

Press Review — 13th TCE/IWRM-WA, 6th MMC and FREAO 2026 (Abidjan, 21-25 September 2026)

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General overview

Abidjan Water Week (21-25 September 2026) generated around 44 media items, with a uniformly positive tone and one dominant message: in West Africa, water is becoming a matter of sovereignty, peace and regional integration.

Coverage closely followed the three-stage institutional sequence: the 13th session of the Technical Committee of Experts (TCE/IWRM-WA), the 6th session of the Ministerial Monitoring Committee (MMC) and the first edition of the West Africa Regional Water Forum (FREAO). The adoption of the Abidjan Declaration and the announcement of Praia (Cabo Verde) for 2028 were the two most widely reported items.

Media type	Items	Main outlets
Online press	19	AIP, APAnews, KOACI, Linfodrome, Fratmat.info, Abidjan.net, Gouv.ci, Pressecotedivoire
Print press	13	Fraternité Matin, L'Inter, Soir Info, Le Nouveau Réveil, Le Patriote, Le Rassemblement
Television and video	7	RTI 1, NCI, Business24 Africa, other news bulletins broadcast on YouTube
Social media	5	Atoou.com, Ministry of Water and Forests (Facebook)

Phase 1 — 13th session of the Technical Committee of Experts (21-22 September)

The press presented the opening of the experts' work on Monday 21 September at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Abidjan Port-Bouët, as the start of a "decisive week" for water governance in the sub-region.

Dominant angle: experts mandated to guide the ministers. Linfodrome headlined the two days the experts had to guide ECOWAS ministers. L'Inter (Franck Souhane) detailed their mandate: assessing the implementation of the Regional Water Policy, progress towards SDG 6 and the sector's financing mechanisms. The paper stressed that their conclusions would feed directly into the MMC and FREAO.

The water crisis context was widely reported. Soir Info ("Abidjan at the centre of West African cooperation") and KOACI emphasised droughts, floods, ecosystem degradation and demographic pressure. APAnews summed up the stakes with the headline that the future of water in West Africa is being decided in Abidjan.

Voices quoted:

- **Alexis Kouakou Kouassi**, Director of the ECOWAS Water Resources Management Centre (WRMC), was the most widely quoted regional institutional voice. L'Inter picked up his statement that IWRM is "a matter of survival and a powerful lever for regional integration", and that the experts' conclusions should be "bold but also realistic".
- **Eugène Yéo**, Director General of Water Resources of Côte d'Ivoire, speaking for the national organising committee, listed the challenges: climate change, population growth and ecosystem degradation.
- **Chief Conservator Zouzou Elvire-Joëlle**, Chief of Staff representing the Minister of Water and Forests, highlighted the new Water Code adopted in 2023 and the new national water policy. AIP made this its headline: Côte d'Ivoire reaffirms its commitment.

Other coverage: Le Nouveau Réveil ("ECOWAS seeks to strengthen cooperation on water"), AIP ("ECOWAS strengthens regional consultation"), Pressecotedivoire ("a technical committee of experts in conclave in Abidjan"), Opera News, and an article headlined "Abidjan, water capital for 3 days" (by Omar Abdel Kader Tani, publication to be confirmed).

Phase 2 — 6th session of the IWRM Ministerial Monitoring Committee (23 September)

On Wednesday 23 September, coverage shifted from the technical to the political, with a repeated call for States to place water at the heart of development policies.

Dominant angle: moving from agreements to results. Atoou.com reported that the MMC Chair, Cheikh Tidiane Dièye, Senegal's Minister of Water and Sanitation, set out the central challenge: turning decades of institutional agreements into tangible benefits for the population. Soir Info ("Water at the heart of development: the call to States") reported his appeal to speak with one voice on infrastructure financing, climate resilience, transboundary cooperation and data sharing.

A more alarmist tone in part of the press. L'Inter headlined that the ministers in charge of water "paint an alarming picture" and recalled the goal of a common position for the United Nations Water Conference scheduled in Abu Dhabi in December 2026. KOACI focused on the call for financial mobilisation and stronger governance.

Regional reading. APAnews ("ECOWAS accelerates transboundary management") and Abidjan.net ("ECOWAS brings together experts and ministers") gave ECOWAS greater visibility as the lead institution of the process. AIP and Opera News echoed the idea of strengthened regional cooperation.

Voices quoted: Cheikh Tidiane Dièye (Senegal), MMC Chair; Jacques Assahoré Konan, Ivorian Minister of Water and Forests, who reaffirmed the country's commitment to equitable and concerted management of the resource.

Phase 3 — FREAO 2026 and the Abidjan Declaration (24–25 September)

FREAO drew the largest volume of coverage: the press presented it as a historic gathering, concluded by a regional "pact" built around five commitments and a follow-up mechanism.

Opening (24 September): water as a matter of State

The opening by Prime Minister Robert Beugré Mambé gave the event its political dimension. Le Rassemblement made it its front page ("Water management: the ills holding back West Africa — Mambé makes his diagnosis and proposes") and headlined an inside page "Mambé urges West Africa to cooperate". Linfodrome (Djomandé Aziz) reported that Abidjan was laying the foundations of hydro-diplomacy around 28 shared basins. The Mono Basin Authority described Abidjan as the centre of gravity of West African hydro-diplomacy.

