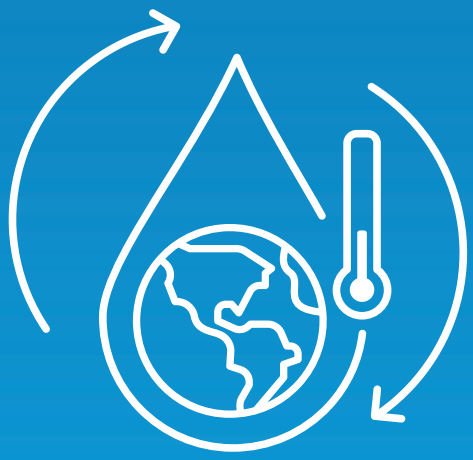
COP31 TÜRKİYE ANTALYA

Advocacy Messages from the French Water Partnership for COP31 on climate

Water: the Primary Indicator of Climate Change and a Key Driver of Resilience

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Water: the Primary Indicator of Climate Change and a Key Driver of Resilience

> **Investing in water, its sustainable management and ecosystem restoration, is a way to take action through adaptation, risk reduction, and mitigation simultaneously. Water is not only a sector vulnerable to climate change; it is both the first indicator of climate change and one of the main means of responding to it.**

Climate change is no longer a future threat: it is already disrupting societies, economies, and regions. Human-induced climate change is intensifying extreme weather events, as evidenced by the heatwaves in Europe, which came earlier and were more intense than anticipated. The return of El Niño could amplify this trend and lead to new heat records, while the UNEP warns that global warming will exceed 1.5 °C in the coming years.[1] At the same time, geopolitical tensions and soaring oil prices are revealing the vulnerability of our economies due to their dependence on fossil fuels. **Now more than ever, climate action is a necessity.**

In this context, water is the primary indicator of climate change. Water-related extreme events dominate the global disaster record and represent 70 percent of deaths associated with natural hazards (World Bank, 2022). The increasing frequency of floods, droughts, heatwaves, landslides, storms, wildfires, episodes of extreme cold, and waterborne diseases illustrates how disruptions to the water cycle directly affect regions, economies, and societies. **As such, water serves as the primary indicator of the systemic risks posed by climate change.**

But water is also an essential part of the solution: it is a key driver of adaptation and resilience, particularly when it comes to water supplies and sanitation.[2] Investing in the sustainable and integrated management of surface water, groundwater and soils helps strengthen climate change adaptation, reduce disaster risks, and enhance territorial resilience.

Water also remains underused as a mitigation lever: protected and restored aquatic and wetland ecosystems offer significant carbon storage potential, as do soils and agroecological practices, while emissions from the water and sanitation sectors can also be reduced.

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[1] UNEP, Limiting Overshoot: Navigating Exceedance of 1.5°C and Pathways towards Return, 2026.

[2] UNFCCC, Decision 12/CMA.7 – Global Adaptation Goal, Belém, 2025. Climate resilience to water-related risks is one of the objectives of Target 9(a) of the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), adopted in Decision 2/CMA.5 and further specified in Decision 12/CMA.7. In particular, this target aims to enhance climate resilience to water-related hazards to make water supply and sanitation systems resilient to climate change and ensure access to safe drinking water for all. Decision 12/CMA.7 establishes indicators related to the resilience of water and sanitation infrastructure, as well as access to climate-resilient drinking water and sanitation services.

As the next United Nations Water Conference approaches, COP31 must mark a significant shift: water can no longer be treated as just another sector, but must be recognized as a cornerstone of climate action.

Inclusive and Sustainable Water Resilience









The transition toward water resilience must be fair and inclusive. The human rights to water and sanitation must be at the heart of adaptation policies, with **priority given to the most vulnerable populations and regions**, particularly those affected by poverty, fragility, conflict, and violence. It must be based on **multi-stakeholder governance** and effective participation from relevant stakeholders, while drawing on the complementary nature of scientific, local, and indigenous knowledge. **Intergenerational justice must guide current decisions** to preserve future generations' ability to meet their water needs and adapt to climate change. **Finally, water resilience must fully incorporate gender issues.** Women and girls still bear a disproportionate share of the burden of water collection: in 7 out of 10 households without a water source on the premises, this responsibility falls primarily on them, impacting their access to education, employment opportunities, and safety.[3] As such, they are key players in water management and must be fully involved in its governance.

