UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE COP 31 | ANTALYA, TÜRKIYE | 9-20 NOVEMBER 2026

SOLUTION AND DELIVERY EVENT

FROM POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO CLIMATE ACTION: IMPLEMENTING THE HIGH-LEVEL LEADERS COMPACT ON WATER SECURITY AND RESILIENCE (ID 48)

Date: Wednesday, 11 November 2026 | **Time:** 12:30-13:30 | **Room:** Special Event Room 4 (Theatre) Perge.
Organized by: Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) | **Proposed partners:** Government of Spain, UNICEF, Government of the Netherlands, WaterAid and RIVA | **Potential collaborators:** Club de Madrid, UN Water Expert Group on Water and Climate Change, AGWA, IWMI and selected NAZCA initiatives (TBC)
Version: 22 October 2026

Background and Objective

This 60-minute Solution and Delivery Event under Global Climate Action Agenda Axis 4 / Activation Group 14 will examine how high-level political commitments become practical, accountable action on water security, sanitation and climate resilience. It will bring together political leaders, governments, delivery partners and cooperative climate initiatives to showcase country implementation experiences and identify opportunities to accelerate delivery.

Launched at SWA's 2025 Sector Ministers' Meeting in Madrid and now endorsed by 30 countries, the Madrid High-Level Leaders Compact on Water Security and Resilience builds on SWA's Heads of State Initiative (HoSI), which serves as a country-led delivery mechanism. The Compact advances leadership, policy integration, sustainable financing, resilient services and mutual accountability. The Compact is formally registered as a Cooperative Climate Initiative on the UNFCCC NAZCA platform, strengthening its connection with the UNFCCC Driven Global Climate Action Agenda. It also contributes to the implementation of the UN-Water System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation through Priority Collaborative Action 3 (PCA3), focused on mainstreaming water and sanitation across the Rio Conventions. Together, these frameworks provide opportunities to translate high-level political commitments into measurable national action, strengthen cross-sectoral cooperation and accelerate implementation. Country perspectives, potentially from Brazil, Uganda, Malawi, Ethiopia or Ghana, will illustrate emerging implementation pathways, alongside links to partnerships and financing, including the related Activation Group 14 Plans to Accelerate Solutions (PAS) on partnerships and delivery. The event also addresses the COP31 Presidency's Zero Waste priority by connecting wastewater and faecal sludge management with pollution prevention, circularity, resource recovery, emissions reduction and resilience. It supports GCAA Axis 4 objectives on multilevel governance, resilient infrastructure and water management, while exploring collaboration with other NAZCA initiatives, including those focused on Zero Waste.

Expected Outcomes

- Greater visibility and political engagement for implementation of the Madrid Compact and HoSI, including country-led policy, finance and accountability pathways.

- Concrete opportunities identified for cooperation among governments, SWA partners, related Activation Group 14 partnerships and other NAZCA initiatives and Plans to Accelerate Solutions.
- Stronger integration of sanitation, wastewater and faecal sludge into Zero Waste and circular-economy discussions, with continued monitoring through national systems, SWA's Mutual Accountability Mechanism and NAZCA reporting.

Proposed event structure

- **Segment 1.** Political leadership and commitments. 15 min
- **Segment 2.** From commitments to implementation. 20 min
- **Segment 3.** Closing: Partnerships, next steps and closing. 10 min

Total event duration. 60 minutes (we are potentially skyping segment 3 to allow for a 50 min session with 5 min transition at the beginning and the end.

Draft run of show

Speaker / Role	Proposed focus of intervention	Duration
12.35 to 12.49. SEGMENT 1 FRAMING: Political Leadership and the Madrid Legacy		
Ms. Ellie McBurney, Water lead, Climate Champions Team, Overall Moderator. Opening and framing	• Briefly introduce Axis IV and Activation Group 14, emphasizing water management and sanitation as foundations for climate resilience. • Position the session within the COP31 Action Agenda as an opportunity to showcase how political commitments are being translated into implementation, building on the Madrid High-Level Leaders Compact.	2 min
1. H.E. Carlos Alvarado Former President of Costa Rica, Club de Madrid (TBC)	• Reflect on why leadership at the highest political level is essential to elevate water and sanitation beyond sectoral priorities, recognizing their contribution to climate resilience, sustainable development and social equity. • Highlight the importance of sustained political commitment, coordination across government and accountability for translating ambition into tangible results.	4 min
2. Government of Spain High-level representative (Name TBC)	• Recall the political legacy of the 2025 SWA Sector Ministers' Meeting in Madrid, including the adoption of the High-Level Leaders Compact on Water Security and Resilience. • Highlight the importance of taking the Madrid commitments forward through national policy integration, institutional coordination and investment, connecting the Madrid legacy to implementation under the COP31 Action Agenda.	3 min
3. Government of the Netherlands High-level	• Highlight the Netherlands' longstanding support for SWA's Heads of State Initiatives as a mechanism for mobilizing sustained political leadership and country-owned action on water and sanitation.	3 min

