

## Futures Dialogues

### Culture of Peace (Part II) Shared Waters, Shared Futures: Building a Culture of Peace in Africa through Water Cooperation and Education

**Date and time:** Wednesday 22 July 2026 (14:00–16:00 Paris time)

**Languages:** English and French

**Format:** Zoom meeting – Please click [here](#) to register

The 4<sup>th</sup> Edition of the [Biennale of Luanda – Pan-African Forum for the Culture of Peace](#) will be held in Luanda, Angola 22 to 23 October 2026, under the theme “Strengthening Water Governance in Africa as a Tool for Conflict Prevention, Mediation and Resolution”. The road to the Biennale comprises a series of collaborative initiatives with UNESCO’s networks and partners including two special online ‘Futures Dialogues’. The first considers ‘[African knowledge and governance systems for a culture of peace](#)’ (Wednesday 8 July 2026) and the second focusses on ‘[Shared Waters, Shared Futures: Building a Culture of Peace in Africa through Water Cooperation and Education](#)’ (Wednesday 22 July 2026).

These Dialogues are also situated within the broader continental momentum generated by the African Union’s 2026 Theme of the Year “Assuring Sustainable Water Availability and Safe Sanitation Systems to Achieve the Goals of Agenda 2063”. It places water and sanitation at the centre of Africa’s development, resilience, cooperation and peace agenda, and it is translated into the [AU’s Water Vision 2063 and Policy](#)<sup>1</sup>, particularly its action framework on *Diplomacy, Peace and Security*.

UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP) brings a unique intergovernmental and scientific mandate to this discussion through its work on water cooperation, transboundary water governance, groundwater systems, hydrological knowledge, education and capacity development, water culture<sup>2</sup> and science-policy interfaces.

[Futures Dialogues](#) are convened in collaboration with UNESCO’s Division of Water Sciences, and its Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP) which will translate scientific expertise into policy relevant messages for conflict prevention, mediation and cooperative water governance in Africa by mobilizing the UNESCO Water Family, including its 103 water-related UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks, 29 water-related Category 2 Centres, 170 IHP National Committees and Focal Points, 15 IHP Flagship Initiatives, as well as various water partners and networks. Additionally, the Dialogue will build on the 8th July session, providing space to explore the application of African governance and knowledge systems in respect to water cooperation over transboundary waters for the promotion of a culture of peace.

Participants will deepen their ability to navigate key debates in water cooperation and transboundary water governance by identifying emerging research frontiers, policy priorities, and opportunities for

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<sup>1</sup> [https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/46011-doc-EN-Africa\\_Water\\_Vision\\_2063\\_and\\_Policy.pdf](https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/46011-doc-EN-Africa_Water_Vision_2063_and_Policy.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Defined as the cultural and historical understandings that shape how societies perceive and value water. See Wolf, A. T. (2007). “Shared waters: Conflict and cooperation.” *Water International*, 32(2), 114–121.

international cooperation. Through forward-looking dialogue, they will contribute to reimagining governance systems, and foster interdisciplinary and intersectoral exchange grounded in diverse knowledge systems, as well as building capacities for the future.

Water remains a foundation of Africa's economic development, social well-being, and environmental sustainability, yet the continent faces mounting pressures from climate change and rapid population growth to accelerating urbanization and pollution that increasingly threaten water security and resilience. Addressing these complex and interconnected challenges demands strengthened research cooperation and sustained capacity development, enabling African institutions and partners to generate innovative solutions, evidence-informed policies, and build the systems needed to maintain water resources for current and future generations.

**The objectives of this Futures Dialogue are:**

1. To harness the potential of water cooperation and education as vehicles for preventing, mediating and resolving conflicts to build resilience and a culture of peace.
2. To mobilize the UNESCO Water Family network and partners, foster collaborative research, capacity development, and policy innovation that support water cooperation and education, and integrate water governance into broader peace efforts, ensuring that shared water resources become instruments of cooperation.
3. To strengthen Africa's intellectual contributions to a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence.

