Indigenous organizations, academia and private sector actors to support implementation and learning. [4A/4C/4D/4E]
- Financing alignment: structured engagement with development banks, climate funds and philanthropies to link governance reform milestones to investment pipelines and bankable basin-scale programs, including longer-term engagement models. [4A/4B/4C/4D/4E]

Illustrative examples:

- Communities of Practice and Regional Learning Networks: Launch of a peer-learning network for basin organizations to exchange best practices on governance and finance (4C).
- Coalition of Water Conflict Resolution Specialists: A new partnership led by the Water Mediation Institute to support dispute resolution efforts (4D).
- Strategic Partnerships for Basin-Level Action: Mobilizing partnerships between governments, UN agencies, and the private sector to scale basin investments (4C).



Actions and Initiatives

Shared priorities proposed by 2 or more topic groups:

- Launch or formalize coalitions / communities of practice and peer-learning exchanges (e.g., basin-to-basin exchange formats) to transfer tools and lessons for implementation. [4C/4D/4B]
- Pilot initiatives on climate adaptation, resilience and integrated water governance (basin-level, city/regional, and community-based), with clear learning objectives and pathways for scaling. [4A/4B/4E]
- (Optional): Source-to-sea coordination pilots: basin-to-coast governance arrangements linking upstream decisions with downstream water quality, delta/coastal protection, and ecosystem-based resilience. [derived from Topic proposals 4A/4B/4C (+4E)]

Illustrative examples:

- Launch a High-Level Dialogue on Downstream Security as a permanent working group addressing downstream vulnerabilities in arid regions. [4B]
- Formal endorsement and promotion of the WASH Roadmap Humanitarian Call to Action (2025) with reinforced attention to humanitarian and fragile contexts toward Member State commitments and follow-up. [4B/4E]
- Establish a coalition of water conflict resolution specialists (led/initiated by Water Mediation Institute) and related capacity-building programs. [4D]
- Establish regional and transboundary peer-learning exchanges (communities of practice / basin-to-basin exchange formats) to support transfer of tools and implementation lessons. [4C]
- Develop community-based monitoring and citizen science initiatives, including participatory groundwater monitoring and transboundary aquifer cooperation using digital tools and safeguards for inclusion. [4C/4E]
- Launch innovation challenges and technology demonstration initiatives tied to governance needs, including responsible use of AI and water footprint governance considerations. [4B]
- Pilot education and water advocacy programs (schools, communities) and youth/women-led stewardship networks to strengthen legitimacy and informed participation. [4D]
- Co-develop and disseminate youth engagement recommendations endorsed at the 11th Forum and aligned with UNESCO Water Youth Strategy, including roles, safeguards and implementation mechanisms. [4E]
- Create a Roadmap or Charter for Inclusive Governance (or equivalent instrument) to anchor commitments for inclusive decision-making and accountability. [4D/4E]

Communication and Legacy

Shared priorities proposed by 2 or more topic groups:

Clear, accessible key messages on water stewardship, trade-offs and shared responsibility; coordinated communications through 11th Forum and partner channels. [4D/4C] **1**

Knowledge products packaged for uptake (policy memos, briefs, toolkits, case libraries, infographics, webinars) with co-publication and dissemination by partner organizations. [4B/4C/4D] **2**

Tracking commitments and outcomes through a post-Forum mechanism (taskforce, roadmap updates), with reporting toward the 12th World Water Forum and relevant UN water and climate processes. [4B/4E/4C] **3**

Illustrative examples:

- Youth-driven visibility initiatives (e.g., short social media video competition linked to education/civic engagement sessions). [4D]
- Communication products centered on lived experience, multilingual formats and non-tokenistic representation of vulnerable groups. [4E]
- Communication products explaining green water accounting / water footprint and fairness dimensions in allocation, linked to the Integrated Hydrological Assessment workstream (without prescribing campaign branding). [4B (+4D)]
- A global awareness initiative focused on "Green Water" and invisible resources (Topic 4B).
- Social Media Video Competition: A youth-driven campaign to capture 11th Forum discussions and amplify water messages (Topic 4D).

Monitoring and Post-Forum Action

Outcomes will be consolidated into a Theme 4 legacy package (policy recommendations, tools, case compendia, and pilot proposals) and maintained through a lightweight post-Forum coordination mechanism. Progress tracking will use a limited set of indicators (e.g., number of institutional commitments adopted; operational data-sharing arrangements; pilots launched or scaled; participation standards implemented; and uptake of toolkits and case compendia). Follow-up will be organized through online check-ins and webinars, reporting to the 12th World Water Forum preparations and feeding into relevant global platforms (SDG 6 reporting, climate-water dialogues, UN water processes) to sustain momentum and institutional memory.

More specifically, the "What Worked and What Didn't" Case Compendium (Topic 4C) will be maintained as a living resource, updated between Forums to track the evolution of governance practices. The Humanitarian WASH Call to Action (Topic 4B) will serve as a monitoring framework to track Member State commitments annually. Communities of Practice and Regional Learning Networks (Topic 4C) will ensure continuity of knowledge exchange beyond the event. The Regional Dialogue Platforms (Topic 4C) will continue to operate, feeding structured learning into the agenda of the 12th World Water Forum and the 2028 UN Water Conference. Youth participation indicators will be tracked to report progress at the 12th World Water Forum (Topic 4E).



11th WORLD WATER FORUM
RIYADH 2027

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11th WORLD WATER FORUM
RIYADH 2027

11th World Water Forum – Riyadh 2027

21–25 March 2027

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

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