



unesco
Centre
Under the auspices
of UNESCO



TEHRAN

Regional Centre on
Urban Water Management
(RCUWM - Tehran)

AGREED MINUTES

Fourteenth Governing Board Meeting (GBM-14)

Regional Centre on Urban Water Management (RCUWM-Tehran)

(Under the auspices of UNESCO)



4 December 2025,

Tehran- Iran

OPENING OF THE MEETING

The Fourteenth Governing Board Meeting (GBM-14) of the Regional Centre on Urban Water Management - under the auspices of UNESCO (RCUWM-Tehran) was held on 4 December 2025, from 9:00 to 11:30, at Isfahan Hall of the Tehran International Permanent Fairground, Tehran, Iran, with participation both in person and online (Annex 1- List of Participants).

The meeting commenced with opening remarks by Director of RCUWM, followed by a formal welcome address delivered by the H.E. Mr. Aliabadi, Minister of Energy of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Chairman of RCUWM Governing Board. The Minister highlighted the Centre's long-standing role in bridging science, management and policy, enabling meaningful cooperation among GB member states through research, knowledge exchange and innovation.

He emphasized that this GB meeting marked the beginning of a more ambitious chapter in regional collaboration, outlining seven strategic priorities, as stated below:

1. Recognizing urban water security as a regional responsibility;
2. Joint management of transboundary water rights, droughts and floods;
3. Extraction and planning of national and regional water balances;
4. Integrating water–energy–climate nexus approaches into governance;
5. Water reuse and non-conventional water resources;
6. Advancing digitalization and Artificial Intelligence in urban water systems;
7. Enhancing standardization, capacity building and water diplomacy.

The Chair welcomed delegates from member states and partner organizations, noting the significance of the Centre's multi-year programs aligned with UNESCO-IHP Phase IX (2022-2029).

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The draft agenda of the meeting was presented to the Governing Board for consideration. The members reviewed the agenda and approved it without amendment. The agenda (Annex 2- Agenda) was therefore adopted as presented and served as the basis for the deliberations and discussions of the meeting.

SUMMARY OF DELIBERATIONS

The Governing Board Members reviewed the main issues related to the Centre's mandate and activities. The deliberations focused on strategic priorities, alignment with the objectives of UNESCO and the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP), and shared regional challenges in urban water management, including climate change impacts, water scarcity, floods, and droughts. Members and partner organizations presented their views, experiences, and proposals, which are summarized below:

1- Iraq, Minister of Water Resources:

H. E. Mr. Aun Dheyab stressed the centrality of urban water management for sustainable development and peaceful coexistence. He underlined the importance of regional cooperation to better manage floods, droughts and shared rivers, and reaffirmed Iraq's commitment to consultations with neighboring countries to establish clear agreements on water shares consistent with natural river flows.

2- UNESCO, Representative of Director General (IHP Secretariat)

Speaking on behalf of the Director of the Water Sciences Division, Mr. Anil Mishra highlighted that water is both a casualty of climate change and a vehicle for solutions. He recalled UNESCO's 50 years of work under the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP), now in its ninth phase: Science for a Water Secure World in a Changing Environment. He commended RCUWM for its active role in urban water management, capacity building and expert mobilization, citing recent joint training workshops hosted in Tehran.

3- Armenia, Chairman of Water Committee

Mr. Aramazd Ghalamkaryan commended the Centre's consistent role as a platform for cooperative dialogue. They emphasized the need for strengthened regional efforts in urban water resilience, climate-adaptive infrastructure, and smart water technologies. Armenia proposed establishing regular thematic exchanges or annual expert round tables and stated readiness to host a regional training program after completing preparations for COP17 on biodiversity, October 2026.

4- Oman, Ambassador of Oman to Iran

Mr. Yarub Qahtan bin Nasser Al- Busaidi highlighted its national achievements in water security, including: 93 desalination plants until 2024 producing 1.73 Mm³/day; 648 remote monitoring stations; 206 water dams with 458 million m³ capacity; over 4,000 desalination units; 190 desalination plants producing 458 million m³ (2024 data); and 67 wastewater treated plants. He reaffirmed support for regional cooperation and its readiness to engage in joint programs.

5- Qatar, Director of Water Networks Affairs, Ministry for Energy Affairs

Mr. Fahad Yousef Telfat emphasized water security as a national and regional priority within its Vision 2030 framework, highlighting advanced technologies for optimizing water consumption. Qatar expressed readiness to expand cooperation and participate actively in RCUWM future workshops, including through virtual engagement.

6- Türkiye, Project Development and Implementation Coordinator at Turkish Water Institute (SUEN), Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

Mr. Mustafa Salih Sarikaya noted growing pressures from prolonged drought, irregular rainfall and flash floods, forecasting up to a 25% decline in national water potential in coming decades. Key national targets include: reducing municipal water losses from 32% to 25% by 2030 and 10% by 2040; increasing wastewater reuse to 15% by 2030 and reducing per-capita water consumption to 120 L/day by 2030 and 100 L/day by 2050. Türkiye representative emphasized the need to integrate water loss management, smart water systems and wastewater technologies into future RCUWM priorities. He also stated that "Istanbul International Water Forum" will be held on 5-6 May 2026 under the theme of " Strengthening Water Resilience: Innovation to Action" and RCUWM members are invited to attend this event.

