

Bulletin

HIGH-LEVEL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE UN WATER CONFERENCE DAKAR

Tuesday, January 27, 2026

PRESIDENT BASSIROU DIOMAYE FAYE

“Investing in water is investing in a global public good”



The high-level preparatory meeting for the 2026 UN Water Conference was opened by the President of the Republic of Senegal, Bassirou Diomaye Faye, with a strong plea for increased investments. The urgency is to reverse the trend to improve the fate of hundreds of thousands of people who do not have access to potable water and sanitation throughout the world.



Editorial

Dakar, a founding momentum

Political will is to decision what the foundation is to a building: it converts hopes into actions and actions into impact on the daily lives of populations. This political will is a marker of the first day of the High-Level Preparatory Meeting for the 2026 United Nations Conference. It translates an invitation to make action a lever of significant transformation.

Dakar, as such, represents a fundamental landmark in the achievement of SDG6, with a new impetus for concerted action to co-build a future through water in all its uses. The words aptly named the situation of water stress and the situation of the habitat without a sanitation system.

Like joined hands, the energy of the world is called to mobilize to avert «a morally unacceptable situation», in the strong words of His Excellency Mr. Bassirou Diomaye FAYE, President of the Republic of Senegal. This speech which sounds like a founding act in the formulation of responses to the climate challenge and its negative impact on the water cycle. This was confirmed by the speech of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs in charge of Energy and Sustainability of the United Arab Emirates, His Excellency Abdullah Balala. He spoke, in a plea both lucid and steadfast, about the preservation of «the dignity of the other» and the urgency to «build together a future».

The path is drawn. The Water Community is laying the groundwork for the renewal of partnerships for a world that is no longer satisfied with being sensitive to the issue of water. Let's walk, carried by this founding momentum expressing a true desire to change the world.

OPENING OF THE DAKAR HIGH-LEVEL PREPARATORY MEETING

The need for collective, equitable responses that are adapted to each person's capabilities



The High-level Preparatory Meeting for the 2026 UN Water Conference is a high point of advocacy. The profitability of investing in the construction of drinking water production facilities generates knock-on effects in several other areas.

«Investing in water is an investment in a global public good; it calls for collective responses, equitable and adapted to the capabilities of each one,» said the President of the Republic.

President Bassirou Diomaye Diakhar Faye, who presided over the opening ceremony and established a link between investments in water and conflict prevention.

«Investing in water is not only financing infrastructure, but also investing in climate resilience, in the prevention of tensions and conflicts, in global stability and prosperity», defended the Head of State who praised the quality of the partnership with the Emirati co-presidency based on trust, a common vision putting the issue of water at the heart of the international agenda for more access and peaceful management of water resources.



He demonstrated that water is at the confluence of several active life activities and that it remains a lever for resilience in this context of climate change.

«Your presence in Dakar testifies to the political importance that the international community attaches to water and sanitation; not only as sectoral issues, but also as essential foundations of human dignity, of the health of populations, of the stability of societies and the shared prosperity of nations,» expressed the President of the Republic at this preparatory meeting organized with the United Arab Emirates.

If the resource is essential for Man and nature and for maintaining the balance of the planet, it must be admitted that the water crisis is a global reality.

In his speech, the President of the Republic, quoting the United Nations, stated that 2.2 billion people still do not have access to safe drinking water; nearly 3.5 billion remain deprived of ade-

quate sanitation services; and nearly 4 billion people suffer a severe water shortage at least one month per year.

The situation of the cradle of humanity is much more concerning. In Africa, 40% of the population do not have access to drinking water and more than 70% lack basic sanitation services.

«This is a morally unacceptable situation and as long as it persists, our collective responsibility will remain engaged, because water crises fuel food crises, weaken economies, displace populations and exacerbate tensions», noted the President of the Republic.

The cost of inaction

To reverse this trend, massive investments are needed. All the more so since the cost of inaction is immense, to borrow the words of the head of state. «Faced with this precariousness of life, it is measured in lost human lives, in compromised development opportunities, in worsened social fractures and sometimes in threatened peace»,



MRS. RETNO L. P. MARSUDI, SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR WATER

“The success of the Dakar meeting will be measured by the actions we will take after our return”

Thousands of children die each year because of the deficit and the quality of water. To stop this drama, Mrs. Retno L.P. Marsudi, the Special Envoy of the Secretary General of the United Nations for Water declared: “At the exit from the Dakar meeting, we must take initiatives to advance the water agenda. As the team from Senegal won the Africa Cup of Nations, we will have to advance the water agenda as a team. The success of the Dakar meeting will be measured after our return to our different countries,”



**DR CHEIKH TIDIANE DIEYE, MINISTER OF HYDRAULICS
AND SANITATION OF SENEGAL**

«Diplomacy around water constitutes one of the strategic pillars of our foreign policy»

«Cooperation and diplomacy around water are strategic pillars of Senegal's foreign and regional policy, transforming a vital resource into a lever for peace and stability.» This is the conviction of the Minister of Hydraulics and Sanitation of Senegal, Dr. Cheikh Tidiane Dièye who yesterday held a press conference on the occasion of the preparatory meeting for the United Nations Water Conference scheduled from 2 to 4 December in Abu Dhabi.

