



## Press Release **Immediate release: 8 November, 2021**

### **COP26 – Landmark ‘Fair Water Footprints’ Declaration sets out to tackle world water crisis**

**November 8, 2021, Glasgow** - The Glasgow Declaration for Fair Water Footprints - a groundbreaking step towards transforming the way the world's water resources are managed to build climate resilience and support the needs of ecosystems, communities and businesses, saw its global launch today at COP26. The Declaration's founding partners bring together some of the wealthiest and poorest countries on the planet with a population totalling 170 million, and nominal GDP of \$4.1 trillion. They include the Governments of the UK, Austria, Finland, Madagascar, Malawi, Panama, and Peru, working alongside multinational corporations and investment companies such as Unilever, Diageo and ACTIAM, and civil society organisations, including Water Witness, CDP and WaterAid.

Lord Goldsmith, UK Minister of State, who signed the declaration on behalf of the UK Government, said;

‘Water sustains life on earth and is vital to limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees. But how we manage our water to produce the food, clothes and goods we consume, shapes water and climate security for millions of people across the globe. Similarly, if we fail to protect the ecosystems that provide clean water, we will always be playing a desperate game of catch-up. The Glasgow Declaration for Fair Water Footprints is an opportunity to harness our water footprints so that they do no harm, but rather benefit people, our economy and our planet’.

Signatories to the Declaration commit to eliminate water pollution and over-extraction from rivers and aquifers; improve flood and drought risk management; and bring greater accountability to ensure that investment and economic activity protect and work with nature by 2030. The Declaration will also deliver on the human right to water, and drive universal access to safe water, toilets, and handwashing facilities.

Investors and multinationals currently influence as much as 70% of the world's water through farming, mining and manufacturing processes, and can contribute to the widespread over-exploitation and pollution of water resources, denying local people access to safe water and exposing them to climate impacts and disease. Over 60% of the water needed to produce the UK's food, clothing and consumer goods is used overseas – often in water stressed countries facing severe climate challenges.

Nancy Tembo, Minister for Forestry and Natural Resources with the Government of Malawi, said;

‘The Government of Malawi is delighted to sign the Declaration for Fair Water Footprints. It is an inspiring example of the bold leadership the world needs in the face of the climate emergency. It will ensure that businesses and investors in Malawi and across Africa, protect and respect nature and the human right to water. It will help our water dependent economies to grow and thrive long into the future.’

Nick Hepworth, Executive Director of Water Witness, who has been a driving force behind the Declaration, said;

‘This Declaration is a breakthrough moment for global climate and water justice. It marks the beginning of the end for the abuse of water, nature, and people in our globalised supply chains, which pushes the most vulnerable further into climate catastrophe. We will work tirelessly with the founding signatories to ensure that responsible water stewardship becomes the global business norm, instead of the exception.’

**Notes for Editors:**

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**The Glasgow Declaration for Fair Water Footprints signing event** at COP26 at 13.30 GMT on 5 November as part of the 'Marrakech Partnership Water Action Event'. It will feature short presentations from a selection of Declaration champions, including Lord Goldsmith representing the UK Government, Minister Nancy Tembo from the Government of Malawi and partners from the private sector and civil society. A second, longer event, 'Fair water footprints in the race to climate resilience' will be held at 0800-0930 hrs GMT on 8 November at the Water Pavilion, during which the Declaration will be signed by additional signatories and discussed in more depth.

Journalists can attend both events which will be live streamed via the Water Pavilion YouTube Livestream on [www.waterforclimate.net](http://www.waterforclimate.net)

Signatories and partners of the Glasgow Declaration for Fair Water Footprints include, the Governments of UK, Finland, Malawi, Peru, Madagascar, Austria and Panama; Multinationals Diageo, Sainsbury's and Unilever; Investment companies ACTIAM and Edentree; Civil society organisations and NGOs - Water Witness, CDP, Water Integrity Network, WaterAid, Baseflow, CEPES, Water Footprint Network and Africa's Civil Society Network for Water.

To learn more about the Glasgow Declaration for Fair Water Footprints see [www.fairwaterfootprints.org](http://www.fairwaterfootprints.org)

Learning resources on Fair Water Footprints are available [here](#) and case studies [here](#)

## Quotes from Declaration Champions

“The Government of Malawi is delighted to sign the Declaration for Fair Water Footprints. It is an inspiring example of the bold leadership the world needs in the face of the climate emergency.”

Mrs Nancy Tembo MP, Minister for Forestry and Natural Resources, Malawi

“The Glasgow Declaration represents a unique partnership...We are united in the common ambition of managing water in a more equitable and sustainable way, that benefits people, our economies and our planet.”

Rt. Hon Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park, Minister for Pacific and the Environment at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)

“The declaration is in line with Finland's national policy and strategies, as well as work to promote the export of Finnish water know-how and water responsibility.”

Mr Jari Leppä, Minister for Agriculture and Forestry, Finland

“Sainsbury's will play a key role in helping to shape and establish the roadmap to deliver this Declaration alongside others. With knowledge of our supply chains we will put our energies where they will have the greatest impact, working collectively and transparently from a global to local level.”

Ruth Cranston, Sainsbury's Group Head of Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability

“Diageo is a proud signatory of the Glasgow Declaration for Fair Water Footprints at COP26. Water is a resource we're all reliant upon for our health, livelihoods and businesses. This Declaration will help us all to work together to address the global water crisis and build a more climate resilient future for some of the most vulnerable communities in the world.”

Ewan Andrew, Chief Sustainability Officer, Diageo

“We are delighted to support The Glasgow Declaration for Fair Water Footprints. As long-term responsible investors, we expect our investee companies to demonstrate strong operational water stewardship and respect for the human right to water by ensuring a fair water footprint.”

Carlota Esguevillas, Responsible Investment Analyst, EdenTree

“This Declaration is a breakthrough moment for global climate and water justice. It marks the beginning of the end for the abuse of water, nature, and people in our globalised supply chains, which pushes the most vulnerable further into climate catastrophe. We will work tirelessly with the founding signatories to ensure that responsible water stewardship becomes the global business norm, instead of the exception.”

Nick Hepworth, Director, Water Witness International

“GWP is proud to sign the Glasgow Declaration for Fair Water Footprints for Climate-Resilient, Inclusive, and Sustainable Development. We commit to take transformative action for fair water footprints which will have durable benefits for communities, ecosystems, and economies across the world.”

Dario Soto Abril, Chief Executive Officer, GWP

“Trade with Africa must no longer be based on the overexploitation of our natural resources, tragic conditions for our workers, or drive vulnerability within our communities. The solutions needed to ensure responsible water use throughout our global economy are already at hand. What has been lacking has been the leadership and shared commitment to make it happen. Until now.”  
Sareen Malik, Executive Secretary of the African Civil Society Network for Water and Sanitation (ANEW)

“The importance of this commitment by governments, banks and private companies to ensure Fair Water Footprints by 2030 cannot be underestimated. We’re convinced that the benefits will be felt in communities across the world as it builds resilience, drives sustainable use and prevents pollution. It’s a key step towards ensuring that everyone, everywhere has access to water, sanitation and hygiene services by 2030.”

Tim Wainwright, Chief Executive, WaterAid