

APWF 31st Governing Council Meeting
18th January 2024
noon-15:00 Japan/ROK time,
11 am-14:00 Beijing/Singapore/Manila time

Minutes

APWF 31st Governing Council Meeting was organized online on 18th January 2024. There were mainly 5 meeting agendas, and the main two were to seek APWF members' approval to appoint Ms. Changhua Wu as a Chair of APWF Governing Council and conduct the inaugural ceremony for her and the progress sharing and discussion for the Asia-Pacific Regional Process of the 10th World Water Forum.

Ms. Changhua Wu, the APWF Governing Council chair, moderated this meeting. 39 members in total joined the meeting.

Before the discussion agenda of the meeting, Mr. Tsutomu Nagata, Director of the Environment Department, Kumamoto City, where co-hosted the 4th Asia-Pacific Water Summit, appreciated APWF members' collaboration in successfully holding the 4th Asia Pacific Water Summit (4th APWS) in April 2022. Since then, Kumamoto City has led efforts to address water challenges on both domestic and international fronts. The 4th APWS, highlighted by the Kumamoto Declaration, focused on governance, finance, science, and technology. Based on these outcomes, the city aims to create a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive society. In May, at the 10th World Water Forum, Kumamoto City plans to showcase its achievements from the 4th APWS and promote initiatives in groundwater conservation. The city is eager to collaborate with all stakeholders in preparation for the 10th World Water Forum in Bali and looks forward to meeting everyone there.

Agenda 1: Appointment of Ms. Changhua Wu as the APWF Governing Council Chair

Dr. Kotaro Takemura, Secretary-General, Japan Water Forum, APWF Secretariat, firstly appreciated the APWF members' Support of APWF's activities. After the sadness over the loss of Mr. Mark Pascoe in August 2022, we sought a new Chair of the APWF Governing Council. He made a proposal to appoint Ms. Changhua Wu for the role. Ms. Changhua Wu has effectively promoted APWF activities as Vice-Chair of the APWF Governing Council since 2013. She has provided clear guidance and helped us enhance water security in our region. Her contributions to the success of the 3rd and 4th Asia-

Pacific Water Summits, as well as her involvement in key conferences and forums, are highlighted. Ms. Changhua Wu's dedication, leadership, innovative ideas, and effective communication skills, even during urgent times, are acknowledged as valuable assets to APWF. He expressed confidence in Ms. Changhua Wu's leadership ability and urged approval for her appointment as the APWF Governing Council Chair. He asked members to continue collaborating and supporting APWF's activities for sustainable water security in the Asia Pacific Region.

Ms. Changhua Wu expresses deep gratitude and honor for being entrusted with a new role as a Governing Council Chair by His Excellency President Yoshiro Mori, Dr. Takimura, Yumiko, and colleagues, both online and those who could not join today. She also acknowledges a sense of obligation to follow in predecessors' footsteps and work with Eduardo Araral alongside a new team to continue steadfast efforts in supporting the network's goals. Ms. Changhua Wu reflects on the urgency of global issues, particularly highlighted by the pivotal moment of COP 28 and emphasizes the need for the network to evolve in this new phase. Despite a decade-long tenure as vice chair, she feels a renewed obligation to learn and collaborate with colleagues of the community more closely and effectively. She expressed excitement about joining forces with colleagues worldwide to contribute to the success of the Asia Pacific Water Forum in the coming decade.

Ms. Yumiko Asayama, APWF Secretariat, introduced an open call for a vacancy for the APWF vice governing chair's position and requested to find candidates and provide feedback to the APWF governance (Reference Document: Meeting Document Agenda 1 and the Ref). The closing date is 31st March 2024.

Agenda 2: Asia-Pacific Regional Process of the 10th World Water Forum

Ms. Yumiko Asayama, APWF Secretariat, introduced the progress and discussion agenda of the Asia-Pacific Regional Process of the 10th World Water Forum. She first shared that ADB joined as one of the coordinators of the Asia-Pacific Regional Process, together with the APWF and AWC, particularly for the Asia-Pacific Regional Process Report, showcases, and synthesis.

She raised 4 main discussion agenda was:

1. 5 Sub-regional Process
2. 5 new session plan opportunities (cross-cutting of sub-regions so-called sub-

regional synthesis sessions.)

