

**43rd Session of the Conference**  
**Secretariat Response to Item 17: Biennial Theme 2024-25**

FAO congratulates Colombia for including water under the National Development Plan and on advancing territorial development, inclusive of sustainable land use and development with biodiversity and people as its base. FAO thanks Colombia for welcoming the proposed topic “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 FAO’s Biennial Theme.

We thank the United States of America (USA) for recognizing water management as central in all policy conversations and in advancing water and food security and climate change resilience among broader human development and economic and environmental goals. FAO applauds the White House Action Plan on Global Water Security and PREPARE and appreciates the USA’s support for FAO’s integration of water in the biennial work programme. Through dedicated complementary water programmes, FAO pursues doubling efforts toward the commitments of the UN 2023 Water Conference and enhancing synergies among partners and programmes with particular attention to targeted approaches in certain regions and through thematic initiatives, such as the Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils (VACS) of the USA and Addressing Water Scarcity in Agriculture and the environment (AWSAMe) of FAO, the U.S. Action Plan on Global Water Security, PREPARE and the National Water Roadmaps towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

FAO appreciates Argentina’s points in highlighting FAO’s comparative advantage in promoting sustainable irrigation technologies, overall system sustainability, as well as FAO’s statistical work on fulfilling its custodian role in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 indicators, 6.4.1 and 6.4.2, in relation to water use efficiency and water stress. FAO, as a member of UN-Water, will ensure that joint efforts prevent duplication while scaling-up coordinated and synergistic activities.

The Secretariat fully concurs with Argentina’s recognition that there are no universal solutions for integrated water resources management. This principle guides FAO’s work in this area, understanding the diversity of contexts and needs in different regions and countries, as reflected in Conference document C2023/2, *The State of Food and Agriculture: Integrated Water Resources Management*.

FAO welcomes the contribution from the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in complementing FAO’s work in agriculture water management and any other potential cooperation.

FAO appreciates the support from the Russian Federation for the proposed Biennial Theme 2024-25: “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 well as for the support for FAO’s call for increased partnership and resource mobilization for implementation.

FAO appreciates the endorsement from Australia of integrated water resources management (IWRM) as the topic for the General Debate of the 43rd Session of the Conference and as the biennial theme for Governing Body sessions in 2024-2025.

FAO reaffirms the importance of Indigenous Peoples’ perspectives and knowledge in FAO’s programme implementation. FAO welcomes the sharing of Australia’s experience and expertise in this regard as well as in the implementation of integrated water resources management.

FAO thanks Switzerland for supporting increased engagement in IWRM approach. The water-energy-food-ecosystem Nexus (WEFE Nexus) approach is embedded in FAO’s programmes from irrigation water resources management to climate actions and reinforces Switzerland’s comment. FAO’s watershed/basin work supports Members in information and multi-stakeholder engagements (inclusive of gender and youth and Indigenous Peoples) towards sustainable management of the resource. As a

founding partner of the Action Platform for Source-to-Sea Management (S2S Platform), FAO also works on technical matters to promote IWRM in transboundary waters. FAO participates and works in tandem with UN-Water members in collective support on related issues through FAO's databases, portals and trainings that can address local, regional and global issues. FAO's AQUASTAT includes information reported on wastewater and reuse, for which FAO participates and contributes to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)-led World Water Quality Alliance (WWQA) in both advisory and technical roles.

With partners and through FAO's projects, various evidence-based work and experiences are shared and provide the basis for policy enhancements with Members. Soil moisture combined with crop varieties in addressing drought and soil salinity conditions are topics supported by the FAO Global Soil Partnership, agriculture management in arid and semi-arid regions, the Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG) and the AWSAMe Initiative. FAO thanks Switzerland for its contribution to WASAG and will continue to accelerate the multi-partner programme.

FAO appreciates Canada's support for water resources management and for the Biennial Theme. We will provide periodic reporting in this regard.

Finally, we thank the European Union (EU) for supporting the proposed Biennial Theme 2024-25 on water resources management. The EU's strong support for water management initiatives through the Global Gateway is most appreciated. FAO reaffirms its willingness for joint and coordinated actions through water in climate action and sustainable food systems among other integrated and WEFE Nexus solutions. FAO supports water tenure dialogues and approaches for effective water governance, and thanks the EU for noting FAO's commitment to the UN Water Action Agenda.