UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

Promoting Private-Public Partnerships
- a vehicle towards fulfilling SDG 6 and climate Actions

24 March 2023, 8:00- 9:15, Side Room C UN HQ Inside

Lead organization: Japan Water Forum c/o NoWNET Secretariat
Partner organizations:

- MLIT, Japan (Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism, Japan)
- The Secretariat of the Headquarters for Water Cycle Policy of the Cabinet Secretariat, Japan
- Danish Water Forum (DWF)
- Finnish Water Forum (FWF)
- French Water Partnership (FWP)
- Swedish Water House (SWH) for Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)
- Korea Water Forum
- World Water Council
- Netherlands Water Partnership

✧ Background on the event

The governments of Europe, Japan, and the Republic of Korea are at the forefront of addressing the challenges of climate change by collaborating with their private sectors to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote adaptation and resilience measures. They are achieving this by mainstreaming policies and measures through water cycle management, from the source to the sea, to mitigate the impacts of climate change and natural disasters. To explore the necessary triple or even quadruple helix structures as a vehicle towards achieving SDG 6, and the global targets, this side event discussed Private-Public Partnerships for climate change mitigation and NBS through Source-to-Sea approaches/ Sound water cycle management from the upper to lower basins by sharing good practices, lessons, and commitment in Europe, Japan, and Korea.

✧ Key Issues discussed

- During the side event, A representative from SIWI and WaterAid respectively delivered the keynote presentation introducing the report "The essential drop to Net-Zero: Unpacking freshwater's role in climate change mitigation: Water-wise integrated

approaches and nature-based solutions as tools for climate mitigation."

- Denmark, France, Japan, South Korea, SIWI, and WWC/Nature Conservancy showcased their collaborative efforts through public and private partnerships, including the collaboration through the platform to tackle the challenges of climate change addressing IWRM/Source-to-Sea and sound water cycle management. They emphasized their commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by promoting adaptation and resilience measures through comprehensive water cycle management, spanning from source to sea.
- Speakers also highlighted the importance of nature-based solutions for long-term sustainability and identifying synergies between climate change mitigation and adaptation. Additionally, they discussed how enhancing IWRM considering biodiversity, system resilience, and the achievement of SDGs can all be achieved through coordinated efforts to address the challenges posed by climate change.
- During the Q&A session with the audience, we explored the challenges arising from the public and private sector gap and identified several key points for improvement.

・ Importance of transparency in interactions between the public and private sectors
・ Civil society's role in engaging with both sectors to address water resource problems
・ Examples of successful business cases and the need for long-term funding strategies for nature-based solutions
・ Importance of collaboration, science-based plans, and strong business cases to engage both sectors

◆ Key recommendations for action

・ Strengthen governance through a polycentric system with integrated and coordinated approaches across sectors and levels, including non-public actors, and enabling conditions to achieve this include transparency, data-based decision-making, inclusive knowledge systems, and mobilizing finance.
・ Address knowledge gaps and adapt governance frameworks to different scales and levels using multi-actor governance approaches to achieve win-wins and identify synergies.
・ When making decisions, consider the entire water cycle and the interconnected ecosystems from source to sea. This holistic approach can enhance climate adaptation and mitigation by identifying trade-offs and co-benefits, safeguarding nature-based solutions, and creating funding mechanisms to strengthen system resilience.
・ Implement comprehensive governance, legislation, and environmental standards to ensure sufficient, good-quality water for all uses while monitoring and developing solutions for substances posing environmental risks.
・ Engage people in changing their water consumption habits for long-lasting water management at the basin level.
・ Proactively share experiences, knowledge, and technology to encourage adopting best practices in sustainable water management.
・ Implement "source-to-sea" (S2S) management for climate mitigation and adaptation, focusing on taking a holistic approach to decision-making and considering the whole water cycle and interconnected ecosystems from source to sea.
・ Address fragmented governance, which is a barrier to decisive action, by identifying trade-offs and mutual benefits for all stakeholders, including the private sector.

