



## High Level Policy Dialogue on



# “Water Transversality for Climate Resilience & Biodiversity Restoration”



# REPORT

3<sup>rd</sup> June 2026 | 16:00 - 18:00 Hrs (IST)

Virtual (Zoom)

## Executive Summary

The High-Level Policy Dialogue on “Water Transversality for Climate Resilience and Biodiversity Restoration”, convened by India Water Foundation on 3 June 2026, brought together leading experts from international organizations, academia, policy institutions, and civil society to examine the central role of water in addressing interconnected global challenges. The dialogue underscored that water is not merely a sectoral issue but a foundational element that links climate action, biodiversity conservation, food security, energy systems, public health, urban development, and sustainable economic growth. Participants emphasized that the accelerating impacts of climate change, ecosystem degradation, water scarcity, pollution, and biodiversity loss require integrated responses that place water at the center of policy design and implementation.

Speakers highlighted that achieving climate resilience and biodiversity restoration depends on strengthening policy coherence across sectors and governance levels. Traditional silo-based approaches were recognized as insufficient for addressing complex and interdependent challenges. The discussion called for mainstreaming water considerations into Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), biodiversity frameworks, infrastructure investments, and development strategies. Particular emphasis was placed on ecosystem-based approaches and nature-based solutions, including watershed restoration, wetland conservation, river rejuvenation, and sustainable land management practices, which provide multiple benefits for climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity protection, and water security. Participants also stressed that biodiversity should be viewed not only as an environmental objective but as critical natural infrastructure that sustains hydrological cycles and enhances resilience.

The dialogue further highlighted the importance of inclusive and participatory water governance that engages governments, local communities, women, Indigenous peoples, youth, academia, and the private sector. Gender-responsive leadership, community-based water management, and local knowledge systems were identified as essential components of sustainable solutions. Discussions also emphasized the growing challenges associated with rapid urbanization, advocating for water-sensitive urban planning, circular water economies, and integrated approaches to managing water, energy, food, and climate systems. Capacity development, water literacy, scientific innovation, data-driven decision-making, and strengthened institutional collaboration were recognized as prerequisites for effective implementation.

A recurring theme throughout the dialogue was the need for increased investment and innovative financing mechanisms to support integrated water and ecosystem solutions. Participants called for greater alignment of public and private finance with resilience-building measures and stressed that investments in water security generate broad social, economic, and environmental returns. Looking ahead to forthcoming global water and climate processes, including preparations for the 2028 United Nations Water Conference, the dialogue reaffirmed the importance of elevating water as a strategic priority within international policy frameworks. The event concluded with a strong consensus that water must serve as the unifying foundation for climate resilience, biodiversity restoration, and sustainable development, and that collective action across sectors and stakeholders is essential to secure a resilient and water-secure future for all.

## Introduction

Water transversality recognizes water as a cross-cutting and interconnected element that influences and is influenced by virtually every dimension of sustainable development, including climate action, biodiversity conservation, food security, energy production, public health, urban development, and economic growth. In an era marked by escalating climate risks, growing water insecurity, ecosystem degradation, and biodiversity loss, addressing these challenges through isolated sectoral approaches is no longer sufficient. Instead, there is a pressing need for integrated governance frameworks that acknowledge water's central role in shaping environmental, social, and economic outcomes. Against this backdrop, India Water Foundation convened the High-Level Policy Dialogue on “Water Transversality for Climate Resilience and Biodiversity Restoration” on 3 June 2026, bringing together distinguished experts and practitioners from international organizations, academia, policy institutions, and civil society. The dialogue explored how water transversality can serve as a guiding framework for strengthening policy coherence, advancing nature-based solutions, enhancing resilience, restoring ecosystems, and fostering collaborative action across sectors and stakeholders. Through a rich exchange of perspectives and experiences, participants highlighted the need to place water at the center of climate and biodiversity agendas to achieve sustainable, inclusive, and resilient development pathways.



