

Global Parliamentary Water Network

Global Parliamentary Water Network
69th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference
Cape Town, South Africa

Side Event: Water is (Good) Politics: Parliamentary Leadership for Water Security

Programme

Wednesday, September 16, 2026, 16H15 – 17H30
Location: Room Nerina and Protea, CTICC 2

Session overview

Cape Town is the ideal setting for this conversation. The city that nearly reached “[Day Zero](#)” in 2018 stands as a reminder that water crises are, at root, governance challenges. They involve questions of law, budgets and accountability that sit squarely with legislatures. This session convenes legislators and partners to examine how political leadership can accelerate progress on water security; Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH); and climate resilience.

Objectives

The session will:

- Frame water security, climate resilience and WASH as core matters of parliamentary governance and accountability, not sector-specific technicalities
- Showcase the newly established WASH and Climate Resilience Caucus in Pakistan's Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
- Equip delegates with a concrete method for launching and strengthening a WASH caucus in their own parliament

Programme at a glance:

Welcome, and why water belongs on the parliamentary agenda

Hon. Silas Aogon, Member
of Parliament, Uganda

Water is (Good) Politics: The parliamentary case - legislation, budgets and oversight as the levers of water security

John Oldfield, GPWN

Spotlight: The Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's newly established WASH and Climate Caucus

Hon. Babar Saleem Swati,
Speaker of the Provincial
Assembly of Khyber
Pakhtunkhwa

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Water, climate security & resilience: How to Get (and Stay) Ahead of Day Zero

South Africa Speaker TBC

Launching & strengthening a Legislative Water Caucus: Practical anatomy of a caucus

John Oldfield + Q and A

Closing & next steps: Commitments, follow-up and the road beyond Cape Town

Hon. Silas Aogon

Session detail: Launching & strengthening a Legislative Water Caucus

The heart of the session is a practical, transferable model for building a parliamentary water caucus that endures. Three themes anchor the discussion:

1. The role of civil society and parliamentary staff: Advocates, researchers and service providers give a caucus its evidence base and its early momentum. They supply data, constituency stories, and technical briefings, while caucus members retain ownership of the legislative agenda.
2. Technical and ministry leadership: Water Ministers and line ministries bring the executive and technical weight a caucus needs. The aim is a working partnership in which parliamentarians scrutinise and support delivery, and ministries find a reliable legislative champion for water leadership and investment.
3. Caucuses that support - not rival - formal Water Committees: A caucus is not a competitor to a legislature's Water Committee; it is a cross-party voting bloc that advances the Committee's legislative and budget priorities. Committee chairpersons should see the caucus as an ally for the outcomes they already seek. Caucuses bring votes, visibility, and broader ownership to water, rather than a parallel structure.

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