representative (TBC)	• Explain how the Heads of State Initiatives can help translate the Madrid Compact into national commitments, stronger institutions, coordinated partnerships and measurable progress towards climate resilience.	
12.50 to 13.15. SEGMENT 2 PANEL: From political commitments to country implementation		
Ellie hands over to Panel Moderator Mr. José Gesti, SWA Senior Adviser, for Introduction and framing	• José introduces the panel as a showcase of concrete implementation pathways emerging from the Madrid Compact and complementary initiatives under Activation Group 14. • Emphasize how government leadership, multi-stakeholder partnerships, community action and private-sector engagement contribute to climate-resilient water and sanitation. • José Introduces panelists	3 min
1. Government of Uganda Ministry of Water and Environment (Name to be confirmed)	How is Uganda translating its commitment into action through its Water and Sanitation National Adaptation Plan, and what are the key priorities and challenges for implementation? • Present Uganda's experience in translating its commitment under SWA's Mutual Accountability Mechanism into the development of a Water and Sanitation National Adaptation Plan, highlighting the role of national ownership and cross-sector coordination. • Explain how the completed plan is moving into implementation, including priorities, institutional arrangements, financing needs and lessons for other countries.	3 min
2. Brazil: Just Water Partnership Government of Brazil (ANA), with IWMI, WaterAid (Name to be confirmed)	How is the Just Water Partnership helping Brazil integrate water, sanitation and climate action, and what opportunities does it offer for mobilizing investment and scaling equitable solutions? • Present Brazil's engagement with the Just Water Partnership approach as a country-led mechanism for integrating water resources management, WASH, climate action and financing, with equity and social justice at its center. • Discuss progress towards operationalizing this approach, including opportunities for coordinated investment, stakeholder participation and scaling up climate-resilient water and sanitation solutions.	3 min
3. Mr. Dires Desyibelew, Deputy Secretary General of the Ethiopia Red Cross Society. Water at the Heart of Climate Action initiative	How is the initiative Water at the Heart of Climate Action helping countries strengthen resilience to water-related climate risks, and what lessons are emerging from collaboration with governments and local communities? • Showcase how the initiative supports countries in reducing water-related climate risks through early warning systems, anticipatory action and locally led adaptation. • Highlight practical experiences from participating countries and how collaboration between governments, humanitarian actors and communities strengthens resilience, including access to essential services during climate shocks.	3 min

4. Mr. Martin Shouler, Director at Arup. Private-sector representative AG14	What can the private sector contribute to scaling climate-resilient water and sanitation solutions, and what partnerships or enabling conditions are needed to accelerate investment and implementation? • Share practical examples of how private-sector expertise, investment and innovation can help deliver climate-resilient water and sanitation services, including operational resilience and efficiency. • Identify what enabling conditions and partnerships are needed to scale solutions while ensuring affordability, equity and long-term sustainability.	3 min
5 Reitumetse Molotsoane (Champions Team, Zero Waste initiative Lead)	Question: How could the Zero Waste initiative incorporate wastewater alongside solid waste, particularly through integrated approaches to methane reduction, circularity and resource recovery? Linkages to Istanbul Platform • Connecting wastewater solutions to the COP31 Zero Waste initiative	3 min
Jose Gesti moderates Interactive discussion and closing. Jose hands over to Ellie	• José Invites panelists to identify one key barrier to scaling implementation and one concrete opportunity for collaboration under Activation Group 14. • Draw together lessons on national ownership, financing, partnerships and measurable progress. • POTENTIAL MENTI with poll / question to the audience	5 min
13.15 to 13.25 SEGMENT 3 CLOSING: Partnerships and next steps		
Ellie hands over to UNICEF and UN Water for remarks	• Building on the political commitments, country experiences and solutions presented throughout the session, highlight that scaling implementation requires strong partnerships, innovative financing and sustained political leadership. • Invite UNICEF to reflect on partnerships and financing for implementation, followed by UN-Water to look ahead to the 2026 UN Water Conference and opportunities to strengthen water and sanitation within international climate action.	1min
1. Ms. Silvia Gaya UNICEF Chief, Private Sector Climate Partnerships	Question: Building on UNICEF's role in the Madrid Sector Ministers' Meeting and its support for the Madrid Compact, what partnerships and financing approaches will be essential to translate these political commitments into implementation at scale, particularly through collaboration with governments, development banks and the private sector? From commitments to investment: The Madrid Compact provides political direction, but implementation requires country-owned programmes, partnerships with governments, development banks and the private sector, and catalytic financing that can mobilize investment at scale.	4 min

2. Mr. Anil Mishra. Co-convener of the UN Water Expert Group on Water and Climate Change. Chief of the Hydrological Systems, Climate Change and Adaptation (HCA) Section at UNESCO's Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP) Secretariat	Question: As we approach the 2026 UN Water Conference, how can the Madrid Compact and UN-Water's ongoing collaborative work contribute to stronger integration of water and sanitation into international climate action, and what role should championing countries play in driving this agenda forward? From sectoral action to systemic integration: The Madrid Compact and the UN-Water System-wide Strategy provide a foundation for implementation. The 2026 UN Water Conference offers an opportunity to strengthen this work, including through a potential flagship initiative to mainstream water and sanitation across the Rio Conventions, with the UNFCCC as a priority entry point. However, technical cooperation must be matched by sustained political leadership from championing countries.	3 min
Ellie closes	The Madrid Compact demonstrates what political leadership can achieve. Our challenge now is to turn that leadership into investment, implementation and lasting change. As we move towards the UN Water Conference, we need countries willing not only to deliver on their commitments, but also to champion water and sanitation as essential priorities across the international climate agenda.	1 min