

Press Release

3rd Conference on Water Neutrality **“Collective Action for a Water Neutral Industry by 2030”** **26 February 2026, Tamarind Hall, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi**

Government Committed to Empowering Industry through Incentives for Innovation in Water Solutions: NWM

CII Water Pledge calls on Industry to Commit to Responsible, Future Ready Water Management

India’s water challenges require moving beyond dialogue to practical, scalable solutions built through innovation, partnerships and cooperation, said, **Mr Sumant Narain**, Joint Secretary, National Water Mission, Ministry of Jal Shakti. He was speaking at the 3rd Conference on Water Neutrality with the theme “Collective action for a Water Neutral Industry by 2030” organised by CII Water Institute, Centre of Excellence on Water, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) at New Delhi today.

Mr Narain highlighted major opportunities for industry collaboration in India’s water sector, including the newly launched Jal Shakti Hackathon that opens government-funded R&D to startups, MSMEs and academia to create low-cost water-efficiency solutions. He urged industries to share good practices for learning and cross learning, leverage incentives for water conservation, and adopt voluntary targets to ensure sustainable water management for future generations.

A Water Pledge was also launched by CII during the conference. Aligned with the mandate of the National Water Mission (NWM) to improve Water Use Efficiency (WUE) by 20% across irrigation, domestic, and industrial sectors, and in line with the Bureau of Water Use Efficiency (BWUE)’s focus on targeted water efficiency interventions, the Water Pledge calls on industries across sectors to make voluntary, future-ready commitments to responsible water management for creating a water secure future. Through collective action, the pledge aims to drive Indian industry towards achieving **Water Neutrality by 2030**.

Mr Narain, while unveiling the pledge emphasized that voluntary action by industry today will shape India's water landscape tomorrow. Collaboration and innovation must be our shared pathway forward, stressed Mr Narain

Mr. Ashis Banerjee, Chief Engineer, Irrigation Management Organization, Central Water Commission highlighted India's deeply skewed water distribution, with two-thirds of resources concentrated in the Ganga and Brahmaputra basins and 85% of water consumed by irrigation. He stressed the need to enhance efficiency through modernized dams, piped distribution networks, and drip and sprinkler systems to unlock water for growing industrial demand. For industries, he emphasized strict water audits, recycling and reuse, and protecting groundwater quality. He urged stakeholders to contribute recommendations to strengthen national water policies.

Mr Avinash Mishra, Senior Advisor, CII-Water Institute & Former Advisor, NITI Aayog highlighted the urgent need for industries to voluntarily reduce water consumption as India faces shrinking per-capita water availability and growing risk of water bankruptcy, as flagged by the UN. Aligning with the Viksit Bharat vision, he stressed strengthening water efficiency, enforcing audits, and accelerating reuse, recycling, recharge and replenishment to decouple economic growth from escalating water demand. He shared that the concept of Water Neutrality is gaining recognition in the industry and over 100+ plants have adopted the *Water Neutrality Guidelines* developed by NITI Aayog with CII as the knowledge partner, focusing on ecosystem health.

Mr K. Ganesh, Director Sustainability and Corporate Affairs, Bisleri International Private Limited underscored Bisleri's commitment to responsible water stewardship through reduce, reuse, recycle, replenish and reporting through comprehensive water stewardship strategy, both *within the fence* and *beyond the fence* initiatives. He emphasized lifecycle water assessment and urged industry-wide collaboration to protect water resources for future generations.

Ms Shilpa Nischal, Executive Director, CII Water Institute, emphasized that achieving *water neutrality* is central to ensuring both water security. She emphasized that water neutrality extends beyond calculations to safeguarding water quality, ecosystem health, preventing misuse, and ensuring responsible water use. Concluding, she reaffirmed CII's vision for industry-wide *water neutrality by 2030* and voluntary adoption of water use efficiency targets through collaboration and shared accountability.

Technical sessions discussed technological interventions, and best practices aimed at enhancing water use efficiency, watershed management and ecosystem health. The deliberations highlighted the need for the industry to move from reactive to proactive approach with adoption of technological innovations, the implementation of measuring and monitoring provisions, and adoption of best practices in that are followed in various sectors.

The conference witnessed participation of over 100 stakeholders including officers from central government ministries/departments, Industry, Academia and NGOs.

26-02-2026

New Delhi