



UN
2023 WATER
CONFERENCE

NEW YORK
22-24
MARCH
2023

UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

[Innovation and Entrepreneurship developing entrepreneurial Capabilities for the Water Sector]

[22 March 2023, 18:30-19:45, Room A inside UN headquarters HQ58]

Organized by: [World Merit SA, Umgeni Water
Moderated and Facilitated by Mrs Mbali Fathima Sibiya]

The world is currently lagging behind in the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goal 6 with only 1 in 3 people in the world having access to potable water and 46% living without access to dignified sanitation. It is imperative for the sector community to be open to innovative solutions particularly those that have the potential for entrepreneurial opportunities. This session looked at the current solutions available for water and sanitation innovation as well as provided guidance for entering the water and sanitation entrepreneurial space. The session aimed particularly at youth, young professionals and community members alike who would like to be equipped to explore innovative solutions and implement entrepreneurial or business opportunities that will advance water accessibly and accelerate action in the attainment of SDG 6. This highly interactive and collaborative session aimed at equipping professionals and like-minded people with the skills to develop entrepreneurial and innovative ideas to tackling challenges in the water sector. It is an opportunity to gain insight into grant application for research and projects.

Water Action Agenda

To encourage innovation and entrepreneurship in the water particularly amongst the youth, young professionals and women. Within the various challenges experienced in the sector, ranging from lack of basic water supply, to impacts of climate change on water resources and better and improved sanitation solutions that will be sustainable and resilient. One of the major tools that the youth and young professionals can use is raising awareness and sharing information in their communities as well as take the lead in introducing new technology and 4IR solutions that will make the water sector more accessible to women and youth. Identification of the gaps is key, and then having the necessary business mind-set and skills for implementation.

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

- Open discussion on fundamental challenges in the Water Sector-Identifying opportunities for innovation lead by Dr Leeann Modley
- Hands on Experience on the use of the Opportunity Business model to create Innovative ideas and how to apply it to water sector business opportunities led by Mr yang Villa
- The process of seeking funding for innovative water solutions and the application processes- personal Journey of Mr Odwa Mtembu
- Open discussion on how to create entrepreneurial opportunities from identified gaps in the sector
- Interpretation of the opportunity business model into current water sector challenges such as climate change, knowledge and information dissipation and raising awareness
- The use of networking tools to engage water sector investors in implementation of innovative solution to accelerate change

Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)

- Session encouraged awareness raising and using new technology to share information
- Youth and Young professionals should focus on identifying suitable solutions for current water challenges in order to accelerate change
- Digital transformation for the future of the water sector
- Partnerships and collaborations are key in building on business ideas and also focusing on the business mindset
- Use skills obtained in formulation of the opportunity business model to take advantage of the significant shift in environmental, economic and social conditions that will play out over the coming decades
- Water Sector professionals need to be able to adapt and have resilience exposure to different skill sets is critical for the sustainability of the water sector