‘We will show the role and place of water in the prosperity of nations,’ said the minister. He gave the example of the Organization for the Development of Senegal (OMVS) which has managed to build cooperation around the shared resource between its member countries.

‘Since the years 75, our founding fathers, created the Organization for the development of the Senegal River, which today is an example of global cooperation around the resource and make it a lever of peace and prosperity,’ rejoiced Cheikh Tidiane Dieye.

In summary, the minister highlights the mode of the Organization for the development of the Senegal River and the Organization for the development of the Gambia River. The basin organizations have built structures for the production of water for agriculture and for energy production.

«All this shows that this resource can be a source of prosperity for a nation, but also as an element of cooperation with countries in other parts of the world,» said the Minister for whom: “water is also a structuring element of the management of multilateralism and Senegal has always played this role as a champion at



the global level in the carrying and promotion of the resource by using water as a space for diplomacy.”

Regarding investments related to water, the Minister of Hydraulics and Sanitation mentioned that the advocacy led by Senegal, for other countries that do not always have the right resources, ‘it is to say that investments that must go into water cannot be similar to investments that go into other resources, because water is not a product like any other, emphasizing that, it is a specific strategic resource and the investments that are going to be calibrated.



MR. ABDULLAH BALALAA, DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN CHARGE OF ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

«We will have to work to advance the water agenda at the global level»



The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs in charge of Energy and Sustainability of the United Arab Emirates, His Excellency Abdullah Balalaa largely returned to the work that the former leaders of his country have done in order to democratize access to this resource for all the population of the United Arab Emirates. Today, it is their turn to preserve this heritage. "Our country has experience in the policy of access to drinking water. It is not only a source of life, it is a source of dignity. This meeting is an opportunity to advance the agenda of

”, argued Mr. Abdullah Balalaa. In addition, the Head of the Delegation of the United Arab Emirates, co-organizer of the United Nations Water Conference in 2026, magnified the work that both are doing towards this major meeting planned in their country. He took the opportunity to congratulate the President of the Republic of Senegal for everything that is being done in terms of democratizing access to water and sanitation services.



MR. SAROJ KUMAR JAH, GLOBAL DIRECTOR OF WATER, WORLD BANK
« We need to change the narrative about water »

The picture is still gloomy. Thousands of women, girls and children do not yet have access to drinking water in the world. Thus, Mr. Saroj Kumar Jah, President of the World Bank Group, on behalf of the international financial institutions, began his speech delivered at the opening of the High-Level Preparatory Meeting for the 2026 United Nations Water Conference. "Water is the foundation of life and prosperity. Water

security is a great responsibility. If we improve water governance, we will make progress. The narrative about water must change. It must be the engine of development. That is why it is a priority for the World Bank,» insisted the Representative of the President of the World Bank Group, on behalf of the international financial institutions. For the latter, it is necessary to continue mobilizing financial resources to cover more needs.





MS. ALUKI KOTIERK, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS
PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES (UNPFII)

«We must take into account the needs of indigenous peoples»

The Representative of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), a high-level advisory body to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Mrs. Aluki Kotierk made an urgent appeal for the concerns of indigenous peoples to be addressed. During her speech at the opening of the Preparatory Meeting for the 2026 United Nations Water Conference, she called on all States to face the challenges,

because if one abandons, thousands of people are in danger. “The water crisis we are facing is not just a technical and financial challenge. It’s a matter of human rights. We must protect the water sources of indigenous peoples, this is compatible with development. This is also a factor for stability. We need to engage more with indigenous peoples to address their concerns,» argued Ms. Aluki Kotierk.

RÉPUBLIQUE DU SÉNÉGAL
Un Peuple - Un But - Une Foi

ÉMIRATS ARABES UNIS



AGENDA

DAY 2 – 27 January 2026

Parallel meetings – Dialogue Space [3]

Roundtables launching discussions on the six themes (e) & (f)

ID (e): Water in multilateral processes

Coffee break and networking

ID (f): Investments for water

Lunch

Parallel meetings – Dialogue Space [4]

Interactive Session 2 (90 min)

- Report-back and reflections
- Creating a shared atmosphere for the 2026 UN Water Conference

High-level Session

On the road from Senegal to the United Arab Emirates

- Synthesis of outcomes
- Roadmap and conclusions

Press Conference