[3] WHO/UNICEF, "Women and girls bear brunt of water and sanitation crisis", July 6, 2023.

1ST PILLAR:

Action Agenda: Water at the Heart of Systemic Transformations

Embed Sustainable Water Management at the Heart of Resilient, Resource-Conscious Food Systems : Expand the Water-Food-Climate Nexus to Include Soils and Agroecology

Water availability, sustainable management, and efficient water use are essential to food security. COP31 must expand the water-food-climate nexus to include soils and agroecological approaches and give it a central role in efforts to transform farming and food systems, promoting agriculture that can protect and restore the water cycle. Nature-based solutions, agroecological practices, and changes in production and consumption patterns are practical ways to reconcile climate resilience, water security, and food security.

Food security is among the priorities of the Turkish presidency's Action Agenda, as 318 million people face acute food insecurity due to climate-related shocks (World Food Programme, 2026). COP31 must reiterate that food security fundamentally depends on water security: without water, there can be no living soils, no resilient agriculture, and no sustainable food systems. Agricultural, climate, and water policies must be designed in an integrated manner so that they collectively address SDGs 2 (food security), 6 (water), 13 (climate action), and 15 (life on land).

The FWP calls for efforts to expand the "water-food-climate" nexus to include issues related to soil, agroecology, and biodiversity.

Integrated water and soil management can serve as a potential tool for protecting and restoring the water cycle, provided that appropriate practices are implemented. Agroecological approaches—including soil conservation agriculture, agroforestry, sustainable soil management, and certain water-efficient irrigation practices—are concrete examples of this. These can be supplemented by nature-based solutions tailored to local contexts. Soil cover and conservation and improved water infiltration reduce runoff, water loss through evaporation, and the need for irrigation water, while also enhancing groundwater recharge and soil moisture retention, in turn alleviating pressure on water resources. By reducing erosion, they also slow sedimentation in dam reservoirs. Furthermore, restoring degraded land, increasing water infiltration, and reducing runoff combine to lower the risk of flooding in certain contexts**. As such, these practices help restore soils' ecological functions, particularly their ability to capture and store carbon.**

Transforming food systems also means rethinking our production and consumption patterns. In countries where pressure on resources exceeds ecological thresholds, moderating consumption, reducing waste, and changing dietary patterns are essential strategies for reducing the carbon and water footprints of food

systems**. COP31 must promote an integrated approach that balances food security, water security, resource conservation, and respect for ecological balance.**

We call for efforts to:

- **BROADEN** the water-food-climate nexus by placing soils and agroecological approaches at the heart of the transformation of agricultural and food systems;
- **STRENGTHEN** integration of the water-soil-agroecology-food-climate nexus into climate, water, and agricultural policies, as well as into NDCs and NAPs, to build food systems that are more resilient, more resource-efficient and deliver greater ecosystem benefits;
- **ACCELERATE** implementation of agroecological approaches that simultaneously contribute to food security, climate adaptation, and the conservation of water resources, and, under appropriate conditions, to increased carbon sequestration;
- **DIRECT** funding toward solutions that generate co-benefits for water, soil, agriculture, biodiversity, and the climate, particularly for the benefit of the most vulnerable regions and populations.



Systematically Integrate Water Security into Electrification and Energy Transition Strategies

> **The energy transition cannot be sustainable if it does not fully incorporate water security. Accelerating global electrification—a COP31 priority, which aims to significantly increase the share of electricity in final energy consumption by 2035—must go hand in hand with systematic consideration of the water dependencies of the solutions being implemented. COP31 must make the water-energy nexus a cornerstone of decarbonization strategies to align climate goals with water resilience.**

Electrifying energy use is one of the key priorities of the energy transition championed by the Australian and Turkish presidencies of COP31, with the goal of increasing the share of electricity in global final energy consumption from more than 20% today to 35% by 2035. This trajectory is essential for accelerating the decarbonization of economies, but its impact on the climate will depend on technological choices and the rollout of an electricity mix based on low-carbon sources.