3. Synthesis of the overall Asia-Pacific Regional Process

4. Interest in the inter-regional process of the other regions of the World

(Reference: Meeting Document 2-1)

Each of 5 sub-regional coordinators introduced their selected topic concepts and the session plans. ((Reference: Meeting Document 2-3, 2-4)

Pacific Sub-regional Process:

The lead sub-regional coordinator, Mr. Dave Hebblethwaite, Secretariat of Pacific Community, discusses their involvement in the Pacific subregion's regional process, collaborating with agencies like the Australian Water Partnership. Due to geographical constraints, He highlights the unique challenge in the subregion where water and sanitation management is mainly at the household, village, or island level. The role of civil society is emphasized in providing Support, given the limitations of national governments. Three subregional sessions have been proposed, focusing on climate-resilient sanitation and overall water security as a resilience issue. The need to engage leaders and position the water sector in climate and disaster resilience discussions is stressed.

Central Asia and the Caucasus Sub-Regional Process

Ms. Yumiko Asayama, APWF Secretariat, first shared the chair of the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (EC-IFAS) has shifted from Tajikistan to Kazakhstan from January 2024, so that the APWF representative from EC-IFAS also from Kazakhstan from this January.

Ms. Zhanar Mautanova, lead Sub-regional coordinator of Central Asia as the EC-IFAS, Director of the International Water Assessment Center, Kazakhstan, introduced the proposal from Central Asia. Central Asia comprises five countries with a population of over 72 million and is crucial to Eurasian security and stability. Water is vital for the region's economic development and environmental stability. She shared the interconnected water systems, particularly in the Aral Sea basin, and present challenges that require collaborative approaches from the countries involved. The region faces challenges such as limited water, increasing demand due to population growth, economic development, and vulnerability to climate change. In 1993, the heads of Central Asian states founded IFAS collaboratively to address the problems of the Aral Sea.

Over 30 years, IFAS has achieved significant progress. IFAS's mission is to develop joint strategies for sustainable water management and promote mutually beneficial water use.

The proposed session aims to serve as a platform for high-level participants from Central Asia, partner countries, international organizations, basin organizations, and experts. The session will focus on effective cooperation in water use, mechanisms meeting economic needs, legal frameworks ensuring economic benefits, and more. It aims to facilitate the exchange of experiences and innovative approaches to transboundary cooperation, contributing valuable input to the forum.

Dr. Vadim Sokolov, Chair of the TAC, GWP CACENA c/o Head of IFAS, Uzbekistan, co-sub-regional coordinator of Central Asia Sub-regional process, represents the Global Water Partnership of Central Asia and Caucasus (GWP CACENA) and acknowledges the new leadership in the IFAS led by Kazakhstan. The appointment of the new chair of the executive committee is expected to accelerate main activities. Central Asia faces two main water-related issues: transboundary cooperation, covered by IFAS, and the impact of climate change, making it one of the most affected regions globally.

The GWP network, in collaboration with Central Asian partners, plans to organize a subregional session on mobilizing water finance for climate resilience. This session will involve partners from South and Caucasus regions, including Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Consultations have occurred with partners from all eight countries, resulting in a joint proposal expressing interest and receiving confirmation. The session aims to engage governmental institutions working on climate change adaptation and partners from the GWP headquarters in Stockholm. The network officer will contribute to the session with experience from the Water Material Meteorological Organization in Geneva. The goal is to mobilize financial resources to address the region's climate change challenges.

Ms. Changhua Wu asked a technical question regarding the impact of financing on water security in the Central Asia region, particularly since COP 28, as it also encouraged the reshaping of the narrative of water security. She catalyzes ideas that can contribute to shaping and uplifting the water security narrative leading up to COP 29.

Dr. Vadim Sokolov responded that the focus on finance is critical, with active Support from international financial organizations like the World Bank, ADB, and the Green Climate Fund. National projects for climate change adaptation are ongoing, and countries regularly submit reports on the ongoing process. The estimated funding

needed for proper adaptation in five Central Asian countries is around 20 billion US dollars for the coming years through their projects. The session aims to discuss how to cooperate effectively, attract funds, and ensure proper utilization of adaptation efforts.

Ms. Zhanar Mautanova highlighted Kazakhstan's involvement in the preparation process for COP 29 and the Summit on Water in New York, where climate change and water security will be key topics.