✧ Water Action Agenda

The Secretariat of the Headquarters for Water Cycle Policy of the Cabinet Secretariat, Japan/

- Create and support an enabling environment for the private sector to plan and implement their measures for a sound water cycle through a public and private partnership

Finland Government:

Finland's Special Envoy for Water, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (**#SDGAction49510**): https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/finlands-special-envoy-water

Finnish Water Forum

- Finnish Water Stewardship Expert Network # SDG WaterAction 50835

French Water Partnership

The app Water4AllSDGs, a free assessment of contributions to the SDG targets of a project, policy or action in the field of Water # SDG WaterAction 50539

Japan Water Forum

Initiate the platform and dialogue among multi-stakeholder of Japan's river basins to promote safety and minimum entropy.

Korea Water Forum

Showcase the best practices of water management in Korea to enhance interregional and cross-border cooperation for a sustainable water future.

SIWI

SIWI commits to support collective action on the Water Action Agenda, good governance, Water for Climate, Source-to-Sea and cooperation https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/siwi-commits-support-collective-action-water-action-agenda-good-governance-water #SDGAction 50772

World Water Council

Joint WWC-TNC-INBO commitment on an "*Action Plan for the implementation of the 'Water and Nature' Declaration":*

https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/action-plan-implementation-water-and-nature-declaration

Ref: Side event Program

Session Introduction **Ms. Yumiko Asayama, Chief Manager, Japan Water Forum s/o NoWNET Secretariat**
Keynote presentation: The essential drop to Net-Zero: Unpacking freshwater's role in climate change mitigation: Water-wise integrated approaches and nature-based solutions as tools for climate mitigation Dr Malin Lundberg Ingemarsson, Programme Manager, International Policy / Team Lead, Water for Resilient Landscapes, SIWI, and Dr Thérèse Rudebeck, Policy Advisor Climate Resilience, WaterAid
Country and NGO's examples and commitments • Denmark: Mr. Jesper Goodley Dannisoee, Senior ecologist, Director, DWF • Finland: Dr. Anna-Stiina Heiskanen, Professor, Unit Director of the Marine and Freshwater Solutions Unit, Finnish Environment Institute • France: Mr. Benjamin, Gestin CEO, Eau de Paris • France: Aurélie COLAS, General delegate of Professional Federation of Water Companies (FP2E) • Japan: Ms. Yumiko Asayama, Chief Manager, Japan Water Forum (on behalf of the Secretariat of the Headquarters for Water Cycle Policy of the Cabinet Secretariat, Japan) • Republic of Korea: Dr. Eun Namkung, Vice-president of Korea Water Forum • Sweden: Mr. José Pablo Murillo, Programme Officer, Stockholm International Water Institute and secretariat of the Action Platform for Source-to-Sea Management • World Water Council: Mrs. Andrea Erickson, Global Lead Water Security, The Nature Conservancy Moderator: Dr. Thomas Rebermark, Director, Swedish Water House
Q&A
Wrap up: Dr. Thomas Rebermark, Director, Swedish Water House

Speakers' talk summary

1. Keynote presentation

Dr Malin Lundberg Ingemarsson, Program Manager, International Policy / Team Lead, Water for Resilient Landscapes, SIWI, *presented and* introduced the report "Essential drop to Net-Zero: Unpacking freshwater's role in climate change mitigation." This report accesses the links between freshwater and climate change mitigation in different sectors (water and sanitation systems, energy systems, land systems, and freshwater ecosystems. It also identifies synergies and trade-offs between mitigation and adaptation, functioning ecosystems, enhanced biodiversity, system resilience, and sustainable development. The necessary actions include investing in climate-smart water and sanitation services, protecting and restoring ecosystems, promoting a water-wise transition to renewable energy, accounting for co-benefits, and investing in integrated approaches.