However, this transformation can only be sustainable if energy systems' dependence on water resources is fully taken into account. Several technologies expected to play a key role in the transition—hydropower, nuclear power, renewable hydrogen, etc.—rely on an adequate supply of water. **Against a backdrop of increasingly severe droughts, growing tensions between different water uses, and worsening climate impacts, water security is becoming essential to the success of the energy transition.**

The FWP has long advocated for the need to incorporate the interdependencies between water and energy into climate policies. COP31 represents a crucial opportunity to make the water-energy nexus a cornerstone of decarbonization strategies, in order to align climate goals with sustainable water resource management and regional resilience.

We call for efforts to:

- **INTEGRATE** water resource availability and resilience considerations into national electrification and energy transition strategies, as well as into NDCs;
- **ASSESS** low-carbon technologies in terms of their impacts on water resources, their resilience to water-related risks, and their impacts on aquatic ecosystems;
- **COORDINATE** planning of water and energy policies to ensure that the energy transition does not create new water-related vulnerabilities and to strengthen regional resilience in the face of climate change.



Make Water an Operational Source of Synergies Between the Rio Conventions

> **The climate, biodiversity, and desertification crises are deeply interconnected and require integrated responses. Because it links these three issues, water serves as a cross-cutting lever for strengthening synergies between the Rio Conventions and breaking down silos between environmental policies. In line with the FWP's long-standing messages on the need to move beyond sectoral silos, COP31 must make water a source of cooperation between these agendas.**

We call for efforts to:

- **RECOGNIZE** water as a cross-cutting issue linking the goals of the three Rio Conventions and as a key driver of integrated environmental action;
- **STRENGTHEN** cooperation between the scientific, technical, and policy bodies of the three Conventions to help produce shared knowledge, guidance, and frameworks for action on water-related issues;
- **DEVELOP** governance, planning, and financing mechanisms that promote integrated approaches to the water cycle that transcend sectoral boundaries;
- **PROMOTE** solutions that provide simultaneous benefits for the climate, water, soil, and biodiversity—including the restoration of aquatic and wetland ecosystems, the protection and sustainable management of forests when these measures help forests adapt to climate change and contribute to the proper functioning of river basins[4], and, more broadly, nature-based solutions;
- **DEVELOP** and share open-source tools for assessing the interactions between policies and projects and identifying their co-benefits, trade-offs, and the risk of shifting impacts from one environmental objective to another. Tools such as Water4allSDGs, developed by the FWP to analyze the interactions between

[4] UN DESA, Global Forest Goals Report 2026, United Nations Forum on Forests, 2026. The report highlights the many ways in which forests contribute to climate stability, biodiversity, water security, food systems, and livelihoods, as well as the need to strengthen their resilience and adaptive capacity in the face of climate change.

water-related actions and the SDG targets, could inspire similar approaches applied to the issues addressed by the Rio Conventions.

Fully Include Urban Water Resilience in the COP31 "Resilient Cities" Agenda

> **A city cannot be resilient to climate change without being resilient to water-related risks. The COP31 "Resilient Cities" Agenda must fully address water security, the resilience of water and sanitation services, drought and flood management, and adaptation of the urban water cycle.**

Cities are home to large populations, economic activities, infrastructure, and water needs. They are simultaneously exposed to droughts, water shortages, floods, runoff, heatwaves, and declining resource quality. Climate change and soil sealing exacerbate these vulnerabilities.

As such, urban resilience must be designed on the water cycle scale: securing water resources, promoting more efficient water use, reducing leaks, reusing water where appropriate, integrating stormwater management, soil unsealing, restoring aquatic environments and wetlands, using nature-based solutions, preventing flooding, and ensuring the continuity of essential services during crises.

Water also serves as a means for adapting to urban heatwaves when the solutions implemented help preserve water resources and ecosystems. Urban planning, water policies, and adaptation strategies must therefore be developed in tandem.