Northeast Asia Sub-regional Process

Dr. Mikio Ishiwatari, Board Director of Japan Water Forum, is taking the Northeast Asia Sub-Regional Coordinator role. He introduced the Northeast Asia Sub-regional process sessions. The Northeast Asia sub-regional process focuses on China, the Republic of Korea, and Japan. One of the sessions will address key issues about flooding and water-induced disasters, emphasizing the importance of flood risk management. The case will include new ICT initiatives for flood risk management, disaster risk management, and climate change adaptation. The other is the session to address the roles of culture in water resource management. Cultural factors are often overlooked in water resource management. The session discusses cultural factors, addressing barriers, challenges, and necessary approaches. To organize this session, he has initiated consultations with organizations like the Asian Development Bank Institute and Japanese institutions to collaborate on developing session content and key messages for these important topics.

Ms. Changhua Wu asked whether you are aiming to prepare the flagship report related to this culture session and launch it during the session.

Dr. Ishiwatari said he would publish it and planned to launch the book during the session. Ms. Changhua Wu then shared that Ms. Yoonjin Kim, Director of the 10th World Water Forum, WWC, will have a pavilion to introduce showcases. You might also be able to introduce the launching book.

Southeast Asia Sub-Regional Process

Mr. Fany Wedahuditama, GWP Southeast Asia Regional Coordinator, leads the sub-regional coordinator of the Southeast Asia Sub-regional process. GWP Southeast Asia collaborates with the Ministry of Planning and Ministry of Public Works of Indonesia (co-lead), and the Korea-Mekong Water Resources Management Collaborative Research Center (KMCRC) is a coordination support member. Southeast Asia Sub-regional Process

has selected two key topics based on last October's stakeholder consultation meeting in Bali. One is "Smart Water Management: Opportunities and Challenges," and the other is "Mobilizing Water Finance for Climate Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management." Apart from the sessions, there is a subregional process reporting plan. This involves two webinars between January and March, where each Southeast Asian country will share updates on the selected topics. The subregional report will be drafted between March and April, followed by another webinar for consultation. We need Support from donors. We also want to seek collaboration with UNESCAP, particularly on water and climate.

The report will utilize data from the SDG 6.5.1 global survey facilitated by GWP Southeast Asia and UNEP. We also seek to collaborate with the ASEAN Water Resources Management Working Group.

Mr. Fany Wedahuditama asked about trends in other processes, such as the thematic and political processes.

Ms. Yumiko Asayama, APWF Secretariat, responded that we can catch up with ICHARM for Thematic Process Sub-Theme 3: Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, and ADB for Thematic Process Sub-Theme 5: Finance, which both organizations are APWF members. Regarding the Political Process, there will be a ministerial preparatory meeting on 22-23 January 2024 in the UNESCO HQ as long as planned last year. We will be able to catch up with it after the meeting.

South Asia Sub-Regional Process

Ms. Kusum Athukorala, GWP South Asia Regional Chair and a Steering Committee member of Women for Water Partnership, is the South Asia Sub-regional process lead coordinator. She delivered her voice recording, as she could not attend today's meeting. Last October, she participated in the second stakeholders' consultation meeting in Bali, Indonesia. During the Bali meeting, the South Asia Group identified two priority topics: sanitation improvement in Asia and capacity building for gender-inclusive proactive disaster risk reduction. Various organizations' experts have submitted a concept note for these topics. We seek online or on-site Support for a consultative process to gather insights and solutions for sanitation and disaster risk reduction in South Asia. While a supporter or donor has not been found yet, we remain optimistic and committed to a consultative process that contributes valuable insights to the World Water Forum in Bali and ongoing research, advocacy, and actions beyond the event. We face the challenge of high costs for attending the Bali forum, especially for civil society organizations, and

hope for support or concessions for the global South and civil society from organizations participating in the meeting.

Dr. Jayati Chourey, Executive Director, South Asia Consortium for Interdisciplinary Water Resources Studies, SaciWATERS introduced the session proposal about the "Strengthening Resilience: Capacity Building for Gender-Inclusive Proactive Disaster Risk Reduction". The Organizing Partners are GWP South Asia, SaciWATERS, the Worldwide Fund for Nature to Environment and Disaster Management Program (WWF-EDM), and the University of Kelaniya.

