



IAH 2026

World Groundwater Congress

53rd Congress of the International Association of Hydrogeologists

14-18 September 2026

Budapest Congress Center



Budapest Groundwater Declaration

18 September 2026

This Statement represents the collective outcome of discussions held throughout the 2026 International Association of Hydrogeologists World Groundwater Congress and highlights the groundwater community's key messages. The participants of the IAH Congress in Budapest call for the urgent need for stronger action on groundwater:

1. Groundwater is the most important freshwater reserve globally, sustaining human life, ecosystems and all sectors of society: water and food security, green energy transition, mineral resources, health, wellbeing, and climate resilience.
2. Groundwater and surface water form one interconnected resource and must be managed through a One Water approach, holistically addressing water quantity and quality issues.
3. Sustainable groundwater stewardship requires the integration of scientific and technical, local, societal and Indigenous knowledge systems, together with the active participation of communities and stakeholders in decision-making.
4. Groundwater management must adopt a multi-decadal perspective, with coordinated action at local, national, regional and transboundary scales, to safeguard resources for future generations.
5. Solving groundwater challenges require transdisciplinary approaches involving natural sciences, engineering, social sciences, law and economics.
6. Art, culture, education and communication are essential to make groundwater visible and meaningful to people, recognizing its cultural and spiritual importance.
7. Investing in groundwater knowledge, monitoring, protection, capacity building, and responsible use is investing in a resilient, sustainable, and more just future. This requires strengthened vocational and academic education and strong institutions, but also long-term, secure, and local employment pathways.
8. Groundwater contributes to sustainability and all Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, groundwater should be recognized through specific sustainability targets and indicators.
9. Groundwater must be placed at the centre of policies and sustainable solutions worldwide, and included in climate and investment plans.

The Congress highlighted the essential contribution of the hydrogeology community, which provides a global pool of expertise, innovative methods, and practical solutions to support science-based decision-making and address these challenges.

Note: We invite governments, donors and partners to consider the messages of this Statement and support the actions needed to secure groundwater for present and future generations. We hope that the 2026 United Nations Water Conference will place groundwater firmly at the heart of global water discussions and commitments. IAH has actively engaged in the preparation of the 2026 UN Water Conference, including participation in UN dialogues and an IAH Position Paper on Groundwater with practical recommendations for action.

