

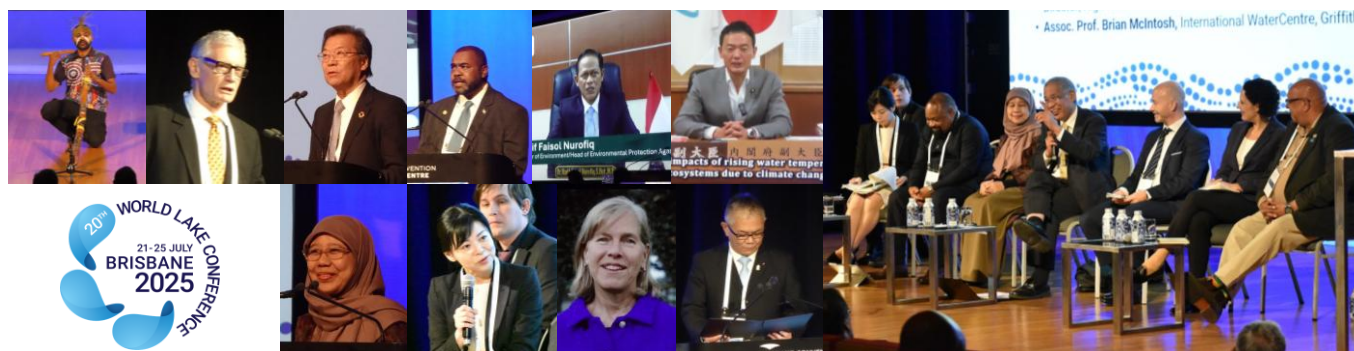


NEWSLETTER

– Save Water, Save Lakes –

International Lake Environment Committee Foundation

This newsletter is also available in Japanese.



WLC20 | Lakes as Sentinels for Integrated River Basin Management

From July 21 to 25, 2025, ILEC and Griffith University co-organized the 20th World Lake Conference (WLC20) in Brisbane, Australia. The conference welcomed 322 participants from 27 countries.

The opening ceremony began with a vibrant traditional performance by Indigenous representatives, followed by congratulatory remarks from the organizers, the Government of Australia, and the State of Queensland.

Subsequently, H.E. Mr. Bulitavu, Minister for Environment and Climate Change of Fiji; H.E. Dr. Nurofiq, Minister of Environment and Forestry of Indonesia; and H.E. Mr. Nakada, State Minister of the Environment of Japan, took the stage. H.E. Mr. Bulitavu remarked that “Lakes do not only reflect what is broken; they also show us what is possible,” while pointing out the limitations of fragmented water management. He underscored the importance of integrated basin management, linking forests to coastlines, and urged that lakes be treated as a national and global priority. H.E. Dr. Nurofiq, reflecting on Indonesia’s leadership in spearheading the adoption of World Lake Day at the United Nations, stressed, “Let it not be ceremonial alone. Let it mark a turning point—toward real action.” He further proposed building a hub for international cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. H.E. Mr. Nakada reflected on Japan’s experience in overcoming pollution and restoring lakes, stating, “When we restore the environment, nature responds.” He called for humility in facing nature and for stronger international knowledge-sharing.

The subsequent panel discussion featured high-level officials from Australia, Japan, Indonesia, and Tanzania, as well as Vice Governor Kishimoto from Shiga Prefecture. The discussion explored the future of lakes, the challenges faced by each country, and shared lessons and best practices. It also delved deeply into strong messages related to the UN Water Conference and World Lake Day, and their connection to the Brisbane Declaration. Vice Governor Kishimoto emphasized the importance of approaching lake conservation from three perspectives: present, past, and future.

This was followed by a lecture from Australia on the cultural value of country and the importance of understanding water quality and climate change for Indigenous people.

As the closing of the opening ceremony, messages were delivered from Dr. Gardner, Director of the Ecosystems Division at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Dr. Mumba, the Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands, and Mr. Mekata, Chairperson of the Shiga Prefectural Assembly, on the occasion of the first World Lake Day, which was established last year and is being celebrated for the first time this year. Dr. Gardner emphasized, “World Lake Day is not just a celebration, it’s a reminder of how deeply lakes are woven into our lives.”

The 21st WLC is to be held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in the summer of 2027. ILEC will continue to advance efforts toward Sustainable Lake Management (SLM) worldwide.



MEANJIN BRISBANE DECLARATION

At each WLC, a declaration is issued outlining guidelines for the environmental conservation and sustainable lake management. The key points of the declaration adopted at WLC20 are as follows. The full declaration is available on the official WLC20 website.

Preamble

Lakes store most of the Earth's freshwater and have long been essential to human life and ecosystems. However, today they face serious crises due to pollution, overuse, and climate change. Safeguarding the sustainability of lakes is vital for sustainable development, climate resilience, and biodiversity conservation. In acknowledging the inaugural UN World Lake Day on 27 August and recognising the 2023 UNEA Resolution on sustainable lake management, the international community declares that the sustainability of lakes and their basins must be integrated into all global, national, and local actions. We commit to advancing practical solutions, strengthening governance, and fostering inclusive collaboration to secure the future of the world's lakes.

Principles for Lake Sustainability

1. Lakes are essential to life and planetary health.
2. Lakes are connected systems, not isolated waterbodies.
3. Lakes are sentinels of environmental and societal change.
4. Lake degradation undermines planetary sustainability goals.
5. Indigenous Peoples and local communities must lead.
6. Climate change demands urgent and adaptive responses.

Commitments to Action | We commit to protect and restore lake ecosystems and catchments by:

- Integrating lakes and their specific indicators into national and global policy frameworks
- Advancing integrated basin-scale coordination
- Supporting Indigenous and community stewardship
- Strengthening monitoring and research
- Promoting innovation and technology transfer to support lake sustainability
- Investing in sustainable lake financing
- Educating and engaging emerging generations, communities, and civil society

A Global Call to Action | WE CALL ON YOU

- Governments: Implement science-based lake policies and management.
- United Nations: Include lakes in the post-SDG framework.
- International Organizations: Prioritize lakes in agreements and funding.
- Scientific Community: Develop tools and improve threat understanding.
- Private Sector: Disclose lake impacts and adopt nature-positive practices.
- Civil Society: Reconnect with and advocate for lakes.

Full Declaration



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