



Major Group for
Children and Youth
A space for children and youth in the United Nations

Speaker:

Oumnia Anfer

Regional Focal Point of UNEA6 Presidency

Dear fellow delegates and distinguished guests,

As a young person who has grown up with access to clean drinking water, I am aware of the vital role water plays in our lives. However, I also recognize that many children and youth around the world do not have this privilege. As we gather here today for the UN Water Conference, I would like to draw your attention to the importance of water and its key interaction with health, particularly from a youth perspective.

In 2020, around 2 billion people did not have access to safely managed drinking water, and above 3.5 billion people used sanitation services that are threatening human and environmental health.

Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) are essential components of health and wellbeing, particularly for young people. Lack of access to clean water and sanitation facilities can have a profound impact on health, leading to water-borne diseases such as Shigella, bilharziasis, Cholera that remain as major public health concerns for certain Global South countries, malnutrition, and even death. As such, it is crucial that we prioritize solutions that promote WASH in all communities, particularly those in developing countries.

Healthcare services are among the responsible sectors that cause pollution and are responsible for around 4% of the Carbon emissions globally.

In 2021, 1.7 billion people globally lacked a basic water service at their healthcare facility. To achieve this goal, we must invest in infrastructure to provide clean water and sanitation facilities to all communities, including rural and marginalized areas. We can also implement policies that promote sustainable water use and prevent water pollution, such as through regulations and incentives for industry and agriculture. In addition, we can prioritize education and awareness-raising campaigns to promote good hygiene practices, such as handwashing and safe food handling.

As young people, we have a critical role to play in advocating for these solutions. We can use our voices to call for action and raise awareness about the need for access to clean water and sanitation facilities. We can also actively engage in local initiatives that aim to provide WASH services to those in need, such as volunteering with NGOs and community-based organizations.

By working together, we can create a world where every child and youth has access to clean water, sanitation facilities, and the opportunity to thrive. Let us prioritize WASH solutions and take concrete actions to ensure that all young people have access to these essential components of health and wellbeing.

Thank you for your attention.