

## Debate on the Water Declaration

**17 April 2024**  
**15:00-16:30**

*This document is intended to facilitate the discussion during the Executive Bureau meeting in San José, which will bring together the FLACMA membership. Our objective is to gather the views, expectations and proposals of the elected officials in attendance regarding the draft "Declaration on Water" presented to the UCLG membership. This discussion is crucial to better align our approach with the diverse political and geographic specificities of our members on this complex issue.*

### **BACKGROUND - Road to the World Water Forum**

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The year 2023 marked a turning point in our collective efforts to address the critical challenges associated with water. The 2023 UN Water Conference resulted in a historic mobilization of all stakeholders and laid the groundwork for a strong political commitment to address the full range of water-related challenges during the upcoming 10th World Water Forum.

Following the signing of the strategic partnership between UCG and the World Water Council, UCLG, as facilitator of the political process of the local and regional governments of the World Water Forum, which will take place from **May 18 to 25** in Bali, Indonesia, will play a key role in the defence of the territories in safeguarding water as a common good, as a right and as a universal public service.

### **UCLG, co-facilitator of the political process of local and regional governments at the World Water Forum**

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Given the deep collaboration between UCLG and the World Water Council, especially in the run-up to the World Water Forum, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed to organize specific preparatory processes for local governments. This includes:

- The organization of a Day dedicated to Local and Regional Governments.
- The preparation of a joint policy statement with the World Water Council and the Government of Indonesia.
- The establishment of regional consultations to inform the discussions at the World Water Forum.

### **A political declaration to situate the position of local and regional governments with respect to water governance**

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The Local and Regional Government Policy Process aims to showcase solutions and challenges related to water protection and universal public service. This process aligns with key UN initiatives and conferences, such as the UN Water Action Agenda, the UN Oceans Conference, the acceleration of SDG6, the Dushanbe Decade of Action for Water

process and the One Water Summit in New York. These global events underscore the urgency of addressing the water crisis amidst the escalating impacts of climate change.

UCLG has prepared a political declaration to guide discussions on global water issues, which has received contributions from local and regional government parts of the membership. This statement will serve as a strategic guidance document, laying the groundwork for a joint statement to be adopted by the World Water Council, UCLG and the Government of Indonesia.

## **Summary of the policy statement**

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The proposed Declaration on Water emphasizes critical commitments and issues:

- **Rethink the value of water as a common good:** Reaffirm water as a global common good and human right, promoting inclusive governance and community participation in decision-making processes.
- **Universal access:** Advocate for safe drinking water and sanitation by enacting legislative frameworks and mobilizing stakeholders for a fair distribution of resources.
- **Gender Inclusion:** Encourage the participation of women in decision-making processes, ensuring that different voices shape water policies.
- **Conflict mitigation:** Highlight the role of water in conflict, advocate for international solidarity and accountability for water-related crimes.
- **Cooperation and diplomacy:** Promoting dialogue and basin organizations for integrated water management, with emphasis on city diplomacy and regional cooperation.
- **Renewed governance:** Strengthen multilevel governance of aquatic ecosystems, involving all levels of government in policy development.
- **Ecosystem protection:** Adoption of sustainable management plans, protection of wetlands and promotion of recycling to conserve water resources.
- **Financial support:** Mobilization of resources for inclusive water infrastructure, prioritizing investments in marginalized communities and youth.

## **Guiding questions for discussion**

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During the meeting, we will organize a round table discussion based on the following guidelines:

1. **Comments on the Declaration:** What do you think of the draft Declaration on Water?
2. **Key messages for the World Water Forum:** What key messages should local and regional governments highlight at the 10th World Water Forum?
3. **Local context and challenges:** Share your thoughts on the water and sanitation challenges facing your local or regional government.
4. **Expectations for the World Water Forum:** What are your main expectations for the Forum and global water initiatives, considering the context of your region or city?

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17-19 April, San José,  
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