South Asia, being highly vulnerable to climate risks, faces challenges such as cyclones, floods, droughts, and temperature variations, affecting over 750 million people in the past two decades. The session emphasizes the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, focusing on seven global targets and integrating gender perspectives. Recognizing the specific vulnerabilities of women, the framework stresses the indispensable role of women in risk reduction. The session calls for inclusive disaster management with gender mainstreaming as a key element, emphasizing the need for capacity building, skill development, and education. It highlights the importance of creating an enabling social environment, advocating for gender-responsive policies, inclusive institutions, and community engagement to empower women in disaster risk reduction. Reorienting curricula to include a gender perspective is crucial for training professionals in disaster risk reduction.

The Session organizing partners have launched capacity-building initiatives across South Asia. The proposed session at the Bali World Water Forum aims to prioritize gender perspectives in disaster risk reduction, share successful initiatives, discuss challenges, and offer strategies for integrating gender into water management, disaster risk management, and climate change curricula. The session seeks to contribute to a more resilient and inclusive future for South Asia and beyond, with ongoing policy dialogues named "Signposts to Bali." The organizers actively seek support and guidance from participants for organizing the consultation meeting before the WWF10 in May and organizing this session in May.

Dr. Santosh Nepal, IWMI, researcher of Water Resources and Climate Change, introduced South Asia's other selected topic, Inclusive Sanitation Management and Service Delivery, specifically emphasizing marginalized groups in South Asia. Despite progress in sanitation coverage, over half of South Asia's population lacks access to safe sanitation facilities. This situation is exacerbated by factors like rapid population growth, climate

change, unreliable water services, and weak governance, particularly affecting marginalized communities in urban areas.

The proposed session aims to address this sanitation challenge through a citywide inclusive approach, providing safe and affordable sanitation services for everyone. This approach goes beyond toilets and sewers, emphasizing the entire sanitation service chain and strengthening core public system functions. It highlights the need to consider the specific needs of marginalized groups, including women, children, and older people.

The planned session will be in a panel discussion format, featuring key regional experts and stakeholders discussing sanitation issues and challenges. We acknowledge resource constraints and express the need for in-depth discussions and consultations with partners to understand real-world challenges, seeking guidance and Support from the forum to address these constraints.

During a meeting, there was a discussion regarding resource constraints and the need for Support in South Asia for the upcoming World Water Forum. South Asia Sub-Regional Coordinators explored ways to address the challenges, including reaching out to partner organizations and potentially seeking a waiver of the registration fee.

Ms. Yumiko Asayama, APWF Secretariat, shared ongoing efforts to mobilize resources among the relevant organizations.

Dr. Pierre Flamand, the Japan Sanitation Consortium, showed interest in the South Asia Sub-regional process's proposal about sanitation. Dr. Ramesh Vaidya, ICIMOD showed interest in South Asia's session proposal about disaster risk reduction and management.

Ms. Yumiko Asayama, APWF Secretariat, emphasized the importance of collective efforts among each sub-regional coordinator and their contributors and timely submission of expressions of interest for each sub-regional coordinator before they examine the speakers in detail.

Synthesis of sub-regional process (cross-cutting)

Ms. Yumiko Asayama, APWF Secretariat, firstly explained that the WWC informed last Friday that the Asia-Pacific Region will be able to plan 5 additional sessions at maximum (so-called the "Synthesis of Sub-region" as of now)

The options, for instance, are:

- 1) synthesis of each sub-regional process session
- 2) Organize the session of cross-sub-regions of the Asia-Pacific under their similar topic interests
- 3) propose new topic-focused sessions, which are not much covered in the current proposals of each sub-region but important points for the discussion, such as agriculture, wastewater management, NBS, youth, and transboundary cooperation to address the impacts of glaciers and snow melts beyond a sub-region, etc, following the topic framework of the Asia-Pacific Regional Process, etc

(Reference: Meeting document 2-5)

She asked the APWF members about options to utilize these new opportunities effectively and make them meaningful.