7- Afghanistan, Deputy Minister for Water Affairs, Ministry of Energy and Water (Online)

Mr. Mujeeb-ur-Rehman Omar Akhoondzadeh highlighted water scarcity as a growing challenge due to climate change, conflict, and weak infrastructure. The country faces declining water resources, limited access to safe drinking water, floods, and rising demand. Decades of conflict and economic sanctions have hindered effective water management and affected food security and public health. As an upstream country, Afghanistan has benefited least from its water resources and seeks fair use through cooperation. The speech emphasized on regional cooperation and water diplomacy as essential for sustainable water management.

8- Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Director for Human Resources and Sustainable Development

Mr. Husnu Tekin underlined that water management is central to Vision 2025, given rising scarcity, declining quality and competing sectoral demands. ECO presented its new initiative on resource efficiency, circular economy and climate-resilient development, and expressed readiness to harmonize approaches with RCUWM and UNESCO.

9- Oman Water Society (OWS), Chair

Mr. Zaher Al Solaimani described its role in linking governmental and non-governmental institutions, raising awareness on groundwater risks and brine management from desalination plants. He proposed organizing a regional workshop to present case studies on climate change, floods and droughts from member states.

10- Iran Meteorological Organization (IRIMO), President

Ms. Tajbakhsh reported on climate-driven extreme weather events such as flash floods, droughts, thunderstorms and heatwaves and their growing socio-economic impacts. She described the expanding role of Regional Climate Centre for the West Asia in Tehran and the regional forecasting and early warning project aligned with WMO's "Early Warnings for All (EW4All)" initiative.

11- Iranian National Commission for UNESCO, Secretary General

Mr. Fartousi emphasized the vital role of the UNESCO Category 2 Regional Centre for Urban Water Management, hosted by Iran's Ministry of Energy. He highlighted

the need for scientific, integrated approaches to tackle urban water challenges amid climate change and rapid urbanization. Stressing cooperation between national institutions and UNESCO, he reaffirmed Iran's strong water science capacity and commitment to ongoing collaboration under UNESCO's Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme and the Sustainable Development Goals.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Hajrasouliha as RCUWM director presented an overview of the Centre's structure, human resources and activities since the GBM-13 and pointed out the most important activities which the Centre is planning for 2026-7. The key points included are as follows:

1- Approved Programs (2023–2029):

Eight major programs aligned with the SDGs and UNESCO-IHP Phase IX, covering: groundwater governance; river and flood management; climate change and drought monitoring and capacity development and awareness.

2- Research and Technical Activities:

Significant implementation of regional research projects including: a Regional Drought Monitoring System (RDMS), a flood forecasting and warning system development using WRF-Hydro and GSSHA and an AI-based reservoir inflow forecasting system.

3- Capacity Building:

Nine international workshops delivered with more than 700 in-person and 7,000 virtual participants as well as strong partnerships with the Iraqi Ministry of Water Resources, WMO, GWP, UNESCO and national institutions.

4- Publications and Networking:

13 scientific books published since 2023; Five MoUs signed and a proposal to establish an annual expert working group to deepen technical collaboration.

WORK PLANS AND PROJECT PROPOSALS

RCUWM senior advisers presented a short overview on the project proposals, their objectives, method of implementation and expected outcomes and the floor was put to the Centre's member states and organizations for receiving their interests to be involved in running the projects jointly with RCUWM. A brief report on the important issues RCUWM Work Plans raised in their presentations were:

1- Work Plan No.1 – Groundwater Governance:

- Introduction of a Smart Management System using smart meters and energy–water integration;
- Pilot implementation via electricity-controlled pumping systems;
- Open offer to transfer technology to member states.

2- Work Plan No.2 – Integrated Flood Management (IFM)

- Regional collaboration under MoU between RCUWM, WMO and GWP;

- Research on a regional flood forecasting system and a reservoir inflow forecasting system;
- Upcoming workshop on flood and sediment management in Iran, January 2026.

3- Work Plan No.4 – Climate Change Adaptation:

- Regional climate impact studies across eight GB countries;
- Planned workshop in collaboration with WMO, 2026;
- Upcoming joint book on climate change adaptation experiences of GB member states.

4- Work Plan No.5 – Drought Management:

- Development of a regional drought monitoring system (RDMS) – second phase;
- Collaboration with IDMP to organize the next regional workshop on IDM;
- Future publication on integrated flood and drought management.

APPROVALS, SUGGESTIONS AND DECISIONS

• Approvals on the Director’s Report:

The member representatives presented theirs comments and suggestions on the director’s report and it was finally approved by the board members.

• Interventions and Contributions by GB members:

Armenia: willingness to host a regional training workshop in 2027.

Qatar: request for the list of focal points and readiness to participate remotely in all future workshops.

Oman Water Society (OWS): proposal for a regional seminar on case studies of climate change, floods and drought.

