



**Fourth Asia-Pacific Water Summit:
Water for Sustainable Development**
Best Practices and the Next Generation
Kumamoto, Japan, 23-24 April 2022

Kumamoto Declaration

Water challenges amid the COVID-19 pandemic and its recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic is having serious socio-economic impacts on countries around the world and is hindering progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The pandemic has disrupted disaster risk reduction and water service delivery. On the other hand, lack of access to safe and affordable water and sanitation, along with recurrence of floods and droughts, has hindered prompt global responses to the pandemic. The extent of damage has varied by region and context, with island nations, inland areas, and vulnerable groups suffering particularly severe impacts.

We, the Leaders of the Participating Countries in the Fourth Asia-Pacific Water Summit (APWS), building on the Joint Statements of the previous Summits, reaffirm the criticality and importance of water as we deal with hazards marked by widespread damage due to the pandemic. We recognize that the water sector plays a vital role in recovering from the pandemic. At the same time, climate change will continue to generate and further aggravate the cascading multi-hazards of tropical cyclones, storm surges, flood and drought disasters, soil and water pollution, rising sea levels, and melting glaciers. But, by restoring a sound water cycle, we can reduce disaster risk, achieve multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and strengthen transboundary cooperation.

Transformation towards a quality-oriented society

We have reached a collective understanding that recovery from the pandemic requires transformation into quality-oriented societies that are resilient, sustainable, and inclusive. This can be achieved by strengthening action for water sustainability. This transformation should proceed through multi-stakeholder partnership with open, transparent, participatory, and collaborative processes.

Resilience involves efforts to reduce water-related disaster risk on a cross-sectoral, whole-of-river basin and aquifer basis. We will also continue improving water security and access to water and sanitation, which is a primary public health measure against infectious diseases.

Sustainability involves placing water at the center of the political agenda. We will promote climate change mitigation measures while utilizing low-emission energy sources in conjunction with adaptation measures and strategies for disaster risk reduction and infrastructure development. Also, we will promote green infrastructure that can provide mitigation and adaptation benefits for achieving carbon-neutral societies in harmony with nature and biodiversity conservation.

Inclusiveness involves maintaining the current trend of improvement towards achieving SDGs in the Asia-Pacific region. Without waiting until 2030, we will work towards achieving access to safe and affordable drinking water and sanitation facilities for all, including women, youth and elderly persons, ending open defecation, reducing the risk of disaster, and attaining other water-related SDGs. We will rectify inequalities in access to water and sanitation services and protection from disaster risk. Also, we encourage every party concerned in both public and private sectors to be involved and closely cooperate in activities to address water-related issues towards a quality-oriented society.

Water problems are inextricably linked to food security and energy security. We will consider the various aspects of water value, and deploy sustainable solutions by managing water resources more effectively starting from glaciers, adopting a source to sea approach, and better integrating water resource management with disaster risk reduction, environmental improvement, and greater water use efficiency.

For acceleration of efforts

To realize a quality-oriented society, we are determined to strengthen the development of quality infrastructure for the water sector, integrating both hard and soft components, including knowledge, information and data management. In order to break free from the conventional approach and accelerate efforts, we will:

1. **Improve governance.** We encourage water-related institutions and civil society organizations to collaborate across sectors and generations, while enhancing capabilities and performance in the water sector. For growth to proceed cooperatively in each river basin, we will share water-related lessons learnt in solving problems and sharing prosperity, subject to international agreements and national laws.
2. **Close the financial gap.** Recognizing the contribution to growth from investing in water, building on the Yangon Declaration adopted at the 3rd APWS in 2017,¹ we acknowledge the importance of mobilizing investment in each river basin not only by national governments but also by international and regional organizations, financial institutions, donor communities, subnational authorities, non-governmental organizations, private sector, and local communities.
3. **Appeal to the science and technology community.** We call upon the science and technology community to provide context-specific innovations for resolving water problems, respecting the natural environment, geographical features, and historical backgrounds of the local community. Additionally, we emphasize the importance of promoting education and capacity building for a new generation of water professionals to ensure, maintain, and improve a sound water cycle.

Outcomes of the 4th Asia-Pacific Water Summit

We acknowledge and support the Japanese Initiative, which was announced at the 4th APWS by the Government of Japan as one of the outputs to tackle water-related challenges. Together with the other participants at the 4th APWS, in coordination with the Bonn Water Dialogues, the World Water Forum, the Dushanbe Water Process, and other major preparatory processes, all discussions at this Summit in the context of this Declaration and the abovementioned perspectives will be communicated and shared at global water-related discussion processes, including the United Nations Conference for the Midterm Review of the Water Action Decade, to be held in March 2023, as well as the 2nd Dushanbe Water Action Decade Conference, the High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development, the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, the 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the 15th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, the G7 and the G20. We will appeal for this Declaration to be taken into consideration and built upon.

We collectively express our sincere appreciation to the City of Kumamoto and the Asia-Pacific Water Forum for hosting this Summit and for its successful conclusion.

Question from the Summit to participants

In all water-related sectors, the barriers, breakthroughs, opportunities, and ways forward for reform and improvement in the three areas of governance, finance, and science and technology need to be identified and thoroughly discussed. In particular, it is imperative to explore what role science and technology should play in the cross-sectoral decision-making of leaders. We invite leaders, experts, scientists, and all other participants gathered at the 4th APWS to discuss this question in view of the spirit of the above Declaration, formulate particularly substantive answers, and make this an outcome of the Summit.

¹ The Yangon Declaration committed to doubling investment in the Asia-Pacific region.