## Context

The global community is facing an unprecedented convergence of challenges, including climate change, water scarcity, biodiversity loss, land degradation, food insecurity, rapid urbanization, and increasing disaster risks. These challenges are deeply interconnected and cannot be effectively addressed through fragmented sectoral approaches. Water serves as the critical nexus linking climate systems, ecosystems, economies, and societies, making it indispensable for achieving the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement, and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Despite its central importance, water considerations often remain insufficiently integrated into climate,

biodiversity, development, and investment planning processes. The concept of water transversality provides a framework for overcoming these gaps by recognizing water as a cross-cutting element that must be embedded across policies, institutions, and sectors. Against this backdrop, the High-Level Policy Dialogue on “Water Transversality for Climate Resilience and Biodiversity Restoration” was convened to foster dialogue, knowledge exchange, and collaborative action among key stakeholders working at the intersection of water, climate, biodiversity, and sustainable development.

## Objectives

The High-Level Policy Dialogue aimed to advance understanding of water transversality as a strategic approach for strengthening climate resilience and biodiversity restoration. Specifically, the dialogue sought to: (i) highlight the central role of water in achieving climate, biodiversity, and sustainable development goals; (ii) promote integrated and cross-sectoral governance approaches that enhance policy coherence across water, climate, energy, food, and ecosystem management; (iii) examine the potential of ecosystem-based approaches and nature-based solutions to address interconnected environmental challenges; (iv) facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and best practices among policymakers, experts, practitioners, and civil society organizations; (v) identify opportunities for inclusive and participatory water governance that strengthens the role of women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities; and (vi) generate recommendations for strengthening cooperation, financing, capacity development, and policy action to place water at the center of global efforts toward climate resilience, biodiversity restoration, and sustainable development.

## Key Themes and Speaker Highlights

In his opening remarks, **Dr. Arvind Kumar**, President, India Water Foundation, emphasized that the interconnected crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and water insecurity can no longer be addressed through fragmented governance structures and sectoral approaches. He argued that while nature functions as an integrated system, policy responses continue to be constrained by institutional silos, resulting in ineffective and disconnected interventions.



Introducing the concept of water transversality, he highlighted water as the central connecting element that links climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, food security, livelihoods, urban development, and sustainable economic growth. Drawing on examples from global and Indian initiatives, including ecosystem restoration, water-sensitive urban planning, river rejuvenation, and community-based conservation, he underscored the need to shift from fragmented management toward integrated governance and systems thinking. Dr. Kumar stressed that climate resilience cannot be achieved through infrastructure alone but requires ecosystem restoration, behavioural transformation, community participation, and cross-sectoral collaboration. He concluded by calling for a new governance paradigm that places water at the center of climate, biodiversity, and development agendas,

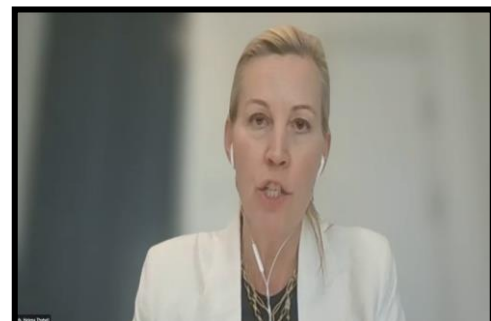
enabling societies to reconnect the systems that sustain both human well-being and planetary health.



In her intervention, **Ms. Astrid Schomaker**, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity, emphasized the critical importance of translating global biodiversity commitments into meaningful local action. Referring to the International Day for Biological Diversity and its theme, “Acting Locally for Global Impact,” she highlighted that the successful implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) the global roadmap adopted by 196 Parties to halt and reverse biodiversity

loss depends on collective action at all levels of society. She underscored that while governments have the primary responsibility for implementing the Framework, achieving its ambitious targets requires the active engagement of citizens, businesses, educational institutions, and civil society organizations. Ms. Schomaker stressed that local initiatives such as conserving ecosystems, protecting pollinators, enhancing soil biodiversity, promoting sustainable consumption, reducing pesticide use, and strengthening biodiversity education can collectively generate significant global impacts. She further called for broad societal participation in building momentum toward the 2026 UN Biodiversity Conference, emphasizing that every action, regardless of scale, contributes to advancing biodiversity conservation and restoring humanity’s relationship with nature.

