

43rd Session of the Conference

Written Correspondence Procedure – inputs from Members - Original version

Item 17 – Biennial Theme 2024-25

Member Name	Comments
Colombia (Saturday, 10 June 2023 — 12.18)	<p>Colombia, como potencia hídrica mundial, considera que la gestión de los recursos hídricos es fundamental para el cumplimiento de la Agenda 2030 de Desarrollo Sostenible, al tiempo que reconocemos que la FAO tiene, entre sus mandatos, la promoción de la gestión integrada de los recursos hídricos para garantizar la seguridad alimentaria para todas las personas, mejorar las condiciones de vida de las poblaciones rurales y elevar los niveles de vida. Asimismo, el Plan Nacional de Desarrollo “Colombia Potencia Mundial para la Vida” reconoce al agua, la biodiversidad y las personas como las bases del ordenamiento territorial. Dicho plan busca un cambio en la planificación del ordenamiento y del desarrollo del territorio, donde la protección de los determinantes ambientales para garantizar el derecho a la alimentación sean objetivos centrales.</p> <p>En ese sentido, Colombia acoge el tema propuesto “Gestión de los recursos hídricos para lograr las cuatro mejoras (una producción, una nutrición, un medio ambiente y una vida mejores) con miras al cumplimiento de la Agenda 2030 y los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible” y espera aportar en las discusiones y espacios que surjan en este bienio.</p>
United States of America (Monday, 12 June 2023 — 10.10)	<p>The United States of America recognizes the inextricable tie between advancing water security and responding to accelerating climate change and applauds FAO for its vision integrating water into its biennial programme of work. Around the world, water crises are becoming more frequent and intense – undermining public health and directly constraining economic growth because sectors such as agriculture, health, industry, and energy rely on water availability, quality, and affordability.</p> <p>The recent destruction of the Kakhovka Dam, which has triggered massive flooding in Ukraine and resulted in the evacuation of thousands of Ukrainians, is an example of how water infrastructure destruction can rapidly and negatively exacerbate food security, livelihoods, and agricultural production. It bears repeating that the latest crises for agriculture and the environment as a result of this crucial dam’s destruction would not exist had Russia not launched and continued brutally to conduct its unconscionable, unprovoked war against Ukraine.</p> <p>The combined effects of growing populations, rising incomes, and expanding cities will see demand for water rising exponentially, while supply becomes more erratic and uncertain.</p> <p>Unless action is taken soon, water could become scarce in regions where it is currently abundant – such as Central Africa and East Asia – and scarcity will worsen in regions where water is already in short supply – such as the Middle East and the Sahel in Africa.</p> <p>Recognizing that global water security is essential to the United States of America’s national security, the Biden-Harris administration in June 2022 released the White House Action Plan on Global Water Security, which laid out an</p>

	<p>innovative, whole-of-government approach to address the full scope of global water issues and mobilize the United States of America’s departments and agencies around concrete actions to achieve our vision of a water-secure world. This set of actions complement President Biden’s Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience – or ‘PREPARE’. PREPARE brings together the full force of our federal government to help more than half a billion people adapt to and manage the impacts of climate change in this decade. This cannot be done without water management being front and center.</p> <p>In the water-food-energy nexus, technology, governance, and finance must work together to share improved sources of data, deploy innovative technologies, ensure planners work together, and create incentives for change.</p> <p>The United States of America will continue to work with partners to achieve the goal of a water secure world where people have sustainable supplies of water of sufficient quantity and quality to meet human, economic, and ecosystem needs.</p> <p>We must redouble our efforts moving forward from the UN Water Conference this year to keep up momentum into COP 28, where adaptation and resilience will feature prominently.</p> <p>This includes multilateral conversations and within our own governments — making water resources management policy part of all conversations.</p> <p>The United States of America will continue to work with partners to achieve the goal of a water secure world, where people have sustainable supplies of water of sufficient quantity and quality to meet human, economic, and ecosystem needs through the rest of the Water Action Decade and beyond.</p>
<p>Argentina (Monday, 12 June 2023 — 13.07)</p>	<p>En el marco del procedimiento de comentarios escritos, establecido para abordar temas específicos de la agenda del 43° período de sesiones de la Conferencia de FAO, la Representación Permanente de la República Argentina tiene a bien compartir los siguientes comentarios.</p> <p>Al tiempo de agradecer la elaboración del documento, la Argentina realiza los siguientes comentarios en línea con las conclusiones del 135° Comité del Programa, endosado por el 172° Consejo de la FAO:</p> <p>La gestión de los recursos hídricos es un tema crucial para lograr mejoras en la producción, nutrición, medio ambiente y calidad de vida, en línea con la Agenda 2030 y los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible. Apreciamos la información actualizada proporcionada y reconocemos los progresos realizados por la FAO en relación con la gestión integrada de los recursos hídricos para la alimentación y la agricultura.</p> <p>Es importante destacar la responsabilidad encomendada a la FAO, dentro del Sistema de Naciones Unidas, sobre los indicadores 6.4.1 y 6.4.2 del ODS 6. En ese marco, es fundamental que FAO mantenga la congruencia en el abordaje de esta temática según su mandato específico y que, a partir de allí, trabaje sobre sus ventajas comparativas para impulsar la eficiencia en el uso del agua y brindar respuestas frente al estrés hídrico, por ejemplo, promoviendo sistemas de riego sostenibles o tecnologías que estimulen la conservación del agua. La colaboración de la FAO con ONU-Agua es fundamental para trabajar en estas áreas, en el marco de una sola Naciones Unidas.</p> <p>Ello ya fue expresado por la propia FAO en el documento PC 133/5 Sup. 1 –documento que es parte del trabajo del presente bienio- en donde frente a la evaluación sobre el trabajo de la Organización en la materia, la actual administración reivindicó su rol de custodio de los indicadores 6.4.1 y 6.4.2 del ODS 6 y, a la vez, en el párrafo 8</p>