Dr. Ishiwatari, Northeast Asia Sub-regional coordinator, sees the opportunity to add five more sessions based on the valuable discussions and opinions from the second stakeholders' meeting in Bali last October. At that time, Northeast Asia needed to limit the number of proposed sessions due to the initial limit so that the other relevant topics' interests were proposed as the inter-regional process session. It is not sensible to organize a synthesis session of 2 proposed sessions by each sub-region. Rather than that, he proposed each subregion pick one additional session, preferably focusing on cross-cutting issues such as finance, governance, youth, and gender in topics such as disaster risk reduction and management, etc, and to make the most of the diverse discussions and cover a broader range of essential topics.

Mr. Anshuman Varma, Economic Affairs Officer, Environment and Development Policy Section, Environment and Development Division, UNESCAP, proposed organizing a cross-cutting session focusing on glacier melt for the 10th World Water Forum. The International Year of Glaciers' Preservation 2025 is mandated through a resolution of the UN General Assembly. The session will seek to address the impacts of changing glacial and snow melt patterns on the water, energy, food security, and water-related disasters. The session's tentative title is "Cooperation, Governance, and Priority Setting for Climate Action and Resilience Building to Glacier Melt." The focus would be on sharing stakeholder perspectives, identifying priorities for cooperation, and examining the influence of glacier melt on major rivers, particularly in Central Asia and the Hindukush Himalayas region.

Proposed Session Overview

Glacier and snow melt are important sources of water and modulators in the hydrological regimes of some of the largest rivers of Asia. Changing glacial and snow melt patterns are already impacting water, energy and food security and driving water-related disasters. Regional and transboundary cooperation and an effective governance architecture are needed to take action, including on reducing black carbon emissions, better monitoring and understanding of ongoing and projected changes in water demand and supply, impacted communities and sectors and priorities for building resilience. The session will share stakeholder perspectives and identify priorities for cooperation.

UNESCAP expresses their willingness to lead the organization of this session. Mr. Anshuman Varma emphasized that the topic could serve as a unifying theme for various sub-regions. He also highlighted the need for support in terms of speakers and budget. He suggested seeking additional Support from collaborating partners to mobilize the resources for the session. In addition, UNESCAP can explore the possibility of engaging speakers (online) from other regions outside Asia-Pacific through the UN-Water network. He expressed openness to collaboration with partners like ICIMOD and those from Central Asia.

Mr. Dave Hebblethwaite, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, highlights an opportunity to address Small Island Developing States' unique challenges, particularly those in the Pacific Islands region. He emphasized the potential for synthesizing efforts across subregions to create a global dialogue. The focus is on island nations, including atoll nations and those without surface water resources. He suggests consolidating subregional sessions to streamline efforts and make the discussions more relevant for countries, particularly those dealing with transboundary and river basin issues. He expresses a willingness to support and contribute to this initiative.

He also mentioned the possibility of consolidating efforts and noted that the upcoming UN Small Island Developing States meeting in Antigua and Barbuda follows the World Water Forum. He highlighted the opportunity to include water security on the agenda of the SIDs meeting, especially with the Support of the chair of the Association of Small Island States (AOSIS). He sees the outcomes of the current dialogue as valuable contributions that could align well with the goals of the upcoming meeting, providing an additional opportunity to address water-related challenges. He expresses openness to further discussions on this matter.

Dr. Vadim Sokolov, Central Asia sub-regional co-coordinator, expressed enthusiasm about organizing subregional synthesis sessions, seeing it as a great opportunity for Central Asia. He plans to coordinate with EC-IFAS colleagues and hopes to collaborate on organizing these sessions. He outlines two topic sessions led by EC-IFAS and the GWP CACENA, which focus on transboundary cooperation and climate change. He views the synthesis session as a platform to address problems and an opportunity to showcase best practices in his region. He mentions partners' interest in sharing achievements, such as the Swiss Cooperation Agency's projects on implementation and smart technology.

Mr. Fany Wedahuditama, a Southeast Asia lead sub-regional coordinator, mentioned that several organizations have expressed interest in supporting an additional session, specifically focusing on water scarcity. He highlighted the possibility of collaborating with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the FAO, which currently have programs in Southeast Asia related to water scarcity. He suggested discussing the alignment of this idea with WMO and FAO and exploring the potential for their Support and resources. He emphasized the importance of coordinating with the co-leads of the subregional process to avoid redundancy and ensure cross-cutting sessions.

As the lead and co-lead sub-regional coordinators were absent during the APWF 31st Governing Council Meeting, South Asia will be back to us after their discussion among South Asia sub-regional coordinators.

