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UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

Inclusivity in disaster preparedness: youth leadership as a critical ingredient to improve resilience to water-related disasters

Thursday 23 March 2023, 09:30 - 10:45, Room B

Organized by: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; Global Resilience Partnership; World Meteorological Organisation; Central Asia Youth for Water Network; Caribbean Risk and Disaster Management Network Youth Platform; African Youth Advisory Board on DRR; U-INSPIRE Alliance; Uganda

Background on the event (one paragraph)

Accounting to more than half of the world's population, children and youth benefit the most from reducing disaster risk and its impacts, increasing the resilience of their communities and securing access to safe water for generations to come. Youth leadership plays a key role in developing inclusive disaster risk reduction (DRR) and resilience-building policies, having better prepared households, safer communities and a higher number of healthy children and youth. In particular, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 emphasises the need to promote youth leadership for DRR, underlining children and youth as agents of change and should be given the space and modalities to contribute to disaster risk reduction. However, more needs to be done to support youth leaders around the world acting on disaster preparedness and climate resilience. Youth initiatives often get a back seat when it comes to uniting efforts to minimise impact from water-related disasters, even though they hold the biggest potential to steer community action and be game changers.

The speakers will reflect on successful cases of cross-sectoral partnerships between youth groups and leading organisations in the field of DRR, coupled with proven strategies and lessons that empower meaningful youth participation. The event will also feature an interactive element of group work where participants would be divided in groups to brainstorm a one-minute pitch for a DRR project. Each group will be led by one of the speakers, mentoring the group members on how best to articulate their idea and cross-reference it with existing global initiatives.

Water Action Agenda (one paragraph, if possible, please include the link to your commitment in the [Water Action Agenda database](#))

Related commitments of the partners:

<https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/enhancing-earth-system-observations-monitoring-and-forecasting-floods-and-droughts>

<https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/engaging-youth-accelerating-sdg-implementation-beyond-capacity-building>

<https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/better-global-water-information-through-global-hydrological-status-and-outlook-system>

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

- Lack of inclusivity in plans and processes adopted towards creating early-warning systems or improved disaster resilience on basin scale
- Practical ways how to support youth in DRR - mobile education app, national project competition, multidisciplinary meetups to share ideas, connecting through professional youth networks, youth focal points for global platforms
- Highlighted the consequences of not including youth and women in the project design and implementation for sustained solution for local water-related disasters
- Challenges to create a meaningful space for youth to contribute to disaster resilience

Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)

- Speakers underlined the need to include at least one seat per youth representative on the basin committees or agencies responsible for basin-wide management
- Several initiatives presented on matchmaking between youth-led initiatives and potential partner organisations
- Strive to mobilize availability of seed funding for youth-led projects in the field of DRR or climate resilience
- Creating paid professional opportunities for young professionals in addition to research fellowships or short-term internships
- Participants presented several ideas on collaboration with youth and rural communities in their respective countries