We call for efforts to:

- **INCLUDE** water-related risk assessments as a standard practice in urban planning and in investments related to housing, infrastructure, and essential services;
- **STRENGTHEN** climate resilience of drinking water and sanitation services, ensuring they continue to operate during droughts, flooding, and other extreme events;
- **DEVELOP** water-sensitive cities based on factors such as resource efficiency, the depaving and renaturalization of urban surfaces, integrated stormwater management, and green and blue infrastructure;
- **ENGAGE** citizens and local stakeholders in the design and implementation of water resilience policies by improving access to education, information and awareness-raising measures regarding water-related risks and adaptation solutions.

Prevent Maladaptation to Ensure Sustainable Water Resilience

> **Adaptation to climate change must not exacerbate the vulnerabilities it seeks to reduce. The FWP warns of the risks of maladaptation in the water sector, where short-term responses, solutions focused on increasing supply without considering the potential for measures to reduce demand, or inadequately assessed actions can shift risks, worsen inequalities, or compromise future adaptive capacity. COP31 must promote adaptation strategies that are resource-efficient, sustainable, and based on a systemic assessment of their impacts.**

An adaptation measure may address a local or immediate problem while exacerbating risks on another scale or over time. In the water sector, these risks can result, in particular, from an overly short-sighted approach, from solutions that rely exclusively on increasing supply, or from technological solutions that have not been adequately evaluated—all at the expense of efforts to reduce losses, manage demand, and promote water conservation. **Effective adaptation must therefore reduce vulnerabilities in a sustainable manner without compromising the adaptive capacities of future generations.**

The emergence or development of measures aimed at artificially altering weather conditions also raises new challenges. Artificial weather modification—particularly cloud seeding intended to influence precipitation—as well as any action that could affect the water cycle across national borders, must be given special attention. **Given the scientific uncertainties and the potential transboundary effects on the water cycle, the FWP calls for such measures not to be developed without a strict, coordinated framework based on risk assessment, transparency, and cooperation.**

We call for efforts to:

- **PREVENT** maladaptation by assessing the short- and long-term effects of adaptation policies and projects on water resources, ecosystems, regions and populations, to avoid risk transfers and preserve the adaptive capacity of future generations.

2ND PILLAR:
Water in the Official Negotiations at COP31

Operationalize the Indicators for the Global Goal on Adaptation as Soon as Possible: Balancing Scientific Ambition and Pragmatism

> **Measuring adaptation is essential to accelerating climate action. COP31 must make the operationalization of the GGA a priority by setting out a robust, pragmatic framework that all States can implement. The FWP calls for scientifically sound, simple, and operational water indicators that will enable countries to measure progress and effectively guide their adaptation policies.**

Operationalizing indicators for the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) will be a major issue at COP31. Following the adoption in Belém of the 59 GGA indicators—9 of which are dedicated to water—the lack of consensus in Bonn has postponed their implementation until COP31, within the framework of the Belém-Addis Vision and the Baku Adaptation Roadmap.

The FWP believes it is essential to reach a compromise to enable the GGA to become operational without delay. Given the accelerating impacts of climate change, the indicators adopted must quickly be underpinned by common methodologies, clear governance and an operational framework.

The FWP calls for the creation of a primarily technical task force responsible for ensuring the scientific soundness, consistency, and comparability of the indicators. This operationalization must balance scientific ambition with pragmatism: in a non-binding process, the indicators must be robust enough to ensure credible adaptation monitoring, while remaining tailored to States' varying capacities. Their effective uptake requires enhanced means of implementation: funding, capacity building, and technology transfer.

Finally, this operationalization must better incorporate the sustainability limits of water resources, in particular environmental flows, sustainable groundwater recharge, and sustainable withdrawal levels, by strengthening their connection to indicators related to ecosystems and nature-based solutions. An adaptation cannot be considered successful if it degrades the natural resources on which it depends.