Ms. Changhua Wu, APWF Governing Council Chair, stressed the significance of deciding not only on the sessions but also on the next level of details, such as who would do what and what messages should be delivered to enhance the political leaders in the Asia-Pacific region.

Overall Asia-Pacific Regional Process Synthesis Session

Ms. Yumiko Asayama, APWF Secretariat, explained the current discussion among the Asia-Pacific Regional Process Coordinators (APWF, AWC, and ADB). WWC allowed the Asia-Pacific Regional Process coordinators to organize 3 sessions at maximum as the overall synthesis of Asia-Pacific Regional Process. The Asia-Pacific regional process coordinators then propose to organize a longer comprehensive synthesis session combining 3 session opportunities to wrap up the discussion of Asia-Pacific Regional Process and deliver the ways forward in terms of (1) Science and Technologies, (2)

Governance, and (3) Finance, toward quality oriented-society and water for shared prosperity following the thematic framework of Asia-Pacific Region. She also shared that the AWC proposes (1) science and technologies will be led and coordinated by AWC, and co-lead by APWF and ADB, (2) governance will be led by APWF and co-lead by ADB and AWC, and (3) finance will be lead by ADB, and co-lead by APWF and AWC.

Dr. Vadim Sokolov, Central Asia Co-Sub-regional coordinator, echoed the idea of a joint synthesis session for the entire Asia-Pacific region.

Inter-regional process sessions with the other regions of the World

Ms. Yumiko Asayama, APWF Secretariat, explained that there were also the opportunity to organize inter-regional process sessions with the different regions of the World (Mediterranean, Americas, Africa), as long as we match the topic interest and willingness to organize the session from the other regions. Proposal depends on (1) each sub-regional basis or (2) joint proposals from some sub-regions of the Asia-Pacific or (3) overall of Asia-Pacific. She asked the participants to share their thoughts on topics and preferences for the region in organizing inter-regional process sessions.

Dr. Vadim Sokolov, Central Asia Co-Sub-regional coordinator, viewed this as an excellent opportunity to address both European and Asian partners simultaneously through inter-regional process sessions. He is willing to commit to consulting with colleagues from EC-IFAS and wait for the guidance to propose it.

Dr. Ishiwatari, Northeast Asia Sub-regional coordinator, reviewed the discussion of the Northeast Asia table during the Bali meeting in October 2023, and the Northeast Asia proposed the cross-cutting topics, specifically mentioning the importance of a youth session. He highlighted the need to cover youth-related issues in the context of climate change and Disaster Risk Reduction. He emphasized that this topic has not been touched upon during the current discussion but is deemed important as a cross-cutting issue. His proposed session aims to explore how youth can contribute, mobilize, and address their own challenges in the future. The interest in involving other regions depends on their youth groups' enthusiasm. He expressed openness to collaboration and working together with youth from different regions.

Ms. Changhua Wu, APWF Governing Council Chair, recalled discussions in Bali last October about potentially incorporating a global youth element for the 10th forum. She

expressed the need for more clarity on this matter. Youth-focused discussion is crucial, while youth participation is encouraged in various sessions, such as 11 sub-regional process sessions. She also mentioned that while the model of the inter-regional process is based on the Mediterranean, Americas, and Africa, there is an opportunity for a more global approach, especially given the potential for addressing youth-related matters on a broader scale. She sought clarification on whether the session's focus would be more region-specific or if there was a preference for a global perspective on youth issues. She also asked for notes about practical challenges, including resource allocation and funding to ensure the active participation of the younger generation in the process and the need to secure adequate resources to involve exemplary young leaders in the discussions.

Ms. Yumiko Asayama, APWF Secretariat, shared the UNESCO Beijing office proposal for a cross-cutting session Creating an enabling environment for youth innovation and cross-cultural collaboration. (on behalf of the UNESCO Beijing Office who could not join the meeting suddenly due to their urgent matter.)