Closing (25 September): five commitments

Almost every outlet detailed the content of the Abidjan Declaration, adopted under the theme "Valuing water to transform West Africa":

1. **Water-Energy-Food-Environment Nexus**, with particular attention to the Fouta Djallon highlands, presented as the region's water tower.
2. **Financing water infrastructure**: public-private partnerships, green and blue bonds, climate funds.
3. **Gender, youth and inclusion** in decision-making bodies and in the sector's opportunities.
4. **Regional cooperation and hydro-diplomacy**: support for basin organisations, and preservation of transboundary achievements whatever the geopolitical developments.
5. **A common West African position** for the 2026 United Nations Water Conference.

The follow-up mechanism (a regional committee, a roadmap within three months, a biennial report on the state of water) was reported notably by Atoou.com and in an article by Marina Nouan. Le Nouveau Réveil saw it as a "roadmap for water security"; Fraternité Matin headlined "The States of the sub-region seal a pact"; Le Patriote referred to the foundations of community-wide water governance.

Most widely quoted statements (Jacques Assahoré Konan): "The time has now come for action"; "History will not remember what we declared, but what we will have achieved"; "The group is always stronger than the strongest member of the group."

Panel messages, relayed mainly by Atoou.com: the urgency of investing given the cost of inaction, moving from project preparation to bankability, "data diplomacy" based on transparent sharing of hydrological information, and strong political leadership to break down silos within the nexus.

Praia announcement. Cabo Verde will host the second edition in 2028; Linfodrome headlined the baton being passed to Cabo Verde. The official Gouv.ci portal relayed the Minister's call for regional mobilisation around the Declaration.

Broadcast and social media

Television focused on the FREAO opening on 24 September, giving the event national prime-time exposure.

Television. RTI 1's 8 pm news (presented by Marie Laure N'Goran) and NCI News covered the opening on 24 September; NCI highlighted the idea of "Abidjan, regional water capital". Another news bulletin on 24 September (presented by Alann Itoua) and Le 7Actu on 25 September (6 am edition) also covered the story, the latter from the angle of pooling the efforts of West African countries.

Web video formats. Business24 Africa published a report on the sustainability of water resources and an interview on water issues with the Director General of Water Resources, presented under the name "Dr. Eugene YAO". The gala dinner celebrating the "Water Builders", held on the sidelines of FREAO, was the subject of a dedicated video.

Social media. Atoou.com covered all three highlights on Facebook with detailed reports, including the most complete summary of the panel conclusions. The Ministry of Water and Forests shared the Minister's closing speech (25 reactions, 13 comments and 23 shares at the time of capture).

Annex — Summary table of media coverage

Items listed in chronological order; "n.d." indicates a date missing from the capture.

Date	Outlet	Type	Headline / subject
21/09	APAnews	Online	The future of water in West Africa is being decided in Abidjan
21/09	Linfodrome	Online	Experts have two days to guide ECOWAS ministers
21/09	AIP	Online	Côte d'Ivoire reaffirms its commitment to sustainable water resources management
21/09	AIP	Online	ECOWAS strengthens regional consultation for sustainable water resources management
21/09	KOACI	Online	Sub-regional experts seek a common strategy
21/09	Opera News	Online	Abidjan hosts the 13th session of the IWRM Technical Committee of Experts

Date	Outlet	Type	Headline / subject
22/09	Pressecotedivoire	Online	A technical committee of experts in conclave in Abidjan
22/09	Le Nouveau Réveil	Print	ECOWAS seeks to strengthen cooperation on water
n.d.	L'Inter	Print	Experts assess the Regional Water Policy and financing mechanisms
n.d.	Publication to be confirmed	Print	Abidjan, water capital for 3 days
n.d.	Publication to be confirmed	Print	ECOWAS calls for stronger cooperation on water
23/09	Soir Info No. 9558	Print	Abidjan at the centre of West African cooperation
23/09	APAnews	Online	Water: in Abidjan, ECOWAS accelerates transboundary management
23/09	KOACI	Online	West Africa calls for financial mobilisation and stronger governance
23/09	Abidjan.net	Online	ECOWAS brings together experts and ministers in Abidjan
23/09	Opera News	Online	ECOWAS ministers strengthen regional cooperation in Abidjan
23/09	Atoou.com	Social media	Opening of the 6th MMC session
24/09	AIP	Online	West African States urged to place water at the heart of development policies
24/09	Linfodrome	Online	Abidjan lays the foundations of hydro-diplomacy around 28 water basins
24/09	RTI 1 — 8 pm News	Television	Opening of FREAO