**The expected outcomes are:**

- a. Increased exchange of knowledge and understanding on water cooperation and education for prevention, mediation and conflict resolution, contributing to long-term resilience and peace.
- b. Potential partners and networks mobilized for initiatives to support follow-up work on water cooperation, science diplomacy and peace in Africa.
- c. Strengthened water governance as a foundation by promoting cooperation, dialogue, and equitable access to water resources.
- d. A set of inputs and recommendations to strengthen coherence between the Biennale of Luanda on a Culture of Peace in Africa, the AU 2026 Theme of the Year, and UNESCO-IHP's work for Priority Africa. The recommendations may also be brought forward to the UN 2026 Water Conference (Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, December 2026) and the 11th World Water Forum (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, March 2027).

\*\*\* Register [here](#) \*\*\*

## Provisional Agenda

### Shared Waters, Shared Futures: Building a Culture of Peace in Africa through Water Cooperation and Education

Wednesday 22 July 2026, 14:00 to 16:00 (Paris time)

14:00-14:15	<p><b>Welcome</b> <b>Rahmah Elfithri</b>, Chief of Section, Groundwater and Water Cooperation (a.i.), Division of Water Sciences, UNESCO</p> <p><b>Opening remarks</b> <b>Abou Amani</b>, Director, Division of Water Sciences &amp; Secretary of Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP), UNESCO</p> <p><b>Setting the stage</b> <b>Nelson Gomonda</b>, Officer in Charge and Director of Programmes, African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW)</p>
14:15-14:50	<p><b>Panel discussion</b></p> <p><b>Segment 1: How water cooperation and governance can be used to strengthen and build a culture of peace in Africa?</b></p> <p><b>Moderator: Christian Berretta</b>, UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa, Nairobi, Kenya</p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Moshood N. Tijani</b>, Professor of Hydrogeology and Environmental Geology, Department of Geology, University of Ibadan and Chairholder of UNESCO Chair on Groundwater Assessment, Climate Change and Environmental-Sociohydrological Systems, Nigeria</li><li>• <b>Euphrasie Hortense Yao Kouassi</b>, Special Advisor on Gender to the Prime Minister and Head of Government Holder of the UNESCO Chair in Water, Women and Decision-making, Cote d'Ivoire</li><li>• <b>Sherif Mohamady Elsayed Ghonim Salem Salama</b>, President of National Water Research Centre and Chairholder of UNESCO Chair on Transboundary Water Management and Governance, Egypt</li><li>• <b>Ashok Swain</b>, Professor and Head of Department of the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University and Chairholder of UNESCO Chair on International Water Cooperation, Sweden</li></ul>

14:50-15:00	<p><b>Open discussion</b></p> <p><b>Moderator: Christian Berretta</b></p>
15:00-15:35	<p><b>Panel discussion</b></p> <p><b>Segment 2: How water education and capacity development enables African institutions and partners in building a culture of peace in Africa?</b></p> <p><b>Moderator: Rahmah Elfithri</b></p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Biennu Armand Éric Foto</b>, Professor and Research Director, Université de Bangui and Chairholder of UNESCO Chair in Water Management, Central African Republic</li> <li>• <b>Koko Zébéto Houedakor</b>, Researcher at University of Lomé and Chairholder of UNESCO Chair in Women, Science and Reasoned Water Management in West Africa, Togo</li> <li>• <b>Makarius C.S. Lalika</b>, Lecturer of Environmental Sciences, Sokoine University of Agriculture, and Chairholder of UNESCO Chair on Ecohydrology and Transboundary Water Management, United Republic of Tanzania</li> <li>• <b>Pascual Fernández Martínez</b>, Professor at Universidad Rey Juan Carlos (URJC), Madrid and Co-Chairholder of UNESCO Chair on Water and Peace, Spain</li> </ul>
15:35-15:45	<p><b>Open discussion</b></p> <p><b>Moderator: Rahmah Elfithri</b></p>
15:45-15:50	<p><b>Concluding reflections</b></p> <p><b>Ruth Katui Nguma</b>, Associate Programme Specialist, Hydrological Systems, Climate Change and Adaptation Section, Division of Water Sciences, UNESCO</p>
15:50-16:00	<p><b>Closing remarks and next steps on the road to the Biennale of Luanda</b></p> <p><b>Mohamed Elfarnawany</b>, Director of Priority Africa Coordination, UNESCO</p> <p><b>Gilbert Dadzie</b>, Priority Africa Coordination, UNESCO</p> <p><b>Keith Holmes</b>, Research Coordinator/UNITWIN, Future of Learning and Innovation, UNESCO</p>

\*\*\* Register [here](#) \*\*\*