In her intervention, **Ms. Helena Thybell**, Executive Director, Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), underscored the urgent need to move beyond viewing water as a standalone sector and instead govern it as an interconnected system that underpins climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, food security, public health, and sustainable development. Drawing on SIWI’s policy brief, “Governing Water as a System,” she highlighted that while global attention to water is increasing across major international processes, including climate, biodiversity, and development agendas, governance approaches have not evolved at the same pace. Ms. Thybell emphasized that water transversality must be embedded into governance structures through stronger integration of water considerations into Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and multilateral policy frameworks. She also drew attention to the often-overlooked importance of “green water”—the moisture stored in soils, ecosystems, and the atmosphere—which plays a critical role in regulating rainfall, sustaining biodiversity, supporting agriculture, and enhancing climate resilience. Stressing the importance of ecosystem-based approaches, she noted that restoring forests, wetlands, and watersheds is fundamentally an investment in the health of the hydrological cycle. Furthermore, she advocated for inclusive and equitable governance that empowers local communities as active partners and co-leaders in water management, recognizing their knowledge and experience as essential for effective implementation. Concluding her remarks, Ms. Thybell highlighted water as a strategic entry point for aligning climate, biodiversity, land, and development agendas, calling for stronger cooperation, policy coherence, and systems-



based governance to address the interconnected challenges facing societies and ecosystems worldwide.



In her intervention, **Prof. Dr. Nidhi Nagabhatla**, Senior Official and Program Lead – Nature, Climate and Health at the United Nations University (UNU-CRIS), emphasized the evolution of global water governance from a narrow focus on water management toward a broader and more strategic concept of water security. She highlighted the significant role of Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) and successive United Nations water initiatives in advancing integrated approaches that recognize water’s interconnections with climate resilience, ecosystem health, peace, economic development, and human well-being. Stressing the importance of policy coherence, she called for stronger synergies among global frameworks on climate change, biodiversity, land restoration, and sustainable development, noting that water provides a critical entry point for aligning these agendas. Dr. Nagabhatla further underscored the need to strengthen transboundary water governance, capacity development, and water education to equip future generations of water professionals with the knowledge and skills required to address increasingly complex challenges. Drawing from the work of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, she emphasized the importance of integrating freshwater, riparian, coastal, and marine ecosystems into biodiversity and restoration strategies, areas that have often received insufficient attention. She also highlighted the necessity of inclusive and participatory governance, particularly the integration of gender perspectives into water policies and decision-making processes. Reflecting on practical experiences from different regions, she noted that meaningful stakeholder engagement requires moving beyond consultation to ensuring that diverse voices, especially those of women and marginalized groups, are genuinely heard and reflected in policy implementation. Concluding her remarks, Dr. Nagabhatla stressed that effective water governance requires a science-policy-capacity interface that translates knowledge into action through collaborative, inclusive, and context-specific approaches capable of addressing the multidimensional nature of water-related challenges.

In her intervention, **Ms. Madhushree Chatterjee**, Secretary of UN-Water and Chief of the Natural Resources and Interlinkages Branch (NRIB), UN DESA, emphasized that meaningful climate action, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable development require systemic transformation with water serving as the central integrating element. Highlighting the importance of aligning global frameworks such as the Paris Agreement, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, she stressed that water should function as the “connective tissue” linking these agendas and fostering policy coherence across sectors. Ms. Chatterjee underscored the critical role of Indigenous Peoples, smallholder farmers, women, local fishing communities, and other grassroots stakeholders whose ecological knowledge and community-led water governance practices contribute directly to resilience, resource efficiency, and ecosystem



restoration. She advocated for a bottom-up approach that empowers local communities, strengthens decentralized water management, and ensures that locally owned solutions can be scaled to national and global levels. Addressing the financing challenge, she highlighted the need for countries to effectively access and utilize existing climate and environmental finance mechanisms, including the Green Climate Fund, Global Environment Facility, and Loss and Damage Fund, while emphasizing the role of the United Nations in supporting capacity development and implementation. She further stressed the importance of water literacy, education, and long-term policy frameworks that integrate low-carbon development, ecosystem protection, and community well-being. Reflecting on the role of the UN system, Ms. Chatterjee emphasized the need to reduce institutional fragmentation, strengthen coordination across water, climate, biodiversity, oceans, and development processes, and provide integrated support to Member States through governance, finance, data, and capacity-building mechanisms. Looking ahead to the 2026 United Nations Water Conference and beyond, she called for stronger partnerships, flagship initiatives, and implementation-oriented cooperation to translate global commitments into measurable action, reaffirming that water must remain at the center of efforts to achieve sustainable development, resilience, and ecological sustainability.