mencionó que “en el marco general de ONU-Agua, las cuestiones relativas a la calidad, impacto eco-sistémico y participación en torno al agua, entre otros elementos, corresponden al mandato de otros organismos de las Naciones Unidas”.

En esa línea, la Argentina entiende que sería inadecuado promover esquemas de trabajo sobre temáticas relativas a la gobernanza del agua, tratamiento de aguas transfronterizas y/ o precio del agua, entre otros elementos, ya que, en primer lugar, cuestiones sobre soberanía de recursos naturales de los países escapan ampliamente al mandato de FAO y, segundo lugar, no es función del Organismo evaluar (o influenciar) procesos intra-nacionales, bilaterales o regionales en esta materia.

Por otra parte, es crucial reconocer que no existen soluciones universales para la gestión integrada de los recursos hídricos. Este principio debe guiar el trabajo de la FAO en esta esfera, entendiendo la diversidad de contextos y necesidades en diferentes regiones sobre la base de los requerimientos específicos de los países.

Es fundamental que la FAO mantenga su liderazgo técnico y sus conocimientos especializados para fortalecer la colaboración intersectorial, especialmente en términos de eficiencia en el uso del agua, riego sostenible, aplicación de tecnologías para el uso resiliente del recurso y superación de situaciones de estrés hídrico. Debemos considerar tanto las dimensiones cualitativas como cuantitativas de este recurso vital.

Recordamos la importancia de respetar el equilibrio regional cuando partes interesadas externas participen en el debate sobre cuestiones sustantivas o la preparación de documentos que, de nuevo, deberán enfocarse en la promoción del uso sostenible del agua para la agricultura y no en su gobernanza. La inclusión de perspectivas y sólidas experiencias regionales son fundamentales para una gestión efectiva de los recursos hídricos. En el caso de nuestra región, América Latina y el Caribe, existen notables contribuciones en esta temática, por ejemplo, desarrolladas por IICA, que podrían iluminar el trabajo de FAO.

Es crucial que las acciones de la FAO en materia de gestión integrada de los recursos hídricos incluyan los enfoques de los países en desarrollo. Sus conocimientos y su experiencia son valiosos para una gestión sostenible y equitativa del agua.

Finalmente, en cuanto a la creación del mecanismo “Un Agua, Una Salud”, reiteramos la necesidad de su abordaje sea debatido con los Miembros a fin de privilegiar el trabajo del enfoque “Una Salud” ya que éste aborda las cuestiones a las que hace referencia la línea programática propuesta.

Esperamos que la FAO mantenga una amplia colaboración con los Miembros en el seguimiento de la Conferencia de las Naciones Unidas sobre el Agua de 2023. Además, invitamos a la FAO a informar sobre los resultados y medidas de seguimiento adoptadas en relación con este importante evento.