Dr Thérèse Rudebeck, Policy Advisor Climate Resilience, WaterAid, introduced the last part of the report. It concludes that achieving water-wise climate mitigation requires strengthening governance through a polycentric system with integrated and coordinated approaches across sectors and levels, including non-public actors. Enabling conditions to achieve this include transparency, data-based decision-making, inclusive knowledge systems, and mobilizing finance. The private sector is crucial in achieving water-wise climate mitigation, and freshwater should be mainstreamed into climate mitigation planning. This report also highlights the need to address knowledge gaps and adapt governance frameworks to different scales and levels using multi-actor governance approaches to achieve win-wins and identify synergies.

2. Case Presentation & Panel Discussion

Speakers shared their work for private-public partnerships and integrated water resource management regarding climate change mitigation and nature-based solutions.

Mrs. Andrea Erickson, Global Lead Water Security, The Nature Conservancy (WWC nomination)
The Nature Conservancy and the World Water Council are collaborating to promote nature-based solutions for achieving water and ecological security. They have convened over 100 organizations to commit to working together on this issue and plan to continue to call more actors to find common solutions and implement projects on the ground while improving policy and governance spaces. The focus is on delivering cost-effective solutions in communities with public and private sectors, indigenous communities, and civil society. The next major convening will be at the World Water Forum in Bali, where they will present tangible experiences and work on the policy framework and enabling conditions.

Aurélie COLAS, General delegate of Professional Federation of Water Companies (FP2E), France
The French Federation of Private Water Companies consists of five members providing water for 60% of the population in France and wastewater management for more than half. To address climate change issues related to water, there is a need for collaboration between public policies, urbanism, water, agriculture, industry, and tourism stakeholders, as well as investment, innovation, and responsible consumption. Public-private partnerships are also essential for sustainable action, and the companies in the federation mobilize technology and nature-based solutions to preserve water. They contribute to social innovation by distributing water vouchers, implementing social tariffs, and continuously improving customer relationships. Good governance is crucial for successful water and wastewater policies, and with efficiency, trust, and engagement, it is the key factor for success.

Dr. Anna-Stiina Heiskanen, Professor, Unit Director of the Marine and Freshwater Solutions Unit, Finnish Environment Institute
Finland works to prioritize the value of water resources for their cleanliness, biodiversity, recreation, and health benefits. Finland ranks top in sanitation, drinking water, and wastewater treatment (according to Environmental performance index 2022), offering high-quality solutions and expertise towards achieving SDG6 and global climate change targets. Finland has comprehensive governance, legislation, and environmental standards to ensure sufficient, good-quality water for all uses while monitoring and developing solutions for substances posing environmental risks. Finland promotes integrated water resources management and the Nexus approach, nature-based solutions, as well as smart, digital, and circular economy solutions, and maintains good quality water supply and sanitation infrastructure to increase resilience and adapt to climate change. The International Water Strategy of Finland, the Finnish Water Forum and the Finnish Water Stewardship Commitment bring together stakeholders to promote and offer solutions for sustainable water management nationally and globally.

Mr. José Pablo Murillo, Programme Officer, Stockholm International Water Institute and secretariat of the Action Platform for Source-to-Sea Management
He discussed the importance of "source-to-sea" (S2S) management for climate mitigation and adaptation. Fragmented governance prevents decisive action toward achieving SDGs. The source-to-sea approach seeks to address this by taking a holistic approach to decision-making, considering the full water cycle and the interconnected continuum of ecosystems from source to sea. The participatory approach facilitates the identification of trade-offs and mutual benefits for all stakeholders, including the private sector. S2S management can enhance climate

adaptation and mitigation by better understanding how climate change affects key flows, identifying trade-offs and co-benefits of climate adaptation and mitigation activities, and safeguarding nature-based solutions by identifying activities impacting them. Public and private actors are encouraged to incorporate in plans and policies analyses of how climate change impacts source-to-sea flows, strengthen coordinated management, and generate funding mechanisms to build system resilience. The speaker highlighted that the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) included in its commitment to the Water Action Agenda its support to source-to-sea management and the Action Platform for Source-to-Sea Management (S2S Platform).