In his intervention, **Prof. Dr. Rabi Mohtar**, Governor of the World Water Council and Professor at the American University of Beirut, highlighted the critical importance of adopting systems-based approaches to address the interlinked challenges of water security, food production, energy sustainability, biodiversity conservation, and climate resilience. Emphasizing the often-overlooked significance of “green water” — the soil moisture that sustains rainfed agriculture and ecosystem functions — he noted that a substantial proportion of global food production depends on this invisible yet vital component of the hydrological cycle. He further stressed the central role of soil as the foundation of agricultural productivity, water quality, ecosystem health, and biodiversity, arguing that soil and water must be considered together within sustainability frameworks. Reflecting on more than a decade of work on the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus, Prof. Mohtar observed that while considerable progress has been made in developing analytical tools, models, and case studies, large-scale implementation remains limited. He identified several barriers to operationalizing nexus approaches, including the complexity of communicating systems-based concepts to decision-makers, the lack of common definitions and frameworks, insufficient demonstration of large-scale benefits, fragmented financing mechanisms, and policy structures organized around institutional silos. He argued that advancing nexus implementation requires greater policy coherence, cross-sectoral financing models, and governance systems capable of supporting integrated solutions that transcend traditional ministerial boundaries. Prof. Mohtar also emphasized the importance of transforming water education by embedding systems thinking into curricula and professional training, thereby building the next generation of leaders equipped to manage interconnected resource challenges. Concluding his remarks, he reaffirmed that achieving sustainable development, climate resilience, and resource security will depend on moving beyond sector-specific approaches toward integrated governance frameworks that recognize the inherent interdependencies between water, energy, food, ecosystems, and society.

In his intervention, **Mr. Nilesh Rajadhyaksha**, Country Programme Manager, UN-Habitat India, highlighted the critical interconnections between water, urbanization, and climate resilience, emphasizing that water must be placed at the center of future urban development strategies. Drawing on his experience as an urban planner, he noted that cities have historically evolved in close relationship with water systems, yet rapid urbanization and the growing demand for infrastructure and services have weakened this connection. He argued that contemporary urban planning must move beyond viewing water merely as a utility or service and instead recognize it as a foundational element shaping the design, resilience, and sustainability of human settlements. Mr. Rajadhyaksha stressed that cities increasingly face a compound water challenge characterized by water scarcity, flooding, water quality concerns, and growing inequalities, all of which have significant implications for public health, economic development, food security, and disaster resilience. He called for a transition toward water-responsive urban planning, where water considerations inform land-use decisions, building regulations, infrastructure investments, and climate adaptation strategies. Highlighting the importance of blue-green infrastructure, including rivers, wetlands, urban forests, parks, and other natural systems, he advocated for recognizing these assets as critical urban infrastructure deserving greater policy attention and investment. He further emphasized the need to align urban financing mechanisms with water security outcomes through performance-based indicators and to strengthen public engagement, water literacy, and behavioral change initiatives that reconnect communities with water stewardship. Concluding his remarks, Mr. Rajadhyaksha underscored that building resilient, inclusive, and sustainable cities will require integrating water considerations across all dimensions of urban governance and planning, making the water–urbanization–climate nexus a central pillar of future development pathways.



In her intervention, **Ms. Archana Chatterjee**, Programme Manager at the IUCN India Country Office, emphasized that biodiversity must be recognized as a fundamental pillar of climate resilience, sustainable development, and human well-being. Highlighting biodiversity as a critical element of transversality, she argued that it serves as a vital connector across sectors, linking water security, food systems, energy development, urbanization, and ecosystem health. Drawing attention to the accelerating global biodiversity crisis, she noted that biodiversity loss remains one of the most significant risks facing humanity, driven largely by unsustainable patterns of infrastructure development, agriculture, energy production, resource extraction, and habitat degradation. She stressed that freshwater, coastal, and marine ecosystems are experiencing particularly severe pressures, underscoring the need for urgent conservation and restoration measures. Ms. Chatterjee advocated for a nature-positive development paradigm that integrates biodiversity considerations into urban planning, infrastructure development, energy transitions, and resource management. Highlighting the role of nature-based solutions, she emphasized that forests, wetlands, floodplains, and other natural ecosystems should be treated as essential infrastructure that enhances climate resilience while delivering multiple ecological and socioeconomic benefits. She further underscored the importance of ensuring that renewable energy expansion, transportation networks, and other development projects are designed in ways that minimize impacts on