<p>The Russian Federation (Monday, 12 June 2023 — 17.17)</p>	<p>Российская Федерация не возражает против утверждения предлагаемой темы сессии руководящих органов на двухгодичный период 2024-2025 гг. («Управление водными ресурсами в контексте четырех направлений улучшений: улучшение производства, улучшение качества питания, улучшение состояния окружающей среды и улучшение качества жизни в интересах осуществления Повестки дня на период до 2030 года и достижения Целей устойчивого развития». Исходим из того, что ФАО имеет мандат на работу в области водных ресурсов: соответствующая цель (3) присутствует в Стратегической рамочной программе ФАО на 2022-2031. Поддерживаем призыв к ФАО расширять партнерское взаимодействие и осуществлять мобилизацию ресурсов на реализацию программных инициатив по воде.</p>
<p>Australia (Monday, 12 June 2023 — 18.02)</p>	<p>Australia is pleased to endorse “integrated water resources management” as the topic for General Debate of the 43rd Session of the Conference, and as the biennial theme for Governing Body sessions in 2024-2025. Water resources management is crucial for boosting climate adaptation and resilience as well as for achieving global food security and sustainable agrifood systems. Accordingly, we welcome FAO’s increased engagement on this priority area, in close collaboration with relevant UN agencies. In this regard, we highlight the importance of promoting the intrinsic linkages of water resources management to a range of Sustainable Development Goals under the custodianship of FAO, as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a whole. Australia reiterates the importance of incorporating Indigenous People’s perspectives and knowledge of water resources management. The Australian Government has made key commitments to increase First Nations water holdings and to ensure that the cultural authority, deep knowledge and expertise of First Nations people is better incorporated into water decisions. We note FAO’s proposed initiatives to strengthen FAO’s work on integrated water resources management and reaffirm that Australia is well placed to share our significant experience and expertise, and look forward to engaging in future processes over the coming biennium.</p>
<p>Switzerland (Tuesday, 13 June 2023 — 8.45)</p>	<p>Switzerland thanks FAO for the comprehensive document, reflecting well the latest evidence available, and welcomes its increased engagement in this topic. Switzerland fully supports the use of an Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) approach and would like to make three remarks in this regard based on our experience in many regions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IWRM needs to be considered from a water-energy-food-environment (WEFE) perspective. In 25 years, 40 percent of the world population will live in areas with permanent water stress; this number highlights the ever increasing competition between the different social and economic targets which will severely impact food systems. • Competition for water is not just between sectors, but between regions and countries. 153 countries share rivers, lakes and aquifers, making transboundary water management a necessity; unfortunately conflicts between and within countries around water management keep increasing. While the documents C 2023/2 and C 2023/30 reference the importance of using a watershed/river basin perspective, we would welcome more information regarding FAO’s plans to engage in transboundary IWMR, as this represents a key contribution to build resilience and prevent conflicts.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would also welcome more information on how FAO can best link its evidence-based work and experiences with policy making, and how to ensure all sub topics take into account gender- and youth-specific constraints and opportunities. • We welcome the references to agroecological practices, as Switzerland considers agroecology as one major pathway towards sustainable food systems. The agroecological principles allow for innovative approaches applicable to water management, including, but not limited to, the retention of soil moisture, the development and use of species and varieties adapted to saline, drought-prone or other conditions, to name but two. We encourage FAO to consider the agroecological principles when developing and promoting solutions in the different planned activities. <p>Furthermore, Switzerland would like to highlight the important role of the Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG) and encourages FAO and Members to collaborate further within this framework. Finally, we encourage FAO’s active engagement within UN-Water and the implementation of its commitments made during this year’s UN Water Conference 2023 in New York. Taking into account that agriculture is both suffering from, and co-responsible for, significant water pollution, we encourage FAO to consider participating in the World Water Quality Alliance (WWQA) led by UNEP.</p>
<p>Canada (Tuesday, 13 June 2023 — 10.21)</p>	<p>Canada welcomes “Water resources management for the four betters: better production, better nutrition, better environment, and better life, to achieve Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals” as the theme for the 2024-25 FAO biennium.</p> <p>Canada underscores the critical importance of water to all life, including for food production, sustainable livelihoods, and adaptation to climate change. We look forward to the results of concerted FAO and Members work in the upcoming biennium on integrated water resources management, and all of the necessary benefits such efforts can bring.</p>
<p>European Union (Thursday, 15 June 2023 — 19.35)</p>	<p>I am honoured to write to you on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States regarding the abovementioned agenda item for the 43rd Session of the Conference.</p> <p>We want to thank FAO for proposing the highly important topic of water resource management as the theme for the next biennium. Challenges such as water scarcity, droughts and floods, but also water pollution and the lack of basic hygiene facilities, including in the context of food production, concern large parts of populations around the world, especially women, who are disproportionately affected in this regard, with far-reaching implications for food security, the environment, human health as well as economic, social and political stability.</p> <p>We highlight the need for climate action, sustainable and integrated resource management and efficiency practices regarding both water and land, duly recognising the water-energy-food-ecosystem nexus, and underline that an increased focus on sustainable agriculture and food systems can play a major role in contributing to relevant and integrated solutions. Furthermore, we underscore the significance of effective water governance and responsible water tenure arrangements. The EU is ready to play its part. Through Global Gateway, our global investment package, the European Union has committed over EUR 1 billion to water management initiatives, working with countries in Africa and Central Asia to support livelihoods, energy, food and peace.</p>

	<p>The way forward can only be together, with joint and coordinated actions at the national, regional and international levels. FAO, in collaboration with other relevant UN agencies and within its mandate, has a major role to play in the global work on sustainable management of water resources. We welcome the programmatic initiatives proposed by FAO in document C 2023/30. We further welcome FAO's contribution to the UN 2023 Water Conference, and its submission of seven commitments to the UN Water Action Agenda.</p> <p>With these comments, we strongly support the proposed theme of “water resources management for the four betters: better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, to achieve the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals”.</p>
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