



General Assembly

Seventy-ninth session

84th plenary meeting

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Official Records

President: Mr. Yang (Cameroon)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Tōnē (Tonga), Vice-President, took the Chair. The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 7 (continued)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items: reports of the General Committee

The Acting President: I invite the attention of the Assembly to draft decision A/79/L.101, circulated under agenda item 18, entitled “Sustainable development”.

Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting on 13 September 2024, the Assembly decided to allocate agenda item 18 to the Second Committee. To enable the Assembly to take action expeditiously on the document, may I take it that the Assembly wishes to consider agenda item 18 directly in plenary meeting and proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided (decision 79/505 B).

Agenda item 18 (continued)

Sustainable development

Draft decision (A/79/L.101)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United Arab Emirates to introduce draft decision A/79/L.101.

Mr. Abushahab (United Arab Emirates): On behalf of Senegal and the United Arab Emirates as co-hosts of the 2026 United Nations Water Conference, I would like to express sincere appreciation to Member States for their constructive engagement throughout the process of identifying the six themes of the Conference’s interactive dialogues. Their active participation in the process underscores our shared commitment to accelerating the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6.

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The 2026 United Nations Water Conference will be a pivotal opportunity to galvanize collective action on the global water agenda and forge a new path towards a water-resilient and sustainable water future for all. We approach this process in listening mode. The proposed themes for the six interactive dialogues are the result of an extensive consultation process with Member States and stakeholders throughout the past year. They reflect our best effort to incorporate the views expressed by all Member States in a balanced way and are intended to guide the dialogues in an inclusive manner.

Today, draft decision A/79/L.101 will mark an important milestone on our journey to a meaningful and action-oriented United Nations Water Conference in 2026. We are counting on members' support for the adoption of this draft decision by consensus so that, together, we can accelerate global water action for the well-being of the planet and all its people.

The Acting President: We shall now proceed to consider draft decision A/79/L.101.

Before giving the floor for statements of position before the adoption, may I remind delegations that statements of position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Shrier (United States of America): The United States extends thanks to the United Arab Emirates and Senegal for their leadership in coordinating the themes of the United Nations Water Conference.

Few issues shape our safety, security and prosperity as much as the availability of fresh water. Yet, despite decades of international efforts, the global water sector has fallen short of achieving fundamental objectives in water and sanitation. By prioritizing the sound development and management of integrated water infrastructure, nations can reduce water risks and promote national and international security and prosperity. Regrettably, the proposed themes of the 2026 United Nations Water Conference do not focus on pragmatic, country-driven, common-sense solutions and contain several redlines for the United States, as follows.

Proposed theme one mentions the "human rights to water and sanitation". The United States maintains its long-standing position on this issue. We understand this theme's reference to human rights to water and sanitation to refer to the right derived from economic, social and cultural rights contained in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The United States is not a party to the Covenant, and the rights contained therein are not justiciable in United States courts.

Proposed theme three contains a reference to "climate". The United States prefers language that focuses on specific environmental threats, such as threats to clean air and clean water, wildfires, floods, drought and sea-level rise. In this case, "environment" is already referenced in the theme title and is sufficient.

Proposed theme four contains the term "inclusive", which is problematic framing, as it gives preferences to specific groups. The United States prefers fair involvement for everyone.

Proposed theme five contains references to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6. The SDGs advance a programme of soft global governance that is inconsistent with United States sovereignty and adverse to the rights and interests of Americans. As previously stated, the United States considers the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals a form of soft global governance.

The United States will not block consensus on adoption of this decision, but dissociates itself from themes one, three, four and five entirely, including but

not limited to references to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, climate change and inclusive governance. The United States encourages Member States to focus on concrete and pragmatic objectives and on the utility of a conference in 2026 that truly addresses needs related to water and sanitation.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker wishing to make a statement of position before the adoption.

The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/79/L.101, entitled “Themes of the interactive dialogues of the 2026 United Nations Water Conference to Accelerate the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/79/L.101?

Draft decision A/79/L.101 was adopted (decision 79/563).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor for statements of position after the adoption, may I remind delegations that statements of position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Sotelo (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the co-sponsors for their leadership. However, Argentina dissociates itself from all references to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the following terms.

With regard to the themes proposed pertaining to water treatment, it should be noted that Argentina supports the gradual development of international human rights law, inter alia, the importance of access to drinkable water and basic sanitation services to protect human health and the environment. In line with that position, Argentina voted in favour of the resolution entitled “The human right to water and sanitation” (resolution 64/292).

Nevertheless, our country maintains that the right to water and sanitation is a human right that should be guaranteed by States for people under its jurisdiction, and not in respect of other States. This is in line with resolution 1803 (XVII) of 14 December 1962, paragraph 1, which indicates that the right of peoples and nations to permanent sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources must be exercised in the interest of their national development and of the well-being of the people of the State concerned.

With regard to the water agenda in the context of the United Nations, Argentina dissociates itself from the use of concepts not previously agreed upon that are not in line with our national positions, such as water scarcity, global water crisis, water diplomacy and water governance.

Ms. İstemil Aydil (Türkiye): For Türkiye, as for all other developing countries, water is a matter of sustainable development, a theme that aligns with the objectives of the upcoming United Nations Water Conference. Since the negotiations surrounding the resolution on the modalities for the 2026 Conference (resolution 78/327), Türkiye has actively advocated for a re-evaluation of the themes for its six interactive dialogues, with the understanding that the 2023 Conference, which focused on the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028, diverge from the main theme pertinent to the 2026 Conference. In this regard, we commend the co-hosts of the conference, Senegal and the United Arab Emirates, for updating the themes for the interactive dialogues with a view to aligning them with the ultimate aim of accelerating the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6. However, we express our deep concern that while the other themes of the interactive dialogues have been substantially changed, the theme of the interactive

dialogue entitled “Water for cooperation” has only undergone minor adjustments, keeping the core theme largely unchanged. Furthermore, we have reviewed the note by the Secretary-General prepared in response to resolution 78/327.

In contrast to the assertions made in this note regarding the dialogue on water for cooperation, Türkiye firmly believes that water serves as a catalyst for cooperation rather than a source of conflict. With this perspective, we do not support the securitization and politicization of water issues within the United Nations, including during the 2026 United Nations Water Conference. Despite the limitations of the “water for cooperation” theme as proposed, we choose not to break silence, as we place our trust in our co-hosts to design this thematic team in a manner that yields objective, unbiased and balanced outcomes. We anticipate that this interactive dialogue will embrace a broad and innovative approach rather than a narrow and one-sided perspective, and Türkiye, as both an upstream and downstream country, stands ready to contribute to and actively participate in it.

Furthermore, the interactive dialogue should consider the insights presented by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Water in her initial six-month report, which outlines the progress, key findings and challenges faced by developing countries in achieving SDG 6. As highlighted in the Envoy’s report, there is an urgent need to address various issues confronting developing countries. Therefore, rather than establishing ambitious new goals that may be unrealistic, each interactive dialogue session should prioritize addressing the needs of developing countries, particularly in the fields of financing, technology, innovation and capacity-building. In this context, we welcome the interactive dialogue on investment for water, and we expect it to be given higher priority in the Conference agenda.

Türkiye remains committed to a United Nations Water Conference that serves to unite us all. We are prepared to support our co-hosts in their efforts towards this noble aim.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in statement of position after adoption.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 18.

Before adjourning this meeting, members are reminded that the preparatory meeting for the 2026 United Nations Water Conference to Accelerate the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all will be held immediately following the adjournment of this meeting.

The meeting rose at 10.15 a.m.