biodiversity and ecological connectivity. Drawing on examples from IUCN's global conservation initiatives, including landscape-level habitat conservation programs, she illustrated how biodiversity protection and socioeconomic development can be advanced simultaneously through integrated approaches. Concluding her remarks, Ms. Chatterjee highlighted the extensive scientific expertise, knowledge platforms, and policy tools available through IUCN and called for stronger collaboration among governments, businesses, researchers, and civil society to place biodiversity at the center of decision-making processes, thereby advancing a more resilient, inclusive, and nature-positive future.

### **Moderator's Closing Reflections**

**Ms. Shweta Tyagi**, Chief Functionary of India Water Foundation, synthesized the key messages emerging from the dialogue and emphasized that addressing the interconnected challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, and water insecurity requires a holistic and integrated approach. She noted that achieving climate resilience and biodiversity restoration will depend on innovative financing mechanisms, technological advancements, strengthened policy coherence, and enhanced collaboration among governments, international organizations, academia, civil society, communities, and the private sector. Highlighting the persistent financing gap for biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration, she stressed the urgent need to significantly scale up investments and mobilize financial resources to support transformative action. Ms. Tyagi underscored the importance of inclusive governance, gender-responsive decision-making, environmental education, water literacy, and capacity development in creating sustainable and equitable solutions. She further emphasized the need to promote regenerative agricultural practices, strengthen research and innovation, and recognize the diversity of cultural, ecological, and socioeconomic contexts in which solutions must be implemented. Reflecting on the central theme of the dialogue, she reaffirmed that water transversality offers a practical and strategic framework for moving beyond fragmented sectoral approaches toward integrated governance systems that connect climate action, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, and sustainable development. Concluding the session, she emphasized that water should be recognized not merely as a resource to be managed but as a unifying force that links environmental, social, and economic systems, capable of driving transformative action in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. She expressed her appreciation to all speakers, participants, and partner organizations for their valuable contributions and reaffirmed the importance of continued collaboration in advancing a water-secure, climate-resilient, and biodiversity-positive future.



## Key Takeaways

### **1. *Water Must Be Recognized as the Integrating Foundation of Climate, Biodiversity, and Development Agendas***

A central conclusion of the dialogue was that water should no longer be treated as a standalone sector but as the connective element that links climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, food security, public health, energy systems, urban development, and economic prosperity. Participants emphasized that many of today's global challenges are manifestations of disconnected governance, whereas water provides a practical entry point for reconnecting policies, institutions, and investments across sectors.

### **2. *The Primary Crisis Is Not Resource Scarcity Alone, but Fragmented Governance***

Speakers repeatedly highlighted that climate change, biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation, and water insecurity are deeply interconnected challenges that cannot be addressed through isolated institutional mandates. The dialogue underscored that the failure to integrate policies across ministries, sectors, and governance levels often undermines the effectiveness of climate, biodiversity, and development interventions. Building policy coherence emerged as a prerequisite for long-term resilience.

### **3. *Water Transversality Provides a Governance Framework for Systems Thinking***

The concept of water transversality emerged as a transformative governance approach that moves beyond sector-specific management toward integrated decision-making. Participants emphasized that water considerations should be embedded from the outset into Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), biodiversity strategies, urban development plans, infrastructure investments, and economic policies rather than being treated as an afterthought.

### **4. *Biodiversity Is Not Only an Environmental Asset but Essential Natural Infrastructure***

The dialogue reinforced the understanding that biodiversity underpins hydrological cycles, climate regulation, food production, and ecosystem resilience. Forests, wetlands, rivers, floodplains, coastal ecosystems, and watersheds were recognized as critical infrastructure that provide indispensable ecological services. Protecting and restoring biodiversity was therefore viewed not only as a conservation objective but also as a strategic investment in water security and climate adaptation.

### **5. *Ecosystem Restoration Is Simultaneously a Water, Climate, and Biodiversity Solution***

Participants highlighted that watershed restoration, wetland rehabilitation, river rejuvenation, landscape restoration, and nature-based solutions generate multiple benefits across sectors. Such interventions improve water availability, strengthen climate resilience, reduce disaster risks, enhance biodiversity, and support livelihoods.