Ms. Yumiko Asayama, Chief Manager, Japan Water Forum

Japan's actions for Sound Water Cycle through Public and Private Partnerships have been implemented from institutional architecture and the private sector's voluntary commitment. Gradually, Japan is integrating these government and private sector efforts to manage water resources and flood risk comprehensively and systematically by developing a collaborative platform. While the initial law to address flood control was mainly targeted at reducing the risk and damage in the urban areas, the focus has shifted to whole river basin management from the upper to lower basins. The Japanese government implemented the Basic Act on Water Cycle in 2015 and formulated a River Basin Water Cycle Plan. In parallel with the actions derived from institutional architecture, many private sectors have also initiated their voluntary actions. Their driving force is Climate-related financial disclosure, and the Task Force on Nature-related Financial Disclosure showed interest in a sound water cycle and the SDGs. Private sectors needed support to respond to international trends through more collaboration and an integrated approach with government initiatives. The Japanese government thus recently established a platform for private-public partnerships to promote water cycle management for climate change mitigation and adaptation, including ways to promote nature-based solutions. The platform provides webinars, knowledge exchange, and consultation advice. Japan aims to contribute to increasing brand value and securing stable water supplies needed to sustain business activities. Japan also aims to contribute to sustainable water use by developing an environment to support corporate initiatives for a sound water cycle.

Mr. Jesper Goodley Dannisoee, Senior Ecologist, Director, Denmark Water Forum

In Denmark, a 1000-year flood event caused significant damage and prompted the formation of an open organization called Water in Cities, which brought together members from all sectors of Danish society to address urban water management. The event led to the realization that legislation needed to catch up with the rapidly evolving solutions developed to safeguard the city. The utilities were given the ability to invest in nature-based solutions, such as changing parks into seepage areas and creating water basins. The partnerships formed quickly, driven by the fear that another catastrophic event could occur. The changes made to manage water in the city are not always obvious but are creating a better way to manage water. Updated technologies and implementation are crucial, and action is necessary to address urban water management problems. It is important for all stakeholders to accept the fact that you have to be alert and constantly adapt to the new normal, hvis changes rapidly.

Mr. Benjamin, Gestin CEO, Eau de Paris

Eau de Paris was created in 2010 to address the unchecked rise in water tariffs and lack of investment caused by a long-term concession model in Paris. The organization champions a PGP model (Public-Government-Private) but recognizes the need for public-private partnerships involving local authorities and farmers to protect water resources. Another "P"

that Eau de Paris adds to their thinking is public. They believe engaging people in changing their water consumption habits is crucial for long-lasting water management at the basin level. Traditional PGP models may be limited, and Eau de Paris suggests moving towards a Public-Private Partnership with five "P"s.

Dr. Eun Namkung, Vice-president of Korea Water Forum

Dr. Eun Namkung shared Korea's success model in water management and public-private partnerships over the past 60 years, which significantly impacted the country's economic growth. Korea focused on providing safe drinking water, adequate industrial water supply, and agricultural water supply to manage water resources sustainably. The Korean government played a significant role in water management, with support from the private sector, in setting policy & regulation, and technological development. The National Water Management System was unified into a single ministry to ensure administrative efficiency. With all the endeavors, the coverage of the drinking water supply is over 99%, and sewage treatment is over 94%. Korea is also proactively sharing its experiences, knowledge, and technology with developing countries through the Korea Water Forum, a non-governmental organization that leads international cooperation. He also emphasized the role of the Korea Water Forum in bridging the gap between developed and developing countries in order to accelerate the water action agenda toward SDG6. Finally, he introduced Korea International Water Week(KIWW), a global platform for sharing knowledge and information and identifying future collaborations, which will be held in Daegu in December 2023. He hopes to conduct further deepened discussions in the KIWW 2023.