Ms. Changhua Wu, APWF Governing Council Chair and Ms. Yumiko Asayama, APWF Secretariat wrapped up that, as Asia-Pacific Regional Process, we will have the opportunity to organize:

- I. 11 sessions of 5 sub-region
 - II. Maximum 5 synthesis of sub-region (cross-cutting)
 - III. 1 Synthesis of the overall Asia-Pacific Regional Process (combine 3 session times)
- 2) Joint sessions with the other groups
- a. Inter-regional process session
 - b. High-Level Panel (joint coordination among the sub-theme coordinator, Regional process Coordinator, Political process coordinator, and the steering committee of the WWF10)

Ms. Yumiko Asayama shared that the high-level Panel would be a joint coordination session among thematic process coordinators, regional process coordinators, political process coordinators, and the 10th World Water Forum Steering Committee. While the thematic process had the opportunity to discuss and propose it from the time of the preparatory meeting in Bali last October, the Regional Process could not have the opportunity to discuss it until December. She also shared that the APWF proposed a

high-level panel to follow up on the UN-Water conference, and we would be able to identify further details about the high-level Panel when there is a meeting to discuss it on 24th January 2024. Once she receives the information, she will share more information and opportunities for involvement in the high-level Panel.

Dr. Toshio Koiike, Director of ICHARM, Sub-thematic 3 Coordinator (Disaster Risk Reduction and Management) shared that Sub-theme 3 proposed a high-level panel on the topic of early warning in collaboration with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and other global international agencies.

Agenda 3 Reflection, the takeaway from the UNFCCC COP 28 and Looking forward to APWF Network Activities

Ms. Changhua shared the objective of the information sharing and discussion in this agenda. She first highlighted the significance of COP28 as a pivotal moment, emphasizing the need to refine and enhance the narrative surrounding water-related issues, reflecting a strategic approach to align with global sustainability goals and effectively address challenges in the COP contexts. She also emphasized the significance of paying attention to the interconnectedness of water with various aspects such as food, agriculture, and nature. She expressed the need to reflect on the progress made in mainstreaming water security in global processes. The agenda involves assessing the journey so far and identifying steps, actions, and narratives to enhance outcomes related to water security.

Mr. Anshuman Varma, Economic Affairs Officer, Environment and Development Policy Section, Environment and Development Division, UNESCAP, provided an overview of UNESCAP's work in the context of climate change actions and water. He spoke about the interdisciplinary expertise of UNESCAP, emphasizing its role in promoting climate action and providing related support to member states. ESCAP's commitments and initiatives include: raising climate ambition and ensuring just transition, accelerating decarbonization in key sectors, supporting early warning and resilience, and bolstering climate finance & investment. The Asia-Pacific region is not on track to achieve SDG 6 and in this context he emphasized the importance of transboundary water cooperation and international cooperation. He presented key recommendations from a regional consultation on the mid-term review of the UN Decade for Water Action, including strengthening governance, policy coherence, gender equality, and promoting integrated

approaches to water for sustainable development. In addition, he also introduced some ESCAP's tools on the climate-water-food systems nexus and knowledge products on water.

Furthermore, he also shared information about ESCAP's inter-governmental work on water and glaciers, including an overview of ESCAP's upcoming engagements, such as Support to 3rd High-Level International Conference on International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development", 10-14 June 2024, Dushanbe, Tajikistan; Support to High-Level International Conference on Glacier Protection in 2025 in Dushanbe, and Study on the necessity, viability and modalities of establishing the United Nations special programme for the Aral Sea basin (pursuant to ESCAP resolution 79/8)

Finally, he shared suggestions on How to Gain the Attention of Member States on Climate/Water Nexus and What Knowledge will be Helpful to Countries, as below:

- Enhanced technical support on water allocation and sharing, water resources management (including transboundary dimension)
- Increased attention to data and monitoring systems (including Cryosphere monitoring)
- More tools for engaging stakeholders in water management
- Enhanced focus on innovative approaches for financing/ resource mobilization

Ms. Changhua Wu expressed interest in following up on data-related matters, particularly in terms of accountability and transparency, to mobilize more financing for the sector.

Mr. Dave Hebblethwaite, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, shared the recent developments in loss and damage in the Pacific island countries, emphasizing their historical advocacy for recognizing loss and damage. He highlighted the frustration of water security being on the periphery of the discussion and expressed efforts to bring it more centrally into the resilience dialogue in the Pacific. He mentioned using tools like a 3D printed model of the atoll of Majuro in the Republic of the Marshall Islands to engage people and seek ideas for similar efforts at the World Water Forum. Moreover, he mentioned the Pacific leaders' endorsement of an implementation plan for the 2050 strategy for Blue Pacific, the approval for establishing a Pacific Resilience facility, and the focus on water security in the Pacific resilience meeting. He expressed commitment to working with the APWF to integrate water security into the resilience dialogue.