Integrated ecosystem restoration was identified as one of the most cost-effective pathways for achieving multiple global commitments simultaneously.

## **6. *Green Water Requires Greater Recognition in Water Governance***

A particularly important insight emerging from the dialogue was the need to recognize and govern “green water” — the moisture stored in soils, vegetation, and the atmosphere that sustains ecosystems and rainfed agriculture. Participants noted that water governance has historically focused on visible “blue water” resources such as rivers, lakes, and aquifers, while the management of green water remains significantly underrepresented despite its crucial role in food security, biodiversity conservation, and climate regulation.

## **7. *Urban Futures Will Depend on Water-Responsive Planning***

Rapid urbanization is reshaping global water challenges. Participants stressed that future cities must move beyond viewing water as a utility service and instead incorporate water as a central element of urban design and governance. Water-sensitive urban planning, blue-green infrastructure, circular water economies, groundwater recharge, and ecosystem-based urban solutions were identified as critical components of resilient and climate-adaptive cities.

## **8. *Community Knowledge and Local Stewardship Are Strategic Assets***

The dialogue underscored that Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women, smallholder farmers, and traditional resource managers possess invaluable ecological knowledge and practical experience. Effective solutions require moving beyond consultation toward genuine participation and co-leadership. Local stewardship was recognized as essential for sustaining ecosystems, strengthening adaptation, and ensuring the long-term success of restoration and conservation efforts.

## **9. *Gender Equality Must Move from Policy Language to Policy Practice***

Participants observed that while gender considerations are increasingly referenced in policy frameworks, implementation remains limited. The discussion highlighted the importance of understanding context-specific barriers, ensuring women's participation in decision-making processes, and integrating gender-responsive approaches into water governance, resource management, and climate adaptation strategies.

## **10. *Water Security Requires Cooperation Beyond National Boundaries***

The dialogue emphasized that many of the world's major rivers, aquifers, and ecosystems transcend political borders. Strengthening transboundary water cooperation was identified as essential for regional stability, climate resilience, ecological sustainability, and shared prosperity. Participants stressed that water governance must increasingly account for regional and basin-wide realities rather than relying solely on national perspectives.

## **11. *Financing Mechanisms Must Reward Integrated Solutions***

A recurring theme was the need to shift from sector-specific financing toward investments that generate multiple social, environmental, and economic benefits. Participants highlighted the importance of aligning climate finance, biodiversity finance, water investments, and development finance to support integrated solutions such as ecosystem restoration, nature-based infrastructure, and resilient water systems. Greater efforts are also needed to strengthen countries' capacities to access and effectively utilize available funding mechanisms.

### ***12. Education and Capacity Development Are Essential for Long-Term Transformation***

The dialogue highlighted a growing need for education systems, professional training programs, and institutional capacity-building initiatives that reflect systems thinking. Future leaders, practitioners, and policymakers must be equipped to understand the interdependencies between water, climate, biodiversity, food systems, energy, and development in order to design effective and integrated solutions.

### ***13. The Next Decade Must Be Defined by Implementation Rather Than Commitments***

While global recognition of water's importance is increasing across climate, biodiversity, and development processes, participants stressed that implementation remains the greatest challenge. The period leading to the 2026 and 2028 United Nations Water Conferences was identified as a critical opportunity to translate commitments into measurable action through strengthened governance, financing, partnerships, and accountability mechanisms.

### ***14. Resilience Ultimately Depends on Reconnecting Human and Natural Systems***

The overarching message of the dialogue was that sustainable development cannot be achieved by managing climate, biodiversity, water, food, energy, and urban systems in isolation. Building resilience requires reconnecting the ecological, social, economic, and governance systems upon which human well-being depends. Water transversality offers a practical pathway for enabling this transformation and fostering a more integrated, resilient, and sustainable future.

## **Conclusion**

The High-Level Policy Dialogue concluded with a strong consensus that water must be recognized as the unifying foundation for climate resilience, biodiversity restoration, and sustainable development. Participants emphasized that addressing today's interconnected environmental and development challenges requires integrated governance, policy coherence, inclusive participation, ecosystem-based approaches, and sustained investment in water security. The dialogue reaffirmed that water transversality provides a practical pathway for bridging sectoral divides, strengthening resilience across natural and human systems, and advancing collective action toward a more sustainable, equitable, and water-secure future.