3. Q&A in the Panel discussion with the audience

One audience asked all the people in the session room whether you are from the private sector and identified the ratio of the private sector. He raises the issue of a gap between the public and private sectors in the water sector and asks the panelists how they engage with the private sector. The representative from water utilities discusses their process of defining their needs for services and technology, publishing them on their website transparently, and testing innovations through pilot projects before scaling up. They emphasize the importance of transparency in the interactions between the public and private sectors.

Mrs. Andrea Erickson, Global Lead Water Security, The Nature Conservancy, discussed how civil society could engage with both the private and public sectors to address water resource problems, using the example of a drought resilience issue. She explained that corporate actors are often willing to come to the table and work together to find solutions. Still, it can take longer for the public sector to make the case and overcome regulatory barriers. She also gave an example of a successful business case for nature-based solutions in Cape Town that could return 55,000,000,000l of water annually. However, the public sector needs to turn this into a long-term funding strategy. Overall, she emphasized the importance of collaboration, science-based plans, and strong business cases to engage both sectors in addressing water resource issues.

Dr. Anna-Stiina Heiskanen, Professor, Unit Director of the Marine and Freshwater Solutions Unit, Finnish Environment Institute, shared the other case of public and private partnership.
The Finnish Water Forum brings companies together to build an ecosystem of solutions and innovations for various purposes. Collaboration between companies and research institutions

is crucial. For instance, Finland has succeeded in this area through the Finnish blue-economy strategy, which involved freshwater and marine innovation projects in partnership with research organizations and companies. It is essential to foster such collaboration to promote development and innovation.

Finland's international water strategy, Finnish Water Way, was defined jointly by 5 ministries, businesses, academia, and several stakeholders. It is a multi-stakeholder approach towards sustainable water management and exemplifies an exceptionally good cross-sectoral collaboration on water issues between the ministries, research institutes, business, and the civil society. As part of the Finnish Water Way Strategy, Finnish research institutes, ministries and WWF Finland have established Finnish water stewardship commitment that brings together the best practices and guidelines and provides a framework for companies for assessing and developing sustainable water use in their own operations and in their international value chains. The Finnish companies signing the commitment have set to become leaders in Water Stewardship by 2030.

An audience from a business sector expressed their dislike for repeatedly piloting something that has been done before in a different place. He emphasized that public organizations need more collaboration to accelerate growth and learn from other utilities and sectors. He stressed that the business case needs to be strong from the beginning and that the private sector shouldn't be burdened with figuring out the best economical way of operating entities.

Dr. Eun Namkung expressed concern that the PPP approach would eventually lead to privatization, while recognizing the importance of PPP in water infrastructure development.

Vice-chair of the French Water Partnership responded to the remarks of Dr. Eun Namkung. He represents a coalition of all French water actors who work together to find solutions for improving water management, with a shared view that water is a public good that should be better managed. The partnership includes a variety of stakeholders, such as local and national governments, companies of different sizes, NGOs, research institutes, and the broader society. This public-private partnership aims to address water management issues in France.

An audience from Jordan asked the question about the partnerships around water utility management and service provision and whether separating the private elements of distribution and supply would make sense from a sustainability point of view. This separation would allow a greater focus on nature-based solutions to ensure supply. The inquiry also asks if there are any specific country contexts or examples where such a separation has been successful.

The speaker suggests that there can be different solutions for separating water management, distribution, and treatment systems. Nationally, these systems are separated, with treatment systems owned by companies and distribution systems owned by communities. The overall system is complex, but various solutions are available for the question presented.

Finally, **Dr. Thomas Rebermark, Director, Swedish Water House** wrapped up our side event. We hear about different country examples and how similar problems are dealt with differently. Through the speakers' showcases, we recognize that governing water is crucial and nature-based solutions, innovation, technology, and multi-stakeholder partnerships must be part of the solution. Adaptation and mitigation go hand in hand, and it is time to act now. He expressed gratitude to all attendees for a great start to the last day of the conference.


Key messages