



African Regional Consultation for the United Nations Water Conference Academic Hub

People

Deadline: 29 Apr 2026

Type:	Conference
Location:	Harare, Zimbabwe
Date:	29 Apr 2026
Duration:	1 Days
Programme Area:	Other
Website:	https://unu.edu/inweh/news/african-regional-consultation-united-nations-water-c...
Price:	\$0.00
Event Focal Point Email:	dize.dogan@unitar.org
Partnership:	United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH), , UNESCO, , WaterNet

BACKGROUND

The African Regional Consultation for the United Nations Water Conference Academic Hub will take place in the context of growing global water challenges, increasing pressure on water resources, and the need for more inclusive and

evidence-based policy responses. The consultation will form part of the broader preparations for the 2026 United Nations Water Conference and will aim to ensure that African scientific knowledge, regional priorities, and lived experiences meaningfully inform global water governance discussions.

The UN Water Conference Academic Hub, co-led by UNU, UNESCO, and UNITAR in collaboration with UN DESA and other UN-Water partners, will serve as a platform to mobilise academic knowledge and expertise in support of the Conference. Within this framework, the consultation in Harare will act as a key regional engagement to strengthen African participation and contribution to the Hub.

EVENT OBJECTIVES

The consultation will aim to:

- Strengthen African engagement with the UN Water Conference Academic Hub and the 2026 Conference process;
- Elevate African scientific perspectives, policy priorities, and regional expertise in global water discussions;
- Facilitate dialogue between researchers, policymakers, basin organisations, civil society, and youth representatives;
- Identify key regional priorities and policy messages across the six thematic interactive dialogues of the Conference;
- Promote collaboration, knowledge sharing, and joint research opportunities under the Academic Hub;
- Ensure that African contributions are integrated into global deliberations in an inclusive and impactful manner.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

The consultation will be organised as a hybrid, multi-session event combining high-level opening remarks, keynote interventions, technical presentations, and interactive discussions. It will bring together diverse stakeholders, including representatives from UN agencies, regional organisations, academia, and civil society.

The programme will be structured around several core components:

- Opening remarks from institutional representatives highlighting the importance of African engagement and science-policy integration;
- A keynote address focusing on the role of African research in shaping global water policy;
- Scene-setting presentations introducing key global and regional water challenges, including water governance, gender equality, and the concept of “water bankruptcy”;
- Thematic sessions aligned with the six interactive dialogues of the 2026 UN Water Conference: Water for People, Water for Prosperity, Water for Planet, Water for Cooperation, Water in Multilateral Processes, and Investments for Water;
- Plenary discussions to consolidate key messages and policy priorities.

Across these sessions, key themes will include:

- Elevating African science and knowledge in global water governance;
- Strengthening the science-policy interface and ensuring evidence-based decision-making;
- Addressing inequalities in water access, governance, and opportunity, including gender dimensions;
- Promoting transboundary cooperation and hydro-diplomacy;
- Integrating water with climate, biodiversity, food, and energy agendas;
- Closing data, capacity, and financing gaps;
- Ensuring inclusive participation of women, youth, and marginalised communities;
- Addressing emerging challenges such as water insecurity linked to critical mineral extraction.

METHODOLOGY

The consultation will adopt a participatory and multi-stakeholder approach, combining expert-led inputs with interactive dialogue. The hybrid format will enable both in-person and virtual participation, broadening regional engagement.

The methodology will include:

- High-level opening interventions to frame the discussion;
- Expert presentations to provide evidence-based insights and policy context;
- Thematic discussions aligned with the Conference’s interactive dialogues;

- Open plenary sessions encouraging participant contributions and exchange of perspectives;
- Consolidation of key messages through moderated discussions to inform inputs to the Academic Hub and the 2026 Conference process.

This approach will prioritise inclusivity, knowledge exchange, and the co-production of policy-relevant insights grounded in regional realities.

TARGETED AUDIENCE

The consultation will bring together a diverse group of stakeholders, including:

- African researchers and academic institutions;
- Representatives of basin organisations and regional water networks;
- Policymakers and government officials;
- UN agencies and international organisations;
- Civil society organisations and practitioners;
- Youth representatives and regional youth networks.

This multi-stakeholder composition will ensure a broad representation of perspectives and will facilitate cross-sectoral dialogue on water governance challenges and solutions in the African context.