Ms. Changhua Wu encouraged Dave to explore the opportunity to introduce the SPC's initiatives about Pacific Islands and sharing regarding loss and damage, particularly from a Pacific Island perspective at the pavilion spaces which WWC will provide at the 10th World Water Forum, in addition to the discussion in the session of Pacific Islands sub-regional process.

Dr. Anthony Slatyer, Water Policy Group, introduced an emerging narrative on water discussed during COP28, emphasizing the need to view water as part of the climate solution and problem. The narrative highlights water's role in mitigation efforts, with a significant project quantifying water demands for the clean energy transition. He urged a focus on water security, stressing that if we don't care for water, it can't support us. He shared a link to a water policy group and a statement by water and climate leaders. Water Policy Group's secretariat is located at University of New South Wales (UNSW) in Australia. UNSW joined the partners at the International University Climate Alliance and contributed to an event hosted by UN-Water and the World Meteorological Organisation at COP 28. The UN-Water/WMO event outcomes were also discussed in a session convened by the COP Presidency. Details on the work can be found at the following UN Water link: <https://www.unwater.org/news/cop28-water-critical-climate-change-mitigation>.

The Water Policy Group has also conducted surveys of national governments' water leaders worldwide, with 124 countries participating in two projects over the last three years. The results, including the Asia Pacific version published in 2021, offer valuable insights into the experiences, challenges, and risks faced by ministers and senior officials responsible for water. He encouraged us to use this reference document to prepare the political and regional process of the 10th World Water Forum, emphasizing its role in conveying the inner thoughts and opinions of water leaders from numerous Asia Pacific countries.

Ms. Changhua Wu highlighted the importance of disclosure, transparency, global standardization, and interoperability in the context of data, evidence, and information. She emphasized the role of these elements in managing risks and leveraging opportunities, particularly in aligning private-sector financing with global sustainability agendas, specifically focusing on water. Ms. Changhua Wu saw this as pivotal in international financial contexts and disclosures.

Dr. Santosh Nepal, IWMI, researcher of Water Resources and Climate Change, highlighted significant achievements at COP27, where a court decision explicitly

recognized water as a key solution to the climate crisis. Establishing the loss and damage fund is a key milestone, emphasizing water's central role in climate actions. COP28 prioritized freshwater ecosystems, urban water resilience, and water-resilient food systems, aligning with the COP28 president's emphasis on putting nature, lives, and livelihoods at the core of national climate plans. The international community at COP28 acknowledged the importance of science in climate actions, focusing on agri-food systems and health sectors. The integration of water, sanitation, health, and food systems into the global adaptation goal received recognition. The IWMI supported governments in Asia and Africa, including pre-COP 28 consultations in Nepal for the Nepal Government, emphasizing water and climate change. IWMI also hosted side events to provide evidence-based information to country delegates for Nepal.

Agenda 4 Stockholm World Water Week 2024

Ms. Yumiko Asayama, APWF Secretariat, introduced the Stockholm World Water Week 2024 overview. The topic of this year is "Bridging Borders: Water for a Peaceful and Sustainable Future". She emphasized the importance of collaboration opportunities among the APWF members and their partners through this year's topic. We can secure the organization of the Asia-Pacific Focus Session sessions for at least 4. The deadline for the session proposal is 22nd February, and She encourages the APWF members to express their topic interests for the proposal.

Wrap Up

Ms. Changhua Wu, APWF Governing Council Chair, wrapped up the meeting. She firstly expressed gratitude for the trust, confidence, and support received in their role as the chair of the Governing Council of the Asia Pacific Water Forum. She emphasizes the need to reexamine and rethink various issues in light of the changing World, focusing on delivering impactful outcomes. She hints at potential thoughts and plans for the APWF's future, with a commitment to being purpose-driven and expanding the network. She acknowledged the importance of preparatory processes for major events. She mentioned the ongoing process of bringing another vice chair on board, in addition to Dr. Eduardo Araral, and encouraged recommendations for the position. She appreciated the meeting participants and anticipated the continued collaboration in the coming year.