

## 43rd Session of the Conference

### Written Correspondence Procedure – inputs from Members - English version

#### Item 17 – Biennial Theme 2024-25

Member Name	Comments
Colombia (Saturday, 10 June 2023 — 12.18)	<p>Colombia, as a world water power, considers that the management of water resources is fundamental for the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, while recognizing that FAO has, among its mandates, the promotion of integrated water resource management to ensure food security for all people, improve the living conditions of rural populations and raise living standards.</p> <p>Likewise, the National Development Plan 2022-2026 “Colombia World Power of Life” recognizes water, biodiversity and people as the bases of territorial planning. This plan seeks a change in the planning of land use and development, where the protection of environmental determinants to guarantee the right to food are central objectives.</p> <p>In this regard, Colombia welcomes the proposed topic “Water resources management for the four betters: better production, better nutrition, better environment and better life” with a view to fulfilling the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals,” and hopes to contribute to the discussions and spaces that arise in this biennium.</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>Under the Written Correspondence Procedure established to address specific items on the Agenda of the 43rd Session of the FAO Conference, the Permanent Representation of the Argentine Republic would like to share the following comments.</p> <p>While expressing its thanks for drafting this report, Argentina makes the following comments in line with the conclusions of the 135th Session of the Programme Committee, endorsed by the 172nd Session of the FAO Council: Water resource management is a crucial issue for achieving improvements in production, nutrition, environment and quality of life, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). We appreciate the updated information provided and acknowledge the progress made by FAO on integrated water resources management for food and agriculture.</p> <p>It is important to highlight the responsibility for custodianship of SDG 6 indicators 6.4.1 and 6.4.2 entrusted to FAO within the UN System. It is therefore essential for FAO to maintain a consistent approach to this issue under its specific mandate and use that as a starting point for leveraging its comparative advantages to promote the efficient use of water and provide responses to water stress, for example, by promoting sustainable irrigation systems or technologies that encourage water conservation. FAO’s partnership with UN-Water is essential to work in these areas, within the One United Nations framework.</p> <p>FAO stated this in document PC 133/5 Sup. 1 – which reports on some of the work done by this biennium – in which FAO, when evaluating the Organization’s work in this area, reaffirmed its role as custodian of SDG 6 indicators 6.4.1 and 6.4.2 and, at the same time, in section 8, mentioned that “within the UN-Water umbrella, water quality issues”,</p>

	<p>ecosystem impact and participation, among other elements, “fall generally more within the mandate of other UN agencies”.</p> <p>Argentina therefore understands that it would be inappropriate to promote working schemes on issues related to water governance, transboundary water treatment and/or water pricing, among other elements, since, firstly, questions of sovereignty over countries’ natural resources are largely outside of FAO’s mandate and, secondly, it is not the agency’s role to evaluate (or influence) intra-national, bilateral or regional processes in this area.</p> <p>However, it is crucial to recognize that there are no universal solutions for integrated water resources management. This principle should guide FAO’s work in this area, understanding the diversity of contexts and needs in different regions based on countries’ specific requirements.</p> <p>FAO must maintain its technical leadership and expertise to strengthen cross-sectoral partnership, particularly in terms of water use efficiency, sustainable irrigation, application of technologies for resilient water use and overcoming water stress. We must consider both the qualitative and quantitative dimensions of this vital resource.</p> <p>We recall the importance of respecting regional balance when external stakeholders are involved in the discussion of substantive issues or the preparation of documents, which, we reiterate, should focus on the promotion of sustainable water use for agriculture and not on its governance. The inclusion of regional perspectives and experiences on the ground are essential for effective water resources management. Our region – Latin America and the Caribbean – has made notable contributions in this area, such as those developed by Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), which could shed light on FAO’s work.</p> <p>It is crucial that FAO’s actions on integrated water resources management consider the approaches adopted in developing countries. Their knowledge and experience are valuable for sustainable and equitable water management. Finally, we reiterate the need to discuss the “One Water, One Health” concept with Members in order to prioritize the work of the One Health approach as it addresses the issues referred to in the proposed programme.</p> <p>We look forward to FAO’s continuing cooperation with Members across the board in the follow-up to the 2023 UN-Water Conference. We also ask FAO to report on the results and follow-up actions taken in relation to this important event.</p>
<p>The Russian Federation (Monday, 12 June 2023 — 17.17)</p>	<p>The Russian Federation is not opposed to the adoption of the proposed theme for the Governing Bodies sessions for the 2024-2025 biennium: “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”.</p> <p>We recognize that FAO has a mandate to work on water resources: the corresponding goal (3) is set out in the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31.</p> <p>We support FAO’s call for increased partnerships and resource mobilization for implementing programme initiatives related to water.</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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>

	<p>different planned activities.</p> <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>