

PANEL DISCUSSION 6

Thematic Significance and National Reality Check of Water Related Culture and Heritage for Present and Future Water Security and Water Safety

October 21, 2026

10.30am – 12.00pm (GMT +8)

Introduction

This year water security and water safety were seriously affected worldwide because of wildfires, droughts and floods. All over the world water managers are under great pressure to cope with the apparent changes in the hydrological cycle. This new reality for water managers will be discussed at the UNFCCC Climate Conference in Antalya, Türkiye in November 2026 and at the UN Water Conference in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates in December 2026. But what can water managers learn from historic water management? The ICOMOS ISC Water & Heritage (ISCWATER) in collaboration with partners will plead for recognition of the significance of historic water management systems for the new reality, starting at the ICOMOS General Assembly 2026 (GA2026) in Kuching, Malaysia and followed by sessions at the COP31 in Antalya, Türkiye and the UN Water Conference in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

The Panel at the GA2026 will be discussing the relevance of water related culture and heritage in the face of the present and future challenges through:

- a. A tour d'hORIZON of the significance of water related heritage for water management systems such as terraces, coastal areas and water supplies
- b. A reality check on the significance of water related culture and heritage at national level on present and future water management challenges

Programme Moderator/Chair: Henk van Schaik

10.30 – 10.40 am **Introduction:** Meisha Hunter (ISCWater President)

10.40 – 11.10 am **Tour d'hORIZON (max 3 minutes 5 slides per speaker)**

1. Site(s)
2. Significance for water security and water safety/livelihood of local communities
3. Actions

Themes:

- Terraced irrigation (Haiming Yan, Kae Oyama, Tomeu Daya)
- Coastal land and water scapes (Sinite Yu, Afzal Azhari, Paola Nella Branduini, Patiphol Yodsurang)
- Water collection systems (Figen Kivilcim, Mooyoung Han)

11.10 – 11.20 am	Discussion on themes
11.20 – 11.25 am	Intervention: Jonathan Bell (World Monuments Fund, WMF)
11.25 – 12.00 pm	Reality check national level recognition of water related culture and heritage for present and future water security, water safety and livelihoods. <i>National recognition, present activities and future (all tbc)</i> ○ India, Priyanka Singh ○ The Netherlands, Lian The ○ Italy, Maria Teresa Iaquina ○ Australia, Ian Travers ○ Turkiye, Figen Kivilcim ○ China, Haiming Yan ○ Estonia, Ave Paulus ○ Morocco, Saida Bathaoui Discussion: 1. Motivation for National Scientific Committee Water and Heritage 2. Objective(s) and scope/theme 3. Activities 4. Outputs