

## UN 2023 Water Conference. Final Proposal for Side Event - Ethiopia

### Session Title:

**Climate Resilient Ground-Water as a catalyst for Sustainable Development in Africa’s Borderlands – a shared SDG 6 agenda. Co-hosted by UNDP Africa Borderlands Centre and the World Bank.**

**Day and Time:** Friday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2023 from 9:30 – 9:45am

**Venue:** UN HQ Room number HQ156

**Member State partners (north & south):** Government of Ethiopia and Government of the Netherlands

**Technical partners:** World Bank, UNDP Africa Borderlands Centre, UNICEF, CIFF

**Session Outline:** 90 minutes

Time	Topic
9:30-9:45	Welcome: Government of Ethiopia – H.E. Dr Eng Habtamu Itefa, Minister of Water and Energy Opening Speech: Boutheina Guerhazi – World Bank Integration Director
9:45-9:55	Panel Discussion: Moderated by Ahunna Eziakonwa-Onochie – UNDP ASG – Director Africa
9:55 -10:05	Introduction Presentation – World Bank and UNDP (Dr Samuel Godfrey and Victor Vazquez)
10:05 – 10:30	Panellists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catherine Russel – Executive Director UNICEF</li> <li>• H.E. Minister - Government of Somalia</li> <li>• H.E. Minister – Government of Kenya (TBC)</li> <li>• Dr Abraham Asmare, Regional Director Children’s Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF)</li> </ul>
10:30-10:45	Closing Remarks - Martyn Engels – Government of Netherlands Commitments - Government of Ethiopia – H.E Madam President, Sahilework Zewdie, FDRE

Opening remarks – Member States Representatives from Ethiopia and Sahel Member States.  
World Bank and UNDP Africa Directors

- Setting the scene.
  - What we have learned from assessment of borderland water successes and challenges

- Rapid fire CASE STUDIES:
  - o Case study 1 – Government of Ethiopia
  - o Case Study 2 – World Bank
  - o Case Study3 – UNDP Africa Borderlands Centre
- Commitments from the UN 2023 conference
  - Each partner will present its own commitments towards sustainability in borderlands

## Short Session Outline

The potential of Africa's borderlands – regions close to international land borders - remains vastly untapped. With an estimated 270 million inhabitants, transforming lives in borderland communities has the potential to accelerate Africa's development trajectory.

Investments in borderland communities will be central to achieving the Agenda 2030 while ensuring no one is left behind. However, despite many Africans living in border regions, development efforts and resources focus primarily on cities, large urban areas, and national interiors.

A new large-scale study by the UNDP Africa Borderlands Centre – focused on agro- pastoralist communities in Africa's borderlands has found a limited availability of public services. Many communities, especially those in semi-arid regions, reported a negative outlook and raised concerns about growing malnutrition and food insecurity, exacerbated by the impact of climate change, drought and sometimes flood.

While development interventions and investments are limited, borderland regions have received significant humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian assistance has, however, been unable to transform Africa's borderland regions meaningfully. There is a critical need to scale up catalytic development interventions and investments to enhance the resilience of borderland communities and provide sustainable socio-economic opportunities. A central element for accelerating development and resilience in Africa's borderland regions is improved access to groundwater.

Globally, Sub-Saharan Africa is the region most off track in achieving SDG 6, with borderland regions in Africa particularly at risk of being left behind. Demographic growth combined with increased migration patterns is placing increasing strain on the “borderlands” areas of countries. The current estimates indicate that 1 in 3 Africans lack access to water which is 400 million people. More than 50% of these live in borderlands areas which are prone to insecurity, are affected by the effects of Climate Change and have limited human capital and economic opportunities.

The World Bank, KfW and the UNDP Borderlands Centre for Africa have dedicated programmes to address the needs of these borderlands communities. Partnering with IGAD and other Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) combined with Member States (Government of Ethiopia and TBC), these multilateral institutions have identified “water” as a driver of displacement, conflict and insecurity in many of the borderlands communities. Recent work by the World Bank highlighted that political marginalization has resulted in the majority of

borderlands communities having to cross national borders for water access for human, social, economic development and livelihoods.

A working group with key sector partners, including governments, external support agencies and civil society organizations is proposed to move this agenda forward. A side event at the UN 2023 Water Conference is proposed to gather support from additional partners and to build momentum around the importance of addressing borderlands water needs by improving understanding of sustainable solutions at national and sub-national levels, and development of commitments towards sustainability from Member States and sector partners.

The side event will discuss case studies and lessons learned highlighting the catalytic nature of water for accelerating development in Africa's borderland regions, while discussing opportunities for scale-up and enhancing sustainability of existing initiatives. The side event will discuss potential roles for Member States, Development Partners, UN System, Civil Society and Private Sector in increasing investments and programmes on water in Africa's borderland regions.