We call for efforts to:

- **ESTABLISH** a primarily technical task force responsible for developing the methodologies and procedures for operationalizing the GGA indicators to ensure a robust, consistent, and scientifically sound monitoring framework at COP31;
- **BALANCE** scientific rigor and pragmatism by developing a monitoring framework tailored to States' varying capacities and supported by enhanced means of implementation (funding, capacity building, and technology transfer);

- **REFINE** water-related indicators by better incorporating the sustainability limits of water resources and their relationship to ecosystem-related indicators to promote truly sustainable adaptation;
- **ADAPT** assessment and monitoring methods to climate change by incorporating updated climate scenarios, uncertainties, and sufficient safety margins, and by regularly reassessing adaptation strategies in light of new knowledge and observed trends.



Direct Adaptation Funding Toward Water Security

> **Water security must become an explicit priority in international adaptation funding. Faced with increasingly severe droughts, floods, and pressure on resources, the expected increase in adaptation funding must translate into greater mobilization of resources for projects that ensure the long-term availability and quality of water, the resilience of water and sanitation services, the protection of aquatic ecosystems, and the reduction of water-related risks.**

In light of the new target to triple adaptation finance by 2035[5], the FWP calls for efforts to make water security a clearly identified priority for climate finance. This should include support for investments in integrated water resources management, the resilience of drinking water and sanitation services, drought and flood prevention, hydrological information and early warning systems, the restoration of aquatic ecosystems, and nature-based solutions.

Special attention must be given to the most vulnerable countries, regions, and populations, as well as to projects that currently face difficulties in accessing international funding. In 2026, the humanitarian WASH sector received only 38% of the necessary funding, leaving a significant portion of water, sanitation, and hygiene needs unfunded.[6] Strengthening project preparation capacity, providing direct access to funds, and using grants and concessional financing are essential for translating the priorities outlined in NAPs and NDCs into concrete action.

We call for efforts to:

- **PRIORITIZE**—within the increase in international funding for adaptation—investments that directly contribute to the water security and resilience of populations and regions;
- **FACILITATE** access to financing for the most vulnerable countries and regions, in particular through funding for project preparation, direct access to climate funds, and increased mobilization of grants and concessional financing;

[5] UNFCCC, Global Mutirão: Uniting humanity in a global mobilization against climate change, draft decision -/CMA.7, November 22, 2025.
[6] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Global Humanitarian Overview 2026 – Monitoring humanitarian action: an interactive dashboard, March 11, 2026.

- **EVALUATE** funded projects not only in terms of their immediate climate benefits, but also in terms of their long-term contribution to water security and all of the Sustainable Development Goals;
- **ENSURE** that funding allocated to water security contributes to the realization of the human right to water and sanitation, prioritizes the most vulnerable populations, incorporates gender considerations, and is based on the effective participation of relevant stakeholders.

Sustain the Baku Dialogue on Water for Climate Action and Consolidate a Major Political Achievement

> **The Baku Dialogue on Water for Climate Action represents a major political breakthrough: as the first COP-to-COP dialogue dedicated to integrating water into the climate process, it offers a historic opportunity to make water a cornerstone of international climate action. COP31 must now transform this momentum into a lasting institutional framework capable of firmly embedding water in the implementation of the Paris Agreement.**

The work of the Baku Dialogue, which began at COP29 and continued in Bonn, demonstrates growing momentum, with growing support from the Parties and increased engagement from UN agencies. **This momentum must now be consolidated to prevent it from waning and to ensure the process continues to move forward**. COP31 represents a key step toward effectively institutionalizing the Dialogue by providing it with a clear and stable mandate.

We call for efforts to:

- **INSTITUTIONALIZE** the Baku Dialogue on Water for Climate Action by quickly establishing a clear, stable, and operational mandate and governance structure to ensure its continuity beyond successive COPs;
- **ENSURE** sustainable financial and technical support by mobilizing structured voluntary contributions and enhanced support from the relevant UN agencies (UNEP, UNECE, and WMO) to ensure the Dialogue is implemented effectively;
- **FULLY ENGAGE** civil society and young people in the governance of the Baku Dialogue to incorporate their perspectives and intergenerational issues into its work and recommendations;
- **ANCHOR** the Dialogue politically by ensuring that it directly contributes to water's integration into NDCs, NAPs, and national adaptation strategies.