Date	Outlet	Type	Headline / subject
24/09	NCI News	Television	FREAO 2026: Abidjan, regional water capital
24/09	News bulletin (Alann Itoua)	Television	Opening of FREAO
25/09	Le 7Actu	Television	Protecting water: towards pooled efforts by West African countries
25/09	Mono Basin Authority	Online	Abidjan hosts the 1st edition of FREAO to transform the region
25/09	KOACI	Online	West Africa seals a pact to make water a lever for development
n.d.	Le Rassemblement	Print	Front page: The ills holding back West Africa; inside page: Mambé urges West Africa to cooperate
n.d.	Business24 Africa	Web video	Sustainability of water resources
n.d.	Business24 Africa	Web video	Interview on water issues (Director General of Water Resources)
n.d.	YouTube	Web video	"Water Builders" gala dinner
n.d.	Linfodrome	Online	Abidjan adopts the Abidjan Declaration and passes the baton to Cabo Verde
26/09	Fratmat.info	Online	West African States reaffirm their commitments
26/09	Gouv.ci	Online	The Minister calls for regional mobilisation around the Abidjan Declaration
26/09	Pressecotedivoire	Online	FREAO closing: a declaration calling for stronger regional cooperation
26/09	Atoou.com	Social media	FREAO closing: Cabo Verde will host the 2nd edition

Date	Outlet	Type	Headline / subject
26/09	L'Inter No. 8463	Print	Ministers in charge of water paint an alarming picture
n.d.	Soir Info No. 9561	Print	Water at the heart of development: the call to States
n.d.	Soir Info	Print	Abidjan Declaration adopted to strengthen regional cooperation on water
n.d.	Le Nouveau Réveil	Print	West Africa adopts a roadmap for its water security
n.d.	Le Patriote	Print	The Abidjan Declaration lays the foundations of community-wide water governance
n.d.	Publication to be confirmed (Marina Nouan)	Print	West African States make five commitments for sustainable water management
28/09	Fraternité Matin	Print	The States of the sub-region seal a pact
n.d.	Ministry of Water and Forests	Social media	Closing speech by Minister Assahoré Konan
n.d.	Atoou.com	Social media	Post on Abidjan Water Week
n.d.	Facebook (share)	Social media	Shared post about the event

Annex — Press review links

Linked articles are in French; headlines are given here in English translation.

13th TCE/IWRM-WA (21-22 September)

1. APAnews — [The future of water in West Africa is being decided in Abidjan](#) (21/09)
2. Linfodrome — [Experts have two days to guide ECOWAS ministers](#) (21/09)

3. AIP — [Côte d'Ivoire reaffirms its commitment to sustainable water resources management](#) (21/09)
4. KOACI — [Sub-regional experts seek a common strategy](#) (21/09)
5. Opera News — [Abidjan hosts the 13th session of the IWRM Technical Committee of Experts](#) (21/09)
6. Pressecotedivoire — [A technical committee of experts in conclave in Abidjan](#) (22/09)

6th MMC/IWRM-WA (23 September)

7. APAnews — [Water: in Abidjan, ECOWAS accelerates transboundary management](#) (23/09)
8. KOACI — [West Africa calls for financial mobilisation and stronger governance](#) (23/09)
9. Abidjan.net — [ECOWAS brings together experts and ministers in Abidjan](#) (23/09)
10. Opera News — [ECOWAS ministers strengthen regional cooperation in Abidjan](#) (23/09)
11. Atoou.com (Facebook) — [Opening of the 6th MMC session](#) (23/09)

1st edition of FREAO (24-25 September)

12. Linfodrome — [Abidjan lays the foundations of hydro-diplomacy around 28 water basins](#) (24/09)
13. RTI 1 — [8 pm News, 24 September 2026 \(Marie Laure N'Goran\)](#)
14. NCI News — [News bulletin, 24 September 2026](#)
15. [News bulletin, Thursday 24 September 2026 \(Alann Itoua\)](#)
16. [Le 7Actu, 25 September 2026 \(6 am edition\)](#)
17. Mono Basin Authority — [Abidjan hosts the 1st edition of FREAO to transform the region](#) (25/09)
18. KOACI — [West Africa seals a pact to make water a lever for development](#) (25/09)
19. Business24 Africa — [Sustainability of water resources: West Africa commits](#)
20. Business24 Africa — [The Director General of Water Resources explains the stakes of water](#)
21. YouTube — ["Water Builders" gala dinner at FREAO](#)
22. Linfodrome — [Abidjan adopts the Abidjan Declaration and passes the baton to Cabo Verde](#) (26/09)
23. Fratmat.info — [West African States reaffirm their commitments](#) (26/09)

- 24. Gouv.ci — [The Minister calls for regional mobilisation around the Abidjan Declaration](#) (26/09)
- 25. PresseCotedivoire — [FREAO closing: a declaration calling for stronger regional cooperation](#) (26/09)
- 26. Atoou.com (Facebook) — [FREAO closing: Cabo Verde will host the 2nd edition](#) (26/09)
- 27. Ministry of Water and Forests (Facebook) — [Closing speech by Minister Assahoré Konan](#)

Whole week and other

- 28. Atoou.com (Facebook) — [Post on Abidjan Water Week](#)
- 29. RFI — [Podcast "C'est pas du vent"](#) (link to the programme page; episode to be specified)