

Concept Note

Side Event: Enhancing Water Capacity for Resilient Cities

Toyota City, Japan

Tuesday, 15 October 2025, 17:15–18:45

Background and Objective

The UN-Water SDG 6 Capacity Development Initiative (CDI) is co-coordinated by UN DESA and UNESCO, with technical support from IHE Delft, Cap-Net, and a broad coalition of 41 UN-Water members and partners. The initiative responds to formal country requests to strengthen institutional and human capacity for accelerating progress on SDG 6.

To date, six pilot countries—Costa Rica, The Gambia, Cuba, Panama, Jordan, and Madagascar—have initiated the CDI process. High-level multi-stakeholder workshops were successfully held in Costa Rica (December 2024) and The Gambia (August 2025), focusing on gap assessments, coordinated planning, and sustainable capacity development strategies.

While CDI is not a direct project funding mechanism, it supports countries in building enabling environments through inclusive planning, inter-ministerial coordination, and partnerships with donor institutions. Cities play a critical role in achieving SDG 6, particularly in adapting to climate risks, managing urbanization, and modernizing infrastructure.

This side event—organized during the 2025 International Mayors Forum—aims to bridge national experiences with city-level action, demonstrating how CDI's demand-driven, capacity-first model can support local governments in delivering resilient and inclusive water and sanitation services.

Objectives

- Introduce the purpose, structure, and city-level relevance of the CDI;
- Share lessons and approaches from pilot countries such as Costa Rica and The Gambia;
- Present examples of international technical cooperation for capacity development (MLIT, UNCRD, UN-Habitat);
- Highlight city-driven innovations using advanced technology (e.g., Toyota City's ALOS-2 satellite leak detection);
- Facilitate dialogue among cities, national actors, and UN partners on aligning support with local needs.
- Explore city-specific capacity needs for sustainable water management and resilient service delivery.
- Strengthen international collaboration among city leaders, UN entities, and capacity development networks.
- Mobilize interest among cities and local governments to join or align with the CDI process.

Outline of the Session

Date and time: 17:15–18:45, Tuesday, 15 October 2025

Venue: Toyota City, Aichi Prefecture, Japan

Organizers: UN DESA, with proposed co-organizers including UN-Water, UNCRD, MLIT Japan, UN-Habitat

Language: English

Agenda

1. Opening Segment (10 minutes)

- Remarks by UN DESA
- Remarks by Toyota City

2. Introduction to CDI (10 minutes)

- Speaker: UN DESA
- Overview of CDI's objectives, structure, and pilot country experiences (Costa Rica, The Gambia)

3. Organizational Lightning Presentations (3x7 minutes = 21 minutes)

- MLIT: MLIT's Technical cooperation and human resource development in water sector
- UN-Habitat: Resilient and inclusive WASH governance
- UNCRD: Capacity building and integrated urban planning

4. City Innovation Case – Toyota City (10 minutes)

- Presentation on ALOS-2-based smart leak detection in water services

5. Local Government Comment (5 minutes)

- Short reflection on SDG 6 priorities from a participating mayor

6. Moderated Dialogue (30 minutes)

- Moderator: Mr. Yosuke Tomizawa, UN DESA
- Interactive Q&A with prepared questions for each speaker
- If time permits, selected audience input may be invited

7. Closing Segment (4 minutes)

- Wrap-up and call to action for cities to engage with CDI
- Group photo and networking