Türkiye: suggestion to incorporate smart water systems, wastewater technologies and leakage management into RCUWM work plans.

• Call for Proposals:

The Chair requested all member states to submit their final proposals within one month to the RCUWM Secretariat (info@rcuwm.org.ir) with a Cc to Mr. Alireza Salamat, RCUWM Deputy (alirezasalamat10@gmail.com).

- It was agreed to form a working group to discuss the ongoing and planned projects at the technical level. All countries were asked to introduce their focal points within a period of one month in order to hold the working group meeting annually.

• Next Governing Board Meeting:

The members were asked to correspond their interest in holding the next Governing Board meeting at ministerial and/or focal point level in 2007 to RCUWM secretariat (above email contacts) so that further arrangements could be made in concern with the venue and date of the 15th GB meeting.

Closure of the Meeting

At the end, the Chair, expressed appreciation for the constructive discussions and the active participation of all delegates. He invited participants to take the opportunity to learn about Iran's latest water and wastewater-related technologies during their stay. In his closing remarks, the Chair confirmed that RCUWM will correspond with member states regarding upcoming meetings and venues and welcomed future offers to host Governing Board meetings.

The meeting was adjourned with thanks to all participants, partners and organizers.

3- ANNEXES

Annex 1- List of participants

Section	Name & Affiliation
RCUWM	H.E. Mr. Abbas Aliabadi, GB Chair and Minister of Energy, Iran
	Mr. Mohammad Hajrasouliha, Director, RCUWM-Tehran
	Mr. Alireza Salamat, Deputy, RCUWM-Tehran
	Mr. Naser Dehghanian, In charge of Research and Capacity Building
Member States	Mr. Saeed Alipour, In charge of Networking and Information
	Afghanistan, H.E. Mr. Mujeeb-ur-Rehman Omar Akhoondzadeh, Deputy for Water Affairs, Minister of Energy and Water (Online)
	Armenia, Mr. Aramazd Ghalamkaryan, Chairman of Water Committee
	Armenia, Mr. Grigor Hakobyan, Ambassador of Armenia in Iran
	Iran, Mr. Janbaz, Deputy Minister of Energy for Water and Wastewater Affairs
	Iraq, H.E. Mr. Aun Dheyab Abdullah, Minister of Water Resources
	Iraq, Mr. Ammar Adil Hussein Al Maliki, Director General of Baghdad Water, Ministry of Water Resources
	Iraq, Mohanad Abo Alsamon, Ministry of Water Resources
	Oman, Mr. Yarub Qahtan bin Nasser Al- Busaidi, Ambassador of Oman in Iran
	Oman, Mr. Naser Al – Battashi, Director of Water Resources
	Qatar, Mr. Fahad Yousef Telfat, Director of Water Networks Affairs, State of Energy Affairs
	Qatar, Mr. Abdullah Al Jassim, Director of International Cooperation, State of Energy Affairs
	Switzerland, Ms. Valerie Wagner, First Secretary, Embassy of Switzerland to Iran
Observers	Tajikistan, Mr. Bahodur Nazir, Counsellor, Embassy of Tajikistan in Iran
	Tajikistan, Mr. Hokimiddin Rahmonov, First Secretary, Embassy of Tajikistan in Iran
	Türkiye, Turkish Water Institute (SUEN), Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
	UNESCO, Mr. Anil Mishra, Chief of the Hydrological Systems, Climate Change and Adaptation Section (online)
	ECO, Mr. Husnu Tekin, Director for Human Resources and Sustainable Development
	Oman Water Society (OWS), Mr. Zaher Al Solaimani, Chairman
	Iranian National Commission for UNESCO, Mr. Hassan Fartousi, Secretary General
	Iran Meteorological Organization, Ms. Tajbakhsh, President, IRIMO
	Ministry of Energy, Iran, Mr. Mohammad Vali Alaeddini, Head of Centre for International Affairs
	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Iran, Morteza Hamisi, Head of International Scientific Cooperation Bureau

Annex 2- Agenda

NO.	Time	Item
1	08:30 – 08:50	Transfer (from Hotel to Convention Hall)
2	08:50 – 09:00	Registration
3	09:00 – 09:10	National Anthem and Reciting the Holy Quran
4	09:10 – 09:20	Opening, Minister of Energy & RCUWM GB Chair
5	09:20 – 10:10	Speech by Representative of UNESCO-DG (5 mins) Speeches by GB Members at the ministerial level (8 mins) Speeches by other GB members (5 mins)
6	10:10 – 10:25	Director Report on the activities between the 13 th and 14 th GBMs and work plan of the next year
7	10:25 – 11:00	Presentation of 4 proposals by RCUWM Scientific Advisors
8	11:00 – 11:20	Comments and approvals on the director's report Interventions & contributions by GB Members on the Proposals
9	11:20 – 11:25	Determining the venue and tentative date of the next GBM
10	11:25 – 11:30	Closing & group photo
11	11:30 – 13:00	Visit to the International Water & Wastewater Exhibition
11	13:00 – 13:30	Transfer (Parsian Azadi Hotel for Lunch Ceremony)
12	13:30 – 15:00	Luncheon Reception