Preserve Transboundary Cooperation as a Cornerstone of Climate Adaptation and Integrated Water Resource Management

> **Water knows no borders: faced with the growing impacts of climate change, transboundary cooperation is essential for water security and adaptation. COP31 must ensure that issues related to shared river basins remain a priority in international discussions and recognize collaborative water governance as a cornerstone of collective resilience.**

Transboundary cooperation is an essential tool in adapting to climate change, ensuring water security, and preventing water-related tensions. More than 60% of the world's freshwater flows are transboundary, and more than three billion people live in shared river basins (UN, 2024).[7]

In this regard, discussions taking place as part of the Baku Dialogue on Water for Climate Action call for particular vigilance. The incoming Turkish presidency of COP31 has stated that transboundary waters do not fall within the Dialogue's mandate. However, disregarding this aspect would mean ignoring a major challenge for adaptation: without coordination among riparian States, national strategies may be undermined by decisions made upstream, while management of droughts, floods, and water infrastructure remains fragmented.

COP31 must ensure that transboundary issues remain a priority in international discussions on water and climate.

We call for efforts to:

- **REAFFIRM** transboundary cooperation as an essential cornerstone of climate adaptation and integrated water resource management;
- **STRENGTHEN** governance mechanisms for shared river basins, including basin agreements, basin organizations, and systems for exchanging hydrological and climate data;
- **ENSURE** that issues related to transboundary waters are fully taken into account in UNFCCC discussions, particularly within the framework of the Baku Dialogue, the Global Goal for Adaptation, and future processes, to ensure coherent adaptation at the basin level that is consistent with the principles of IWRM.

[7] UN Water, Progress on Transboundary Water Cooperation – Mid-term status of SDG Indicator 6.5.2, with a special focus on Climate Change, 2024.

Institutionalize the Dialogue on Mountains and Climate Change and Strengthen the Integration of Water Security into Climate Policies

Recognition of mountains under the UNFCCC presents a major opportunity to better integrate water-related issues into climate action. Described by UNESCO as the planet's "water towers", mountain regions are essential to water security and regional resilience. COP31 must recognize not only their vulnerability but also their role as regions that offer solutions, and ensure that these issues are permanently incorporated into climate policies.

Mountain regions account for 55 to 60 percent of global freshwater flows (UNESCO/UN-Water, 2025), while two billion people depend directly on glaciers for their water and energy supplies (UNESCO/WWDR, 2025).

However, these regions are warming faster than the global average, jeopardizing water availability, ecosystems, food security, and the resilience of downstream regions. **Protecting them is therefore essential to strengthening water security, climate change adaptation, and ecosystem resilience**.

We call for efforts to:

- **INSTITUTIONALIZE** an annual UNFCCC Dialogue on mountains and climate change to maintain sustainable political momentum and raise the profile of water-related issues;
- **INCORPORATE** mountain regions' challenges, vulnerabilities, and solutions into NDCs, NAPs, BTRs, work on the GGA, and climate finance mechanisms;
- **ENHANCE** scientific knowledge, funding, and the participation of local communities, indigenous peoples, and young people to support adaptation and the sustainable management of water resources in mountain regions.

The French Water Partnership

The French Water Partnership (FWP) is a one-of-a-kind platform for French public, private and civil society stakeholders seeking to contribute to the French mobilization on international water issues.

For nearly 20 years, the FWP has pursued collective advocacy to make water a priority in international policies and action. Its strength lies in a simple conviction: a united, structured and representative voice carries more weight in international negotiations than a series of isolated initiatives.

Its diversity makes it a unique space for dialogue and co-creation, bringing together stakeholders from multiple sectors and backgrounds and strengthening the legitimacy and reach of its advocacy.

CONTACT :

Inès Tixier
Policy Officer - Water & Climate
ines.tixier@partenariat-francais-eau.fr

> Follow us on LinkedIn:
Partenariat français pour l'Eau

More info on our website:
partenariat-français-eau.fr/en

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