

STATEMENT TO FINAL PLENARY SESSION OF THE UNFCCC COP 25

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“People will rise like the waters.” This is the refrain of a song - sung here in Madrid over the last days. It is a song of social movements, brought to us by protesting youth, reminding us that we need to safeguard the future. We need this rise, the voices of all people – not just the powerful – to transform the systems that drive all our choices.

The call for action on mitigation is here, and it is loud. So is the call for action on adaptation and resilience. But do political leaders and negotiators hear the call?

We are the Global Water Partnership. We bring the voices of over 3000 organisations that care for water. And here, at the first “Blue COP”, we call on political leaders to be more ambitious.

We analyzed the commitments made by countries around the world, the plans charted and the financing mobilized. The solutions needed to safeguard vulnerable people, in particular women and children, are not in sight. Why? Because the plans largely ignore the fact that all solutions are interconnected through water, through the need to use, protect, maintain, and recover clean water resources and oceans. Unless we invest – at a completely new scale – in governing and managing our waters, we will lose the fight against the impacts of climate change.

We have three messages for you, the political leaders, negotiators, and everyone at home:

Firstly: The planners in ministries and agencies need leadership and help. Most countries find themselves stymied - by commitments across multiple sectors and development goals, and by institutions that struggle to collaborate and mobilize the right people. Targets on water are absent, disconnected, or out of sync. But there are exceptions, and they are invariably about leadership. Prime ministers have established “whole of government approaches”, parliaments have demanded water action to connect development and resilience agendas, and officials have built bridges between agencies. Through our work in the last 10 years in over 60 countries, we have been privileged to be of assistance to many such leaders.

Secondly: We call on all countries to identify and act on “water points of no return.” The history of the Aral Sea and the risks to Lake Chad were neither unknown nor unanticipated. We must make sure we act beyond ‘business as usual’ to ensure we do not pass such points of no return elsewhere. This is why here in Madrid, as part of the UNFCCC Nairobi Work Programme’s Resilience Frontiers, we initiated a new global effort on *Water Resilience Frontiers: Pathways for Transformational Action Towards 2030 and Beyond*. Together with our partners, we will identify ideas and concrete actions that can contribute to climate resilience through water – well beyond 2030.

Thirdly: Resilience and adaptation know no borders – and neither should your ambitions. Approaches that rely on governments acting individually are bound to fail. Over 80% of the

world's rivers cross national borders. There is no way to warn of floods, manage droughts, or save our oceans unless countries sharing river basins work together. Yet, our analysis identified almost no ambitions to invest in transboundary solutions to water challenges.

The next 12 months are crucial. Nearly all countries are revising their Nationally Determined Contributions. These Contributions – and the plans that turn them into action – need to be “**water-proof**.” This requires harnessing disruptive frontier technologies, considering emerging social trends, and, at every step of the way, understanding the interconnectedness of the actions we take – through water.

Our call to political leaders and negotiators is: Be ambitious! And do so